

The Sermon on the Mount



INTRODUCTION

The words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are like a holy halo of that has girded the minds of His followers in a perpetual epiphany of the loftiest ideals for man ever expressed.

The Sermon on the Mount contains the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes. By themselves the most repeated and most beloved words of Jesus. Memorized and treasured by countless millions of people.

If indeed the Sermon on the Mount is the first and the longest discourse of Jesus in the Bible, and if the words in it have the attention of millions of believers, shouldn't we understand what the Lord is saying?

Parts of the Sermon on the Mount are self-explanatory. For example: '**Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad for great is your reward in heaven...**' (Matt. 5 v 11-12)

But other parts are not clear cut. For example: '**If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.**' (Matt. 5 v 29). It sounds like Jesus is teaching self-mutilation. What exactly is He saying by this?

This paper will unfold the mystery of the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount. In a way never before seen, or heard, or published. Once the reader grasps this insight, fresh revelation will pour out of the New Testament.

We will show precisely how to understand each verse. There will be no doubt, no shades of meaning. Darkness and stumbling will pass. The light of full day will beam from the Sermon on the Mount!

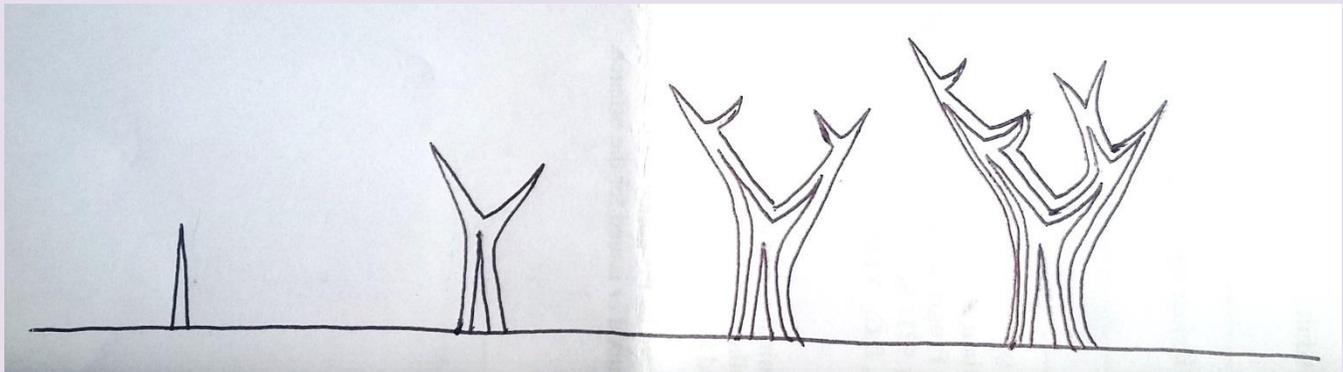
¹ Painting by Carl Bloch: portion of it

THE KEY INSIGHT

Jesus said:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed...which is indeed the least of all the seeds but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree..."

As a child did you ever plant a seed and watch it grow? The first tender shoots gradually appear and then become rigid. From those branches, shoots of other branches come. This continues until all the branches of the tree are formed.



The final shape of the tree is just an expanded version of the original shape of the first tender shoot and off-shoots. New Testament Scripture obeys EXACTLY THE SAME principle.

The seed bed of the New Testament is the first 260 verses of the Book of Matthew. These are the tender shoots of the Word of God (SEED). Each shoot grows into a tree, which are the 260 chapters of the New Testament.

<u>Verse Count</u>	<u>Location in Matthew (SHOOT)</u>	<u>Chapter in New Testament (TREE)</u>
1	Matt. 1 v 1	Matthew 1
29	Matt. 2 v 4	Mark 1
46	Matt. 2 v 20	Luke 1
69	Matt. 4 v 4	John 1
90	Matt. 4 v 25	Acts 1
SERMON ON THE MOUNT BEGINS		
91	Matt. 5 v 1	Acts 2
118	Matt. 5 v 28	Romans 1
134	Matt. 5 v 44	1 Corinthians 1

<u>Verse Count</u>	<u>Location in Matthew (SHOOT)</u>	<u>Chapter in New Testament (TREE)</u>
150	Matt. 6 v 12	2 Corinthians 1
163	Matt. 6 v 25	Galatians 1
169	Matt. 6 v 31	Ephesians 1
175	Matt. 7 v 3	Philippians 1
179	Matt. 7 v 7	Colossians 1
183	Matt. 7 v 10	1 Thessalonians 1
188	Matt. 7 v 16	2 Thessalonians 1
191	Matt. 7 v 19	1 Timothy 1
197	Matt. 7 v 25	2 Timothy 1
201	Matt. 7 v 29	Titus 1
SERMON ON THE MOUNT ENDS		
202	Matt. 8 v 1	Titus 2
204	Matt. 8 v 3	Philemon
205	Matt. 8 v 4	Hebrews 1
218	Matt. 8 v 17	James 1
223	Matt. 8 v 22	1 Peter 1
228	Matt. 8 v 27	2 Peter 1
231	Matt. 8 v 30	1 John 1
236	Matt. 9 v 1	2 John
237	Matt. 9 v 2	3 John
238	Matt. 9 v 3	Jude
239	Matt. 9 v 4	Revelations 1
260	Matt. 9 v 25	Revelations 22

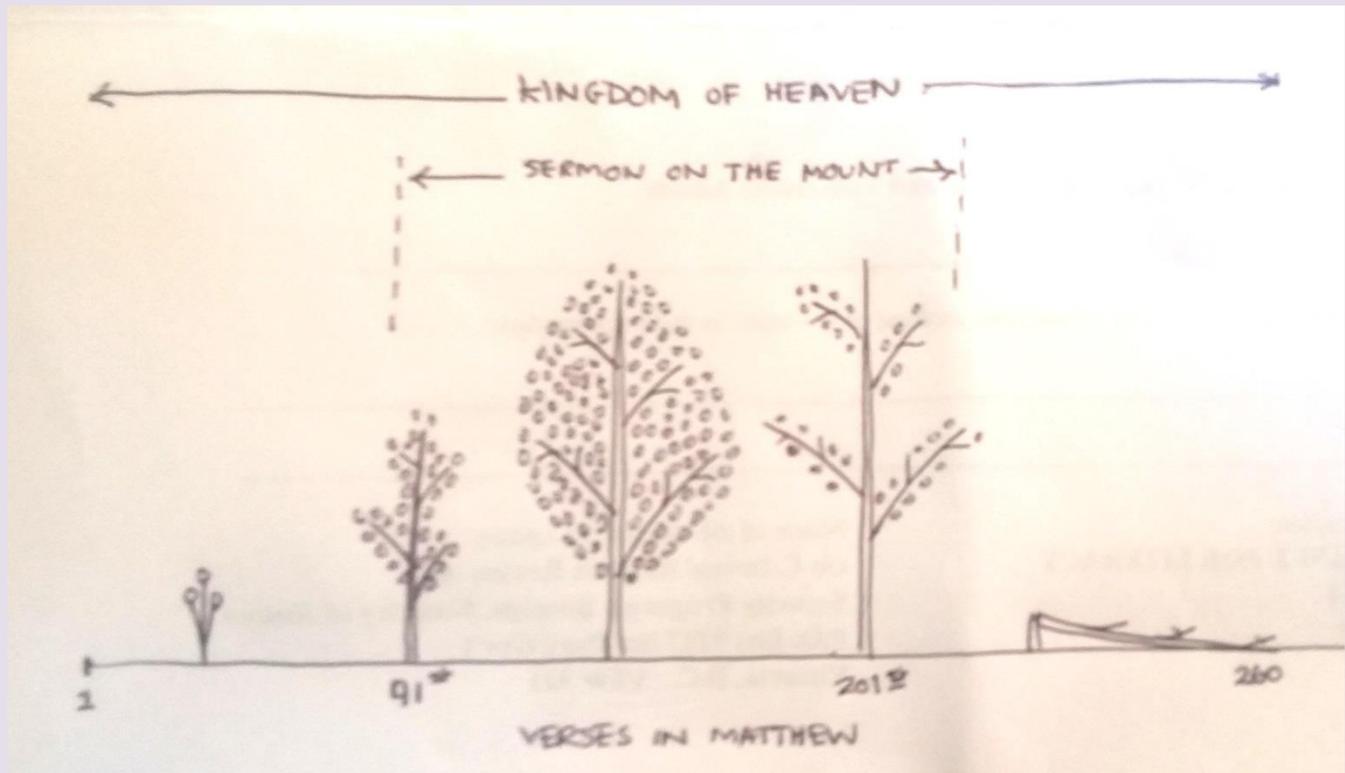
END OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The 91st to the 201st verses of Matthew correspond to the Sermon on the Mount. There are 111 verses in this portion of Scripture. The spiritual number 111 means "Fear of the LORD".

The life of any plant experiences a cycle of emergence, rapid growth, early fruitfulness, maturity, maximum fruitfulness, decline, little fruit, no fruit, then eventual death.

The beginning of the Sermon corresponds to the point when the planting of the Kingdom of Heaven in men's hearts [faith in Jesus Christ] reaches fruitfulness and the Sermon ends at the point when the plant has passed its fruitfulness and is in decline.²



In our map of verses in Matthew to chapters in the New Testament, the first verse of the Sermon on the Mount (**Matt. 5 v 1**) corresponds to Acts chapter 2, the first ingathering of believers on the Day of Pentecost. The tree of faith has bourn its first crop of fruit to the Master of the Vineyard. Men listened to the Gospel and were convicted: "**now when they heard this they were cut to the heart and said... 'What shall we do?'**" (Acts 2 v 37)

The last verse of the Sermon on the Mount (**Matt. 7 v 29**) corresponds to Titus chapter 1. The tree of faith is well advanced in stages of decline, producing little fruit. The last pastoral letter of Paul portrays the laity as "**many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households**" (Titus 1 v 10-11). Men are no longer listening to the Gospel, nor are they convicted. Instead they have become resistant to it and are causing divisions.

² The resurrection of Christ from the dead is prophetically the 'first-fruits' of the Barley Harvest.

What verse in the Sermon on the Mount corresponds to the greatest fruitfulness of the Tree? What is the peak of perfection in the Kingdom of God? The mid-verse of the Sermon on the Mount is the 146th verse: **Matthew 6 v 8**: “**Do not be like them** [the public saying of prayers in temples] **for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him**”. This corresponds to the 146th chapter of the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 13, the ‘Love Chapter’: “**These three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.**” (v 13)!

Now we will illustrate for you how perfectly the chapters in the New Testament fulfill the words spoken by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

ACTS CHAPTER 2

Words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount:

The 91st VERSE (**Matt. 5 v 1**)

"**Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside, and sat down. His disciples came to him.**"

This will be fulfilled in four parts.

Fulfilled in New Testament Chapters:

The 91st CHAPTER (Acts 2):

Part One

The great wind and speaking in tongues brought onlookers:

"**And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men of every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together...**" (Acts 2 v 5-6)

Fulfills: "**Now when Jesus saw the crowds...**" (**Matt. 5 v 1 a**)

Part Two

Peter's message on the day of Pentecost:

"**Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death**" (Acts 2 v 23)

"**whom God raised up**" (Acts 2 v 24)

Fulfills: "**He went up on a mountainside**" (**Matt. 5 v 1 b**)

Part Three

Peter's message on the day of Pentecost: (continued)

"**having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it**"

"David is dead and buried... God had sworn an oath to him of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh,"

"He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2 v 30)

Fulfills: "and sat down" (Matt. 5 v 1 c)

Part Four

Peter's message on the day of Pentecost: (continued)

"Peter said to them 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of JESUS CHRIST for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the promise of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2 v 38)

"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about 3,000 souls were saved." (Acts 2 v 39)

"His disciples came to Him." (Matt. 5 v 1 d)

The EVENTS that occurred on the Day of Pentecost and the KEY TRUTHS in the sermon of Peter are in perfect parallel to the corresponding verse in the Sermon on the Mount!

FIRST THIRTY CORRESPONDENCES

There is not space to go into all the details of the fulfillment of every verse in the Sermon on the Mount in its corresponding chapter in the New Testament. We will summarize the first thirty or so verses and leave it to the reader to explore the rest. This ought to be a sufficient verification of the thesis of this paper.

Matt. 5 v 1

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

Acts 2

Peter preaches the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. A harvest of disciples is gathered in.

Matt. 5 v 2

And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

Acts 3

The lame man is healed at the Beautiful Gate [mouth of the Temple]. Peter and John preach to Jerusalem: "you denied the Holy One and asked that a murderer be granted to you, and killed the Prince of Life... but those things God foretold by the mouth of all his prophets, that the Christ would suffer..."

Matt. 5 v 3

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Acts 4

Peter and John are imprisoned for witnessing of Christ. But the Holy Spirit adds to the number of believers. They were all of one heart and one soul. There was no needy person among them.

Matt. 5 v 4

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Acts 5

Again Peter and John are thrown into jail by the High Priest. Surely they grieved that religious men resist the truth so violently. But they were set free by an angel and continued to preach.

Matt. 5 v 5

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Acts 6

The believers appealed to the twelve apostles for fair distribution of food. The apostles said it was beneath them to serve tables. Seven deacons were appointed for the lowly task. The Holy Spirit blessed the deacons and mightily empowered them: Steven with wisdom and miracles (v 8); Philip to be a missionary (to Samaria), in a way, inheriting the earth. Because of arrogance the Spirit set the twelve apostles aside. He would search far afield to find replacements (e.g. Saul on the road to Damascus).

Matt. 5 v 6

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Acts 7

Who hungers and thirsts for righteousness most of all? Isn't it God? Doesn't the heart of God pine that men on earth would seek his Kingdom, indeed, seek Him? In Acts 7 Stephen is martyred and the Son of Man looks down from heaven beholding a soul who loves Him enough to die for Him! Thus, the years of tearful service of Jesus upon the earth, rejected and despised by men, seeking God's glory not his own, is rewarded by great joy and satisfaction in seeing the fruit of his labors!

Matt. 5 v 7

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Acts 8

Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ. Why did he bother? Jews did not care for Samaritans. They were considered ethnically and religiously soiled: foul human beings. But Philip went

down because he cared for their souls, he was merciful. And the Samaritans showed Philip mercy, by listening to his message, not rejecting it out of hand like the priests in Herod's Temple. God's mercy was poured out, and the Samaritans believed.

Such was the blessing of the Spirit even the arrogant apostles in Jerusalem found it in their heart to travel down to see what God was doing among the unclean.

Matt. 5 v 8

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Acts 9

On the road to Damascus Saul has a vision: he saw the resurrected Jesus Christ and conversed with him. Saul was breathing threats against the disciples of the Lord at the time. In fact, Saul, like the rest of the Pharisees, considered Jesus to have been demon possessed. How could such a man see God?

Saul was a fanatic law keeper. He was dedicated to obey the Torah, and even to keep the traditions of his sect: all its prescriptions for holy living. In this sense, Saul's heart was pure from legal sin, seeking to honor God through strict law keeping.

Yet Saul heard the preaching of Stephen. Following Stephen's argument [**'the goads'**] over and over in his mind, Saul finally had to admit the truth that the forefathers of his faith were wicked murderers.³ Once he admitted in his heart his sect was man-made, his heart was purified from religious sin. Jesus appeared. By these two things, conviction of sin and faith in the resurrected Christ, Saul was saved.

Matt. 5 v 9

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Acts 10

The Holy Spirit falls on the household of Cornelius. Who is the peacemaker? Not Peter. He is only a reluctant witness drawn into the scene. In fact, Peter was reverting to Judaism. Peter says "**you know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation**" (v 28). There is no such teaching in the Torah of Moses, where marriages to certain aliens were forbidden, but in no place is it written Jews can't visit with Gentiles. This teaching is of rabbinical origin. Yet Peter refers to it as a law, indicating he esteems the teachings of rabbis with the teaching of Moses.

Cornelius is a powerful military man and yet he was touched with compassion for the poor and walked in uprightness among the subjected peoples. But he is not the peacemaker either. He is also only a witness and participant drawn into the events.

³ The forefathers of Saul, the roots of the Pharisaical sect, trace back to the man-made religion invented by David and brought into being by Solomon. David changed all the God-given dimensions and materials of the tabernacle in the desert specified by Moses and replaced it with stones, altars, priestly orders, Levitical orders, and musicians of his own design.

The peacemaker is “a devout soldier from among those who waited on him.” He was the go-between the estranged parties. From his speech to Peter we know he believed a “holy angel” spoke to his master. Only a person intimate with Cornelius and a believer in Jesus could have offered prayers causing Cornelius’ deeds to “come up as a memorial before God”. Imagine! A soldier is a peacemaker!

Matt 5 v 10

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Acts 11

From the martyrdom of Stephen there was a persecution of believers in Judea. Those who had given up lands and laid the money at the apostles feet no longer had a means of financial support. God honored their suffering for his sake. The Spirit moved in the hearts of Gentiles in Antioch. The Gentiles who had converted to Christ sacrificed and sent relief to the brethren in Judea in spite of famine.

Matt 5 v 11

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Acts 12

Herod ordered the killing of the apostle James. When he saw it pleased the Jews he seized Peter as well. Peter was imprisoned without cause. While Peter was in prison a group assembled to pray for his liberty. Interestingly, none of the other apostles in Jerusalem attended the prayer meeting! They were elsewhere (v 17). We infer that Peter was unpopular among the other apostles: likely because of Peter’s membership in the circumcision group. Peter was reverting to Judaism (see **Matt. 5 v 9**) and we suspect he condemned his fellow apostles for not strictly obeying the rabbinical law. Hated by Herod, by the Jews, and shunned by his fellow apostles! John Mark is recorded to have prayed for Peter. Although Peter was reviled in the Christian community John Mark prayed for his safety. God blessed them both. Peter was released and the stature of John Mark rose in the community. Peter was in error in embracing the circumcision group. His release did not vindicate that alliance.

Matt 5 v 12

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Acts 13

Paul preaches the message of salvation in Cyprus but is resisted by Elymas the sorcerer. Then Paul preaches the message of salvation in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia but is resisted by the synagogue rulers.

Matt 5 v 13

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Acts 14

Paul boldly preaches the gospel in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. The salt had not lost its savour at that point. It was the purest testimony of Christ among the Gentiles by the greatest apostle to the Gentiles.

But the salt lost its savour in verse 23: “So when they had appointed elders in every church... they commended them”. Paul is personally responsible for planting the seeds of the institutional church system. Hierarchy creeps in innocuously: a plurality of elders sounds egalitarian and harkens to the suggestion of Jethro to Moses appoint judges to lighten his burden (Exodus 18:18).

But the eldership model introduced by Paul isn't God's will. We know because Acts 14 grows from the shoot of **Matt 5 v 13**. Elderships imply geographic divisions in the body of Christ. Two disciples meet on a road. The question arises: What church do you *belong* to? The answer: such and such church under so and so elders. This undercuts salvation: believers *belong* to God. There is only One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One Church, Christ's body, of which He is Lord: not the elders! (Nor the pastors they hire).

Too late: the salt lost its savour. The Kingdom of Heaven is “trodden under foot by men”!⁴

Matt 5 v 14

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

Acts 15

The phrase “light of the world” is an unmistakable reference to the promises in Isaiah: (1) Christ would appear in the Holy Land “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shone.” (Isaiah 9 v 2); and (2) faith in Christ would reach to all Gentiles “And he said, It is a light thing that you should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that you may be My Salvation to the end of the earth.” (Isaiah 49:6)

Sadly there is another ‘light bearer’ who is Lucifer, for that is his name. He is a religious spirit from the beginning. The calling of a Council of super-apostles elevated above the laity to debate and decide the things of God and impose them back on the people is Lucifer's favorite religious trick. Who are these ‘super-apostles’? These are the people the LORD set aside from his work back in Acts 6 (see **Matt 5 v 5**)!

No surprise, given the shoot verse of **Matt 5 v 14**, in Acts 15 the super-apostles gathered in Jerusalem “a city on a hill” to debate the requirements of God: whether to command the Gentiles to obey Moses.

⁴ This error has been repeated ad nauseam. Look at the great preachers like Whitfield and Wesley. All the converts were eventually corralled into religious organizations, which became official denominations, and finally became empty buildings.

The truth: “**Ye are the light of the world**”. The Light is Christ. Christ’s unheralded humble servants, everyday Christians, like the seven deacons, take the light to the world, as the Holy Spirit directs them.

The lie: The Light of the World is the highest Religious Official or gathering of Religious Officials; who dictate truth – light - for all. The Jerusalem Council was an abomination: its decision was an invention.

The truth: “**A city set on a hill cannot be hid**”. The City of God is the Heavenly Jerusalem; where Christ lives and reigns. Any humble gatherings of believers: around a kitchen table, in a public park, or in a coffee shop is the “hill” which the presence of Christ graces and “cannot be hid” from the world.

The lie: The City of God is a Temple of Religion; the place where the highest Religious Officials dwell. This council was in Jerusalem. Since then there have been innumerable councils and religious ‘Cities of God’. Inside those dark halls, which have need of artificial light to navigate, truth is well hidden.

Matt 5 v 15

Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house.

Acts 16

Paul circumcises Timothy “**because of the Jews in the region**” (v 3) and goes on a mission to Asia Minor. His goal is not to proclaim the gospel, rather “**...as they went through the cities they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.**” (v 4).

Paul was the “**candlestick**”: the first apostle to “**light the candle**” and proclaim Jesus is the Light of the World to the Gentiles (see **Matt 5 v 14**). Now Paul put the candle “**under a bushel**”: the teaching of the apostles and elders of Jerusalem. Even worse he circumcised Timothy!

No longer is Paul preaching in the open air to pagan inhabitants of foreign lands to win souls for Christ. Paul now focusses his energy on “**strengthening the churches**” (v 5), building up the religious organization, i.e. “**all that are in the house**”, or all that are “**under the bushel**”.

Interestingly, it is here in Acts 16 that the Holy Spirit begins to actively resist the ministry of Paul: “**they were forbidden by the Spirit to preach the word in Asia**” (v 6) and “**they tried to go to Bythnia, but the Spirit did not permit them**” (v 7). Why? The establishment of man’s religion, the rule of religious authorities, in Jerusalem or elsewhere, cancels and contradicts the truth of the Gospel of Christ. The Holy Spirit is dispensable in a religious system because “**men light the candle**”: not God.⁵

Matt 5 v 16

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

⁵ Now you know why candles are so popular in temples of religion.

Acts 17

In his ministry in Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens Paul's first objective is to win over people who are very religious: "a synagogue of the Jews... Paul, as was his custom, went in to them, and... reasoned with them from the Scriptures" (v 2). In doing so Paul whipped the Jews into a frenzy. This led to riots: "all the city in an uproar" (v 5). Was this the way to introduce the Gospel of Christ into new territory? To fuel religious conflict and escalate violence?

Paul had reverted to his old self: a religious fanatic. Christianity ultimately suffered greatly from the deeds of the religious fanatic Paul. Early reports received by authorities in Rome of riots inclined them to perceive Jews and Christians as a threat to the stability of society, a root of sedition possibly even against the authority of the Emperor. Christians became associated in the eyes of officials with Jews who were already mistrusted. Not long after, Jews were expelled from Rome (Acts 18 v 2). In later times, Romans put Christians to death in periods of sustained officially sanctioned persecutions.

The actions of Paul in Thessalonica were antithetical to the teaching of Christ. Christ's word to His disciples was to witness in such a gentle and virtuous manner as to win admiration: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

At this low point Paul's father – his spiritual authority – ceased to be in Heaven, it was in Jerusalem. This is root of the problem. Paul had rejected the religion of the Pharisees, accepted Jesus as His Savior, only to set aside the Gospel in favor of the tenets of another man-made religion: based in Jerusalem no less!

Matt 5 v 17

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Acts 18

A turning point was reached in Corinth. Paul finally declared to the Jews "your blood be upon your own head; I am clean. From now on I go to the Gentiles". Whereas the Holy Spirit had resisted Paul, now encouragement came from the LORD: "I am with you and no one will attack you to hurt you." (v 10)

Rather than barging into Jewish synagogues and causing a hullabaloo, Paul quietly took up his trade of tent making and blended into society. When the Jews attempted to bring Paul to court, he was released and walked a free man (v14-15). The LORD upheld Paul and protected him from harm.

Paul was learning, maturing. He was allowing the Holy Spirit to change him from the inside out. Rather than dispute with Jews about the Law or the Prophets, the work of the Spirit in Paul's soul was serving to make him like Christ: to "fulfill" them. This was the purpose of Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

From this time forth, Paul's pen was loosed: twelve books of Scripture. Finally, Paul was done with religion! His new motto would be: "Christ in you – the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

Paul's new walk with Christ influenced those around him. A man named Apollos came to town and began to speak fervently and boldly in the synagogue of the Jews. Aquila and Priscilla "took him aside and explained to him the Way of God more accurately" (v 26).

Although Apollos was factually accurate in what he said, he was not Christ-like by engaging the Jews in heated religious debates. Such an approach would never convert them nor please the Father in Heaven.

Matt 5 v 18

For verily I say unto you, until heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, until all be fulfilled.

Acts 19

Paul peaceably preached for two years in Ephesus without incident and the Word of the LORD spread throughout the whole region. So much so that people publically burned their books of sorcery.⁶

Then Paul got it into his mind to travel to Jerusalem then "see Rome" (v 21). He sent his close disciples, Timothy and Erastus, away to Macedonia (v 22). Paul was shutting down his ministry.

Why go to Jerusalem? The Lord had told Ananias concerning Paul "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My Name before Gentiles, Kings, and the Children of Israel" (Acts 9 v 15). This made sense. There was a King in Judea that Paul could testify before. Which we know did happen. But why was there a desire to see Rome? That wasn't in the will of God. It becomes clear later in the Matthew links.

How does God's will for Paul tie to **Matt 5 v 18**? The implication of **Matt 5 v 18** is the Law is prophetic. The instructions God gave to the children of Israel in the desert foreshadowed future events, especially events concerning the crucifixion of Jesus, the Lamb of God, by order of the high priests. Bible students are familiar with Jesus pre-figured in sacrifices. Where does Paul appear as a prophetic type in the Law?

On the Day of Atonement two goats were brought before the High Priest and lots were drawn. One goat was sacrificed on the altar for the atonement of the sins of Israel. The other goat was led into the wilderness and set free. The condemned goat was Christ. The goat set free was Paul. Paul continued the ministry of Jesus and proclaimed the Gospel of Freedom in the wilderness (to Gentiles).

The blood of the condemned goat was brought into the Holy Place for the temporary atonement of the sins of the children of Israel. This is prophetic of Christ offering his blood to God for eternal atonement of sin. This prophetic type is explained in the Book of Hebrews 9 v 11-14. It is indisputable.

Paul knew the prophecy hidden in the Law. As the goat set free he knew if he went to Jerusalem the high priests could not kill him; and if the high priests took him to court they could not condemn him. It was prophetically impossible for him to die by the Jews.

⁶ Religious manuals.

Paul went to Jerusalem to make one last testimony to the Children of Israel. In the hope they might see the fulfilment of prophecy in the Law, and repent and believe that the condemned goat, Christ, died for their sins. In the process Paul would also fulfil the prophecy given to Ananias.

Why did Paul have compassion on the Jews and make such a dangerous journey to witness to them? Paul knew the Holy Land was “in the shadow of death”. Roman legions were coming. They would lay siege to Jerusalem and massacre the inhabitants. There was little time left to witness to the Jews.

Matt 5 v 19

Whoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Acts 20

Paul makes a strenuous defense to the Ephesian elders that he had “not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God” (v 27). Although Paul claims “you know from the first day I came to Asia in what manner I lived among you serving the Lord with all humility” (v 18-19) the implication of **Matt 5 v 19** is Paul is claiming to be “great in the kingdom of heaven”. That is not humility. Furthermore, the reader of Acts is not fooled. Based on our study of **Matt 5 v 16** and **Matt 5 v 17** Paul did not discover The Way until he arrived in Corinth. This was long after the time he first came to Asia. Paul isn’t publically confessing his failures: he is covering his sins to burnish his reputation. So his sins stick to him. Not until his last epistles, written in prison in Rome, does he confess “I am the chief of sinners” (1 Tim 1 v 15).

Matt 5 v 20

For I say to you: Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Acts 21

When Paul arrived, James, the chief apostle in Jerusalem, the man who sat in the holiest chair in the imitation version of Christianity, man’s religion, told him to get in line with Jewish law-keeping: “they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that their children ought not to be circumcised nor to walk according to the customs... take a vow and be purified... that all may know you yourself walk orderly and keep the law” (v 21-24)

Paul had written this to the Galatians: “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different Gospel... but even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel to you than what we have received, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1 v 6-7)

And Paul wrote: “a man is not justified by the works of the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ... for if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor... for if righteousness comes through the Law Christ died for nothing.” (Gal. 2 v 16-21)

Remarkably, in Acts 21 Paul destroys the credibility of his ministry (in the eyes of God) by disobeying his own inspired teachings through the most despicable actions imaginable! First, he submitted himself to the chief religious authority in the official Christian religion to gain his approval (thereby insulting the true chief religious authority of all Christians, the LORD in Heaven). Second, he submitted himself to the Law of Moses to ritually purify himself to worship in Herod's Temple, in order to gain the approval of the Jews and their High Priests (thereby insulting the Cross of Christ and calling the Holy Spirit unclean).

After the Council in Jerusalem Paul went through a phase where he strove to please men and advance Christian religion. In Corinth he regained his right mind and followed the Way. Now, Paul has lost his mind again, and has gone so far as taking a vow to keep the Law of Moses! Anathema!

By returning to keeping the Jewish Law, Paul is now obliged to keep all of it flawlessly. If he fails, there is only one outcome: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Paul can't lose eternal life: that was won for him by Christ at Calvary. But Paul can lose all his rewards in heaven by denying the Cross.⁷

Matt 5 v 21

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not murder; and whosoever shall murder shall be in danger of the judgment:

Acts 22

Paul declares three times in Acts 22 that he is guilty of murder or accessory to murder: "I persecuted this Way to death" (v 4); "went to Damascus to bring even those who were there ... to be punished" (v 5); "and when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him." (v 20)

Paul did not make the good confession of faith in the blood of Jesus on the Cross. In fact in his account of his spiritual journey he describes how Jesus imposed himself upon him on the road to Damascus and blinded him. Paul does not give glory to God for his healing but credits Ananias, who he describes "a devout man according to the law, having a good testimony with the Jews..." (v 12).

Paul makes two public declarations: (1) "I am indeed a Jew..." (v 3) and; (2) "The commander ...said 'Tell me, are you a Roman?' and Paul said 'Yes'" (v 28). He does not declare himself to be a Christian, a citizen of heaven. Instead he is seeks to please men and avoid the offense of the Cross.

Paul spoke in Hebrew. So, by Paul's account Ananias gave him the instructions "arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the Name of ADONI" (v 16). Untrue! Fabrication!

What Ananias said to Paul was: "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road to Damascus has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9 v 17). He placed his hands on Paul and he received his sight. No baptism. No calling on the name of Adoni.

⁷ See 2 Timothy 2 v 11-13

Paul suggests to his Jewish audience that sins can be washed away with water and confession! No mention of the blood of Jesus! Blasphemy!

Then Paul declares to the Jews that when he was praying in the temple he was given in a vision: “**Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles**” (v 21). A bare-faced lie!

Paul wrote in the Book of Galatians “**When it pleased God... to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem... but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus**” (Gal. 1 v 15-17)

God in Heaven had heard enough! He removed his hand of protection from Paul and immediately the Jews threw dust in the air and started beating Paul: “**Away with such a fellow from the earth!**” (v 22)

By declaring himself to be a Jew and not declaring himself to be a Christian nor giving glory to God for the forgiveness of sins paid for by Jesus on the Cross, Paul was accepting on his soul the sin of the murder of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, whom the Jews adamantly refuse to admit was a wrong.⁸

Staggering! Astounding! Unheard of! An apostle of Christ publically denying the Cross before Jews! Blaspheming the blood of Jesus! Distorting facts while making public testimony!

Matt 5 v 22

But I say unto you: Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca [Empty Head!], shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool [Moron!], shall be in danger of hell fire.

Acts 23

The Holy Spirit was no longer present in Paul’s heart. In his meeting with the High Priest he at once humbly appealed for the favor of the council: addressing them as “**brethren**” and asserting he has kept the law “**in good conscience to this day**” (v 1).

In return for this the High Priest ordered that Paul be struck on the mouth. Paul’s response is not what we would expect a Christian person to say. He defames the High Priest: “**you whitewashed wall!**”

By his defamation Paul violated the precept of Christ in **Matt 5 v 22**: right at the beginning of Acts 23. Astounding proof of our thesis: the first 260 verses of Matthew presage the first 260 chapters of the NT.

Without the presence of the Holy Spirit men can only behave like men. They can’t turn the other cheek. They can only revile when evil is done to them.

Sinful behavior proceeds from the flesh, not the Spirit. Paul can only heap sin upon sin. Keeping laws and pleasing earthly priests will not save him. The old Paul knew that. The new Paul has forgotten.

Matt 5 v 23

⁸ Hebrews 10 v 23 - 31

Therefore if you bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has ought against thee;

Acts 24

The High Priest Ananias is literally the person who offers sacrifices, gifts, to God on the altar of Herod's Temple. In Acts 24 he leaves his priestly work, his gift on the altar, and travels to Caesarea to give evidence against Paul because he "has ought against" him. By making a lawsuit Ananias proves he is unwilling to forgive his enemies. Even though as High Priest he appeals to God to forgive him his sins every day!

Matt 5 v 24

Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Acts 25

Back in Acts 24 Felix had found no fault with Paul, yet "wanting to do the Jews a favor" (Acts 24 v 27) he kept him in chains.

In Acts 25, the High Priest petitioned Festus, "asking a favor", or a 'gift', to send Paul to Jerusalem for trial so that they could "lay ambush along the road to kill him" (v 3).

But Festus brought Paul before "the altar", the judgment seat of the Romans. He found no fault with him, yet "wanting to do the Jews a favor" asked Paul if he was willing to go to Jerusalem for trial.

The Jewish High Priest and the Roman rulers were estranged in religious matters but brothers in politics: asking and receiving special privileges from each other. It seems the Roman rulers were especially eager to "be reconciled to thy brother" and Paul's life was a convenient 'gift' to offer to them.

Paul had repeatedly been brought before judges to be tried and no fault was found in him, yet he was not released. So Paul appealed to Caesar.

Paul could have confessed his sin to Jesus of denying him before men. This would have "reconciled him to his brother". But there is no record of him offering any prayers to the Lord Jesus. Paul was in chains to the Romans. But Paul was also bound in chains of judgment for his sin against the Lord Jesus.

Matt 5 v 25

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

Acts 26

Paul has two adversaries: the High Priest in Jerusalem (Ananias) and the High Priest in Heaven (the Lord Jesus). Paul doesn't know he has two adversaries because he grieved the Holy Spirit and has lost

spiritual insight and conviction of his sin. Paul's greatest adversary is the High Priest in Heaven, who pulls the strings of men's hearts and causes the actors to behave as they do.

Paul was delivered to "the judge" (first Felix, then Festus). Paul appealed to Caesar. This was a hasty decision. Paul is brought before "the officer" (King Agrippa) who would have set him free (v 32).

Another turning point in Paul's spiritual journey! He regains his Christian identity and faith!

Paul makes a clear public confession of faith in Jesus Christ to King Agrippa. He says forgiveness of sins and inheritance comes through faith in Jesus (v 15-18). He says that Christ fulfilled prophecy and rose from the dead (v 23). The result is King Agrippa is almost persuaded to become a Christian (v 27-28).

King Agrippa was not expecting this. All along up to now Paul had stoutly attested his Jewishness. Festus was shocked by the transformation: "Paul! You are out of your mind!" (v 24)

As **Matt 5 v 25** portends Paul is "cast into prison" again. The offense between Paul and the High Priest in Heaven has been dealt with, and Paul is a witness of Christ once more. The chains of judgment for denying Christ before men have gone. Paul is Spirit-filled: his old self.

How was Paul's sin forgiven so that he could receive the fellowship of the Holy Spirit once again? The High Priest in Heaven forgave his enemies. And the sin was no more.

Oh the mercies of God! While we were yet sinners Christ died for us!

Matt 5 v 26

Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Acts 27

Paul was free in his spirit. But he was now paying in the flesh for the errors he committed during the time he had grieved the Holy Spirit. The chief error of Paul was his appeal to Caesar.

Paul had put his trust in men, even in the chief of men, the pagan Roman Emperor. The storm and shipwreck of Acts 27 is a token of God's judgment for this choice. All in the ship were guilty of this sin. The Roman soldiers put their faith in the Emperor and pledged loyalty to him. The crew put their faith in pagan gods. The ship owners and the traders of Alexandria who stocked the ship with wares relied on Pax Romana – world peace from the supremacy of the Roman Emperor – and the opportunity for merchants to profit. Profit and money – the "farthing" - was the motivation of all in the ship.

A day is coming when God will bring the world trading system down. This is declared in the Book of Revelations. All the ship-owners and traders on the sea will mourn because they will lose their "uttermost farthing" (Rev. 18 v 11). By God's grace, Paul escaped with his life, and the crew-members, and the Roman soldiers, because they had heeded Paul.

Matt 5 v 27

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

Acts 28

Why did Paul leave a successful ministry in Ephesus? Why did Paul tell the elders, who loved him dearly, that he would never see them again, and go to Jerusalem? The prophet Agabus warned Paul that chains awaited him (Acts 21 v 11). Why did Paul appeal to Caesar? Paul was educated in the law. Paul knew there was no case against him. Paul also knew, prophetically, that Jews could not kill him (**Matt 5 v 18**).

Paul wrote this:

"Now I don't want you to be unaware, brethren, that I OFTEN PLANNED TO COME TO YOU BUT WAS PREVENTED until now, that I might also have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles." (Romans 1 v 13)

Wow. Paul had often planned to go to Rome - but he was prevented - from having fruit - among the Gentiles. How strange is that? The greatest apostle to the Gentiles was prevented from a fruitful in ministry in Rome.

Paul was a free man. What could have possibly prevented him? Only the Holy Spirit.

Let's look deeper into Paul's motivation to go to Rome. Was it to reach Gentiles that Paul went to Rome? What happened when Paul got to Rome? Acts 28 tells us.

The Jews welcomed him: "We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoke any evil of you" (v.20)

The Jews listened to him: "...we desire to hear from you what you think..." (v 21).

The Jews came in large numbers: "...many came to him at his lodging" (v.22) and Paul taught them "from morning till night" (v.23).

Conversely...

The Jews in Jerusalem hated Paul to death: "... the Jews banded together and bound themselves with an oath saying they would neither eat or drink till they had killed Paul." (Acts 23:12)

The Jews in Jerusalem could not abide the words out of Paul's mouth: "...they cried out and tore off their clothes and threw dust in the air" (Acts 23: 23)

So what was the real motivation for Paul to go to Rome? It wasn't to preach to the Gentiles because he had a successful ministry to Gentiles in Ephesus, in Greece, and all over Asia Minor.

God had blessed Paul with the intimate companionship of a Gentile' woman': a fellowship of Gentiles who believed in the LORD with all their heart. Paul was quick to say that Christ is the only legitimate

husband of the Church bought by His Blood: “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor. 11:2)

Paul was fulfilling the role of step-parent in preparing the Gentile Church for the wedding day where she would be presented to Christ: “I will not be burdensome to you... for children do not lay up for the parents but the parents for the children.” (1 Cor. 12:14)

The Gentile Church was never the ‘wife’ of Paul. But she like a close companion, she loved him, supported him through prayers, food and shelter, and submitted to his authority - as an apostle. It was a relationship between a man – authority figure – and a woman – a body of believers – that was as close as can be to marriage without being marriage. Paul strove in all his letters to keep that distinction clear. Jesus is LORD and Savior and Master. Paul was called to be the ‘*doulos*’ – the lowest house servant - to care for the Mistress until her Lord returns to take her away.

Paul loved the churches of the Gentiles with a tender father's love: “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls” (2 Cor. 12:15a). But they did not always love him in return: “...though the more abundantly I love you the less I am loved.” (2 Cor. 12:15b)

In his lowly position, Paul became guilty of adultery. He lusted after another ‘woman’. He broke his commitment to be the servant of the Gentile church to get that woman. Paul wanted SO BADLY for Jews to believe and follow Jesus - so he could have Christian fellowship within his own ethnic group of Hebrew speakers. He says so in the Book of Romans:

“I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my relatives according to the flesh [i.e. the Hebrews]” (Romans 9:2-3)

In Rome there were Jews who would believe if Paul arrived to speak to them: “And some were persuaded by the things that were spoken...” (v 24). Paul knew it would be so.

God resisted Paul from fulfilling that desire. The Lord had died so the Gospel would be told around the world as a testimony. He appointed Paul as an apostle to that end. It was against His will for Paul to quit preaching to the Gentiles and make a cozy home for himself among Hebrews Christians in Rome.

Paul appealed to Caesar so he would be sent to Rome under guard. Chains or no chains – he didn’t care. Eternal life or accursedness – he didn’t care. People who are in love lose their mind and do crazy things, even sacrificing themselves to fulfill their hearts desire. Jesus understood. Jesus went to the Cross to obtain the Bride he desired – the Gentile woman.

There was an important distinction. Jesus had not committed adultery. He presented himself first to the Children of Israel, but they rejected him as Messiah. On the other hand, the Gentiles had accepted Paul. So Paul’s yearning was adultery.

Matt 5 v 28

But I say unto you: That whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Romans 1

Why did Paul leave Ephesus? He didn't love the Gentiles enough to spend time with them anymore. He desired to go to Rome. This was the root of his sin. All the follies that followed: denying Christ, preaching false doctrine concerning forgiveness of sins, grovelling before the High Priest, then insulting the High Priest, then appealing to Caesar. All of the shame that Paul brought on himself by his misdeeds could be traced back to misplaced affection. Paul should have loved Jesus above all other loves. But somehow the love of Jesus left him, and he replaced it with a pining for soul mates.⁹

Paul glanced. Paul gazed. Paul stared. Finally, Paul lusted. And he was guilty of sin in God's eyes.

Romans 1 v 23 "because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened."

Romans 1 v 24 "Professing to be wise, they became fools"

Matt 5 v 29

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Romans 2

Paul fled his calling. What happened the moment Paul got to Rome?

JESUS "PLUCKED HIS RIGHT EYE" OUT...!

The Book of Acts ends when Paul got to Rome. No more miracles. A couple of short letters to Timothy. No more churches planted. Only chains. The care of the Gentiles fell on John – who moved to Ephesus. The Book of Revelations would be written by John: the apostle who leaned on Jesus' breast.

...AND "THREW IT AWAY"!

The LORD who had protected Paul and raised him up after being stoned and beaten so many times would no longer bother to keep Paul alive.

The strong suggestion in the Book of Acts is Paul only lived for two years in Rome before he died (Acts 28 v 30). The Bible does not say how Paul died. Perhaps he was martyred (so is the tradition). It is more than mildly disrespectful that his passing receives no mention at all.

⁹ Aquila and Priscilla were from Rome and they were dear to Paul during his sojourns in Greece and Asia Minor. It could have been that special relationship which sparked Paul's desire to move to Rome to experience more of the same.

The story of Paul simply stops. It didn't matter if Paul lived or died. God was done with him as an apostle and as a friend. Does that sound harsh? God takes adultery seriously. People go to Hell for it!

Jesus went to the Cross. Jesus was flayed alive. Jesus was crucified. Jesus did NOT and could NOT disobey the commandment of the Father. Jesus did NOT and could NOT take His eyes off HIS BRIDE.

Paul knew the pleasure of intimate spiritual companionship with a Gentile woman. This had been a comfort to Paul. He says concerning the Gentiles in Galatia (note the irony in these words!)

"...for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, YOU WOULD HAVE PLUCKED OUT YOUR OWN EYES, and have given them to me." (Galatians 3:1)

But Paul had despised the affection of the Beloved of Christ: Gentile believers. Did Paul imagine the Lord would not know? He would not be resentful? He would not decree a consequence for it?

Romans 2 v 5 "But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God"

Romans 2 v 6 "who will render to each one according to his deeds."

Matt 5 v 30

And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Romans 3

The mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with this request: "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." (Matt. 20:21)

Zebedee's sons were James and John. Figuratively, James the Elder, was the "right hand" of Christ. He was one of the three innermost apostles. James was present at the Mount of Transfiguration with Peter and John. James was martyred: "Now about that time Herod the King stretched out his hand to harass some from the fellowship. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword." (Acts 12 v 1-2)

After this, another James, who some say was James the Just, author of the Book of James, renowned for personal piety, became the "right hand" of Christ, the most senior apostle in Jerusalem. Accordingly, at the Jerusalem Council, the speech of James became the decision of the convocation (Acts 15).

Peter and James the Just were close associates. Upon his miraculous release from Herod's prison Peter instructed the prayer gathering to "tell James" (Acts 12:17) – no mention any other apostles by name.

When Paul first came to Jerusalem he met only Peter and James, the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19). Apparently, none of the other apostles closely associated with Peter or James.¹⁰

¹⁰ Jerome says James the Just, son of Alphaeus, and James the Lord's brother were the same. Truth is we can't say for sure.

Tradition states that James the Just was martyred in Jerusalem. This left only Peter as the sole super-apostle, available to be the “right hand” of Christ in Jerusalem. John was far away in Ephesus.

Matt 5 v 30: “if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off”. In his own eyes Peter was the “right hand” of Christ, exalted above the rest of the apostles. This was a greatly offense to the Lord in Heaven: Peter sat on Christ’s throne on earth, ruling over even the apostles, and all Christ’s believers.

The ignominious departure of Paul – the gouging out of Jesus’ “right eye” – is followed closely by the death of Peter – the cutting off of Jesus’ “right hand”. Both apostles offended Christ. Both apostles were cut off and thrown away – useless for building the Kingdom of God – of which Christ is the Head – not Peter! May every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD – Amen!

Romans 3 v 1 “What advantage is there being a Jew? And what value is there in circumcision?”

Peter was in close fellowship with James, who was the leader of the circumcision party: those who wanted to impose the Law of Moses and the rite of circumcision on Gentiles (Galatians 2 v 9-13). Peter was swayed by James and became so zealous for Judaism he studied the rabbinical teachings and at one stage considered them equal in merit to the Torah (see **Matt 5 v 9**).

All this was of no advantage to Peter. It brought him temporary prominence and ecclesiastical power. But finally, the LORD set him aside from the work of the Kingdom of God, and restricted his eternal reward, just as he had done to Paul.

Matt 5 v 31

It hath been said: Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce:

Romans 4

Abraham was childless. Sarah was barren. Sarah said to Abraham “Please go into my maid; perhaps I will obtain children by her” (Gen. 16 v 2). Hagar became pregnant but then she despised her mistress.

“...which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai that gives birth to bondage, is Hagar. Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem, which now is in bondage with her children [Jews]. But the Jerusalem above us is free, which is the mother [Sarah] of us all. Now we, brethren [Christians], as Isaac, are children of promise. But, as he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him born according to the Spirit, even so it is now” (Gal. 4:24-30)

Just as the son of Hagar, Ishmael, despised the son of Sarah, Isaac, the Children of Israel despised Jesus Christ and gave him to the Romans to be crucified on a Cross.

Abraham never divorced Hagar. According to Sarah’s instructions, and right as Mistress of Hagar, Abraham sent Hagar away, with her son. Hagar met an angel in the desert and she returned and submitted to Sarah. (Which things will be fulfilled when the Jews repent of crucifying Jesus at the mid-point of the Great Tribulation).

Romans 4 v 13 “For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his Seed through the Law but through righteousness of faith”

It is an either-or choice. Either you put your hope of righteousness in the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, or you put your hope of righteousness in keeping the Law. Those who trust in salvation by faith alone are Children of the Promise: they share in the eternal reward of Abraham: heirs of the world. Those who put their trust in the Law, shame the Cross, and demote themselves from inheritance.

However, if there are any circumcised who reject Christ (the Jews in the time Romans was written), who later repent (a portion of them will in the Great Tribulation), they will be accepted by the Father, albeit at the reduced status of a servant to the princes and princesses, the co-heirs with Christ. God has not divorced them. They can come home as a slave wife and not perish.

Matt 5 v 32

But I say unto you: That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery.

Romans 5

There is one legitimate cause for divorce: fornication. There was one sin in the Garden of Eden that brought death: eating the forbidden fruit. Eve ate the forbidden fruit, sinned, and came under judgment. But Adam did not divorce Eve. Instead he too ate the forbidden fruit and sinned.

Adam sinned to save his marriage. Adam did not act by faith. He did not believe God could generate another innocent Eve to replace the wicked Eve he loved. Nor did he want an innocent Eve. He loved the wicked Eve. In unbelief he disobeyed the commandment and came under the same judgment.

As a result of sinning to stay married to Eve all of Adam’s posterity were subject to the same judgment.

Romans 5 v 19 “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners...”

Thus, if the parents are sinners, then the children inherit sin, and the judgment of sin.

Peter denied Christ three times (Matt 26 v 69-74). Paul denied Christ (see **Matt 5 v 21**). Both were accepted back by Jesus. But their eternal inheritances were reduced to rubble.

The forefathers of the faith ate the forbidden fruit: they broke their apostolic vow to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What happened to the spiritual children of those disobedient men?

The Roman Catholics embrace Peter as their patron. Their millions of adherents are not a surprise, but a fulfillment of the Angel of the LORD’s promise to the slave wife: “**I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so they shall not be counted for multitude**” (Gen. 16 v 10). Catholics say they believe in the resurrection of Christ. But they deny Jesus is Lord by bowing to religious men. The religious men keep the parishioners under their spiritual authority in their private house (church building). Fornication!

As a slave wife to Peter, they can expect to divide his paltry eternal inheritance. Perhaps out of the pile of rubble each of the millions might receive a grain of sand. How appropriate! A rock! A memorial to Peter! Perhaps they can store the grit in their shoe: and have it grate on them for eternity.

Abel knew the way back to God. He offered the acceptable sacrifice: the Lamb of God slain since the foundation of the world. He was persecuted by his own family members for his faith. Dear reader: if you believe in Jesus but find yourself ensnared in a religious system over-ruled by religious men, flee out of it! Set aside your love for wicked Eve: the stained glass windows [*harlot's eye-shadow*] the vaulted ceilings [*harlot's bed chamber*], the holy music [*the seductress' song*]. Cast this Satanic deception aside and worship the LORD your God and serve him only!

Then, and only then, with a pure heart of faith can you claim the precious promises:

Romans 5 v 1 “... having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus”

Romans 5 v 9 “Much more then, having been justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath...”

If the believers commit spiritual fornication with their priest/paid pastor/professional minister, won't they deserve a billet of divorce? And if you dear Christian join with them, won't you be guilty of adultery? Jesus said “**whosoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery**” (**Matt 5 v 32**)

WE ARE NOT SAYING YOU WILL GO TO HELL IF YOU COMMIT SPIRITUAL ADULTERY. YOU WILL SPEND ETERNITY WITH A DIMINISHED INHERITANCE. YOU MAY SEE JESUS ONCE AT THE JUDGMENT OF THE SAINTS THEN HE MAY NEVER SHOW HIS FACE TO YOU AGAIN. IS THAT REALLY WHAT YOU WANT?

Matt 5 v 33

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself [swear falsely], but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

Romans 6

Those who have believed on the Lord Jesus receive eternal life. But, a person cannot believe Jesus is the Messiah, crucified and risen, without also surrendering to His Lordship. If you are not the servant of Christ how can you be a citizen of the Heavenly Jerusalem?

The demons know that Jesus is the Messiah. But they shudder (James 2:19) because it is impossible for them to obey his Lordship; which means they cannot be redeemed.

Romans 6 v 13 “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves as slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves...”

Romans 6 v 14 “having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

Romans 6 v 15 “and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit of holiness, and the end everlasting life”

Matt 5 v 34

But I say unto you: Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

Romans 7

Christ on the Cross took the judgment of the Law upon himself – removing the Law from being over Christians. He was raised up and now sits on “**God’s throne**” in Heaven.

No man can serve two masters. If a Christian takes an oath to obey religious law we cancel our pledge of total obedience to Christ on the throne in Heaven.

Suppose a French citizen wrote to the warden of a US penitentiary and said: ‘Please lock me up. I don’t want freedom any more, I want bondage.’ The Frenchman is not a citizen of the US, nor a resident of the US. US law can’t apply to French people who live in France. It is an absurd thing to do!

Yet Christians become members of man-made religions all the time. They earnestly follow traditions of men, regulations, festivals, and submit to elders, hireling pastors & priests, and ecumenical councils.

The Christian has been freed from the Divine Law over planet Earth. We are now citizens of the Heavenly Jerusalem. We don’t become members of man-made religions; our duty is: “**Swear not at all**”.

The body of believers is like a virgin pledged to be married to the Lord Jesus. While we wait patiently, we must maintain our chastity. Else, we commit spiritual adultery.

Romans 7 v 2 “**For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law [of marriage] as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband**”

Romans 7 v 3 “**So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress...**”

END OF THE CORRESPONDANCES

We will leave the rest of the correspondences between the SHOOTS (verses in Matthew) and the TREES (chapters) to the reader to investigate.

Blessings

servant mark