

The Sermon on the Mount - Intro

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[0 : 0 0] Bibles, please, to the very first chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew. And this morning is going to be decidedly different. It has already been different, but the difference is going to continue because my message for these next 30 minutes is going to consist primarily of a host of rhetorical questions.

And I will be asking the questions and you will be providing the answers. And I think the answers will become very obvious as we go along. And in connection with that, that is going to constitute our introduction to the subject of the Sermon on the Mount.

This is, as I have said, one of the most popular sermons in all of Scripture. It consists of Matthew 5, 6, and 7 that our Lord delivered early on in his ministry.

But unfortunately, it is also one of the most confusing to people throughout the whole world. And that does not exclude Christendom, but I emphasize that it is vastly misunderstood in many segments of Christendom.

And I think that that will become apparent as we get into it. We have not devoted any real attention to the Sermon on the Mount for probably 20 years here at Grace.

[1 : 2 4] And at that time, you'll recall, we took you through the synoptic Gospels dealing with the life of Christ chronologically. And we sandwiched between Matthew, Mark, and Luke, pulling out items that were pertinent to our Lord's ministry, including the miracles, the parables, and other incidents that occurred in those Gospels.

And I think everybody enjoyed it. But for the most part, we have not really revisited the Gospels all that much since we devoted most of our time then to ongoing in the New Testament and a verse-by-verse exposition of all that followed, beginning with the Book of Acts.

So, this is going to be introductory to the Sermon on the Mount. And if you are able to get the implications of the introduction, as I've said, the sermon in large way will become almost self-interpreting.

And you will see how and why it is that there's so much confusion and misunderstanding about the contents of the Sermon on the Mount. So, I want to begin with Matthew chapter 1 and verse 1.

And we read the Book of the Genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. To Abraham was born Isaac, and to Isaac Jacob, and to Jacob Judah and his brothers.

[2 : 5 2] Now, here's my question. Who were these people? And you are supposed to answer, they were Jews.

Okay? Who were these people? Okay. So far, we're doing very well. And they are all ancestors, direct ancestors of Jesus Christ.

All of them were Jews, except for two women in verse 5. And they were not Jews. They were Rahab, the harlot, and Ruth, the Moabitess.

However, those two non-Jewish women became Jews. Because Rahab, tradition tells us, married Joshua.

Not Joshua, but yes, Joshua. Married Joshua. Now, we do not have that authenticated in Scripture, but that is what tradition tells us. And then we know, of course, that when you come to Ruth, the Moabitess, she married Boaz.

[4 : 1 0] And Boaz and Ruth became the grandparents of David the king. Because Boaz and Ruth are going to beget Obed, and Obed will beget Jesse.

And Jesse will beget seven sons, the youngest of whom will be David the king. So, even those two women who were not Jews became Jews, or proselytes to Judaism.

Remember that wonderful, endearing passage in the book of Ruth, when Naomi expected her daughter-in-law, Ruth, whose husband had died.

She lost both of her sons and her husband, remember, in the land of Moab. And she just assumed that her daughter-in-law would do the same thing that Orpah had done. That was the girl who married her other son.

And she was going to stay there in the land of Moab with her people. But Ruth would have none of that. And Ruth made that tremendous statement. She said, That was nothing more than a tacit admission of Ruth to the embracing and adoption of the God of Naomi.

[5 : 3 0] She has become a believer in the one true God. And you know the rest of the story. So, even the two who were not actually Jews by birth became Jews by conviction when they encountered those experiences.

The Jews. The Jews and principally the one Jew, Jesus Christ, is what the great majority of the Bible is all about.

Old and New Testament. Now, most people will not have any difficulty at all with the first part of that statement.

But with the second part, they may take exception. How is it that we can say, The Jews and principally the one Jew, Jesus Christ, is what the great majority of the Bible is all about.

Old and New Testament. The only significant portion of the New Testament that is not specifically about the Jew, also contains the Jew.

[6 : 3 9] Because therein we are talking about the Pauline Epistles. And the thing that is distinctive about the Pauline Epistles is that Jew and Gentile, Jew and non-Jew, are blended together into one body.

So that the distinctive Jewishness is lost, the distinctive Gentilism is lost, and the two become amalgamated, infused into one body. So those twain, Paul tells us in writing to the Ephesians, those twain become one new man.

Jew and Gentile becoming one new man in Jesus Christ. And that is tremendously significant. You see, in the Old Testament, when things begin, particularly within the book of Genesis, if we just confine ourselves to Genesis, you don't find any Jews or even those designated as Gentiles in the book of Genesis.

Because they are just people. They are just humanity. And perhaps the only real distinction that is given to them are those that get their name from the three sons of Noah.

There are the Shemites. Today we call these the Semitic people. And there are the Hamites. Those are principally found today in Eastern Asia.

[8 : 0 5] They comprise the Oriental and the African in Africa. And then there are the Japetic people. And these are those who comprise primarily Europe, especially Western Europe.

They are more of the Caucasian race. So in Genesis chapter 10, you've got the table of nations and the scattering of these different people all throughout the world in connection with the Tower of Babel and the incident that happened there when God confounded the languages.

But up until that time, that's about the only way that they were known as descendants thereof of one of those three sons. But when you get later on into Genesis, and I'm thinking particularly now of chapter 12, chapter 11, when God calls Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, actually he was just a Semite.

But because of the trek that he made from his home in Ur of the Chaldees, over across the Jordan River, the Euphrates River and the Jordan River, and came down into what we call the Promised Land or the land of Israel today, he became known to all the locals as the stranger who came from abroad.

He was the man who came from the other side. And the word for the other side was Habiru. If we were going to spell it with the English, it would be H-A-B-I-R-U.

[9 : 37] Habiru. And that eventually morphed into the English term Hebrew. So Abraham became the first Hebrew.

And when Abraham and Sarah had their children, it was Isaac, not Ishmael, Isaac who was the son of promise, and Isaac. Isaac married Rebekah, and that produced Jacob and Esau.

And it was not Esau, but it was Jacob who became the child of promise, the one through whom the line would be carried. And Jacob had two wives.

Remember the story about Leah and Rachel? And then there were the two concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah. And between those two wives and two concubines, they had daughters, and they had 12 sons.

And one of those sons is named Judah. He is the fourth-born boy. His name was Judah. And Judah is designated as the royal tribe.

[10 : 45] That's the tribe through which Jesus, the Messiah, would come. It's also the tribe through which David, the king, would come a thousand years before Jesus.

Christ is referred to as the lion of the tribe of Judah. And that's very significant, because when the kingdom was divided, as a result of Solomon passing on, Rehoboam coming to the throne, making some foolish decisions, and the kingdom was divided into the north and south kingdom, the prominent kingdom in the north and south that remained was Judah and Benjamin.

And Judah is where the royal line was. It's where the throne was. It's where the temple was. It's where all of the sacrificial system was going on. And eventually, the name Judah, J-U-D-A-H, over the years, was shortened and morphed into the term Jew, J-E-W.

And that's where we get the name Jew from, or Jewish. So it is true to say that all Jews are Hebrews. Hebrew and Jewish is virtually the same thing. They are synonymous.

So, if you are going to be at all serious about understanding the Bible, you cannot escape the Jew.

[12 : 07] Don't even try. The Jew is very key and very germane, not only to the Old Testament, but to the New as well.

When Christ said, salvation is of the Jews, when he was talking to the woman at the well, Jesus Christ, the principal Jew, of all Jews, said that.

And he was merely stating a fact. Now, as you read on down through Matthew chapter 1, you'll come to verse 6, And to Jesse was born David the king, and to David was born Solomon, by her who had been the wife of Uriah, and to Solomon was born Rehoboam.

Who were all these people? They were Jews. Okay? All of these people were Jews. Now, let us come over to chapter 2 of Matthew.

Matthew chapter 2. Now, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, and where is that? In Israel, right?

[13 : 22] In the days of Herod the king, who was Herod the king? No, he wasn't. Caught you napping, didn't I?

He was not a Jew. That's why he was vilified and hated by those who were Jews. Because, remember, remember when Jacob and Esau were born, and Jacob became the son of promise, the one through whom the line was going to be carried, Esau became the father of the Edomites.

Now, what in the world does that mean? Well, the Edomites are going to turn out to be, their descendants are going to turn out to be, a big thorn inside of the children of Israel.

In fact, they still are today. Do you know who the present day Edomites are? They live in Jordan. Biblical Moab and Petra and that south area there.

And they are bitter enemies to this day of the Jewish people. Well, King Herod was an Edomite. He was from Idumea. He was not a Jew.

[14 : 44] And the only reason Herod was on the throne is because the emperor of Rome that was occupying Israel as a defeated people, the Caesar of Rome put Herod on the throne.

Now, how do you think the Jews in the land of Israel felt about the Romans? Well, they hated them with a passion. They were foreigners, they were idolaters, and they were there in the land of Israel, God's land, contaminating the land and lording it over us and ruling us and demanding taxes from us.

Now, if the Jews hated Rome and Caesar, what do you think they thought of Herod the king? They hated him too.

He had no business being on the throne. He was just a puppet put there by the Romans. So, let's move on through this if we may. Verse 2 or verse 1 says, In the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem.

who are these magi? You don't know, do you? That's a trick question, really.

[16 : 05] They are not identified in Scripture. They are not told. We are not told that they are Jews or that they are not Jews. But if I were to give you a wise man opinion, and I will anyway, and there's nothing you can do to stop me, I am satisfied that these magi are Jews.

That's why they're here. I want you to just use a little bit of logic now and put this together. These magi, otherwise known as the three wise men that we associate with Christmas, you know, they've come a long, long ways.

They are from the east. They are from several hundred miles away. And they came in like a camel caravan because they saw this mysterious star.

Now, I do not propose to understand about the star, about the astronomy of this, and when these things appeared, but I do know that modern day astronomers are able to calculate and go back even thousands of years and they are able to tell where various heavenly bodies were at what times and predict their movement because they move in a very methodical outlined way that God has designed.

And all I am suggesting is this. These wise men, we would call them today scientists, these wise men had plotted and charted these things out and they had seen this particular star that communicated something to them.

[17 : 38] We call it the star of Bethlehem. We do not know exactly how it appeared or where precisely it appeared, but they saw something that was a tip-off to them.

And the interesting thing about this is it's just so fascinating and I'm embarrassed to tell you that I missed this for probably the first 40 years of my Christian life. Never, never occurred to me. I just never could figure out who these guys were.

They were just a mystery. But I am convinced that they were Jews and they were from the land of Babylon east. Now, how do you suppose they got there?

Do you remember reading about the Babylonian captivity that took place beginning in 586 when Nebuchadnezzar came in and burned the city and sacked and ruined the city and burned the temple and put these Jews in irons, thousands of them, thousands of them, and led them into captivity in Babylon where they are going to be for 70 years until that generation dies off.

And these Jews lived there in Babylon and carried on a life and multiplied and the time came when God was going to terminate the captivity because the time of exile was up and he's going to bring them back to their own land and he's going to use his key figure by the name of Nehemiah to do that and Zerubbabel and they're going to come back from Babylon all the way back to Israel and rebuild the walls and rebuild the temple and reestablish worship and get business as usual underway in the land of Israel again after having been kicked out of the land for 70 years.

[19 : 27] But not all the Jews came back. Several of the Jews stayed in Babylon and do you know why they stayed? Because some of them opened up little shops had a business had families there was some intermarrying going on they established some roots they stayed not everybody came home and I am suggesting to you that many generations later we're talking about 500 years later these magi are still there in the land of Babylon and they are still Jews they are still Jews and they're still practicing their Judaism let me ask you a question who else do you think would be interested or could possibly even care that a special king of the Jews had been born apart from one being a Jew why would they even care?

They wouldn't what would be such a big deal about a king of the Jews being born? It's because they knew this king was not just a king of the Jews he's the king of the Jews and they put it together that's why they came and the logical place for them to come is the seat of government in Israel and that's Jerusalem so they come to the palace where King Herod is but Herod's not a Jew and they say where is he that is born the king of the Jews we have seen his star in the east and we have come to worship him and yes that's the word they use worship him you may honor a king you may pay your respects to a king but you don't worship a king unless it's this king this king was not just a king he was the king and they knew it the text doesn't say it but if I may take the liberty this is precisely what it means where is he the promised

Messiah because we have come to worship the Messiah they knew that the Messiah would be directly from God and he would be of God and he would be worthy of their worship wow that was a major wow to me so here in Matthew chapter 2 we have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him and when Herod the king heard it he was troubled why should he be troubled if he was a Jew but he wasn't a Jew he saw this king they were talking about as a threat as competition because he knew Herod knew he did not have any legal right to the throne he was sitting on he knew he was just a lackey of the Roman government that put him in power and he knew that everybody else knew that but you know what people want to do who hold power what they want to do more than anything else is hold on to power power is so hard to give up so hard to walk away from there's so many perks and benefits and prestige that comes with power and it has enormous appeal to the human ego oh well if you'll tell me where he is

I'll come and worship him too in a pig's eye he would we know what the worship was going to consist of when he sent a hit squad throughout the land to actually take the lives of all of the Jewish babies born within the last two years that's not exactly worship is it so as you read on gathering verse 4 gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people what people do you suppose these were Jews and who were the scribes and the chief priests who were they yeah they were Jews and they said in Bethlehem of Judea so it has been written by the prophet and who was this prophet it was Micah one of the so-called minor prophets it was Micah and what was Micah yeah he was a Jew wasn't he

Herod secretly called the magi and ascertained from them the time the star appeared and said well you know the rest of it now I want you to look at Matthew chapter 2 and verse 13 now when they had departed these are wise men behold an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream saying arise and take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and who are the Egyptians they are not Jews are they you see if you're a Jew you are a descendant from Shem son of Noah if you are an Egyptian you're a descendant from Ham so the Egyptians are Hamitic they are not Jews and we read then in well let's go over to chapter three I'm going to be out of time and not get halfway through this introduction over to chapter three now in those days

[25 : 12] John the Baptist who was John the Baptist he was a Jew and when you read in Luke's gospel chapter one you see that John the Baptist mother was Elizabeth and his father was Zacharias and Zacharias was a priest and who was Zacharias the priest he was a Jew and Elizabeth was also from the tribe of Levi and she was a Jewess and John the Baptist is a Jew and I must be careful here I'm going to get ahead of myself in verse 17 of chapter 2 we are told then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled and who was

Jeremiah a Jew if you've ever thought about trying to escape the Jews just forget it it's a study in futility you cannot escape the Jew not in the Old Testament and not in the New the Jew is the vanguard of the plan and program of God that means that the Jew is the spearhead of the vanguard of the plan and program of God and Jesus Christ the son of God is the point on the spear that's how connected this whole thing is and it is absolutely tragic that the majority of Christendom has avoided ignored denied resented the presence and influence of the Jew for literally thousands of years in chapter three of

Matthew we read in those days John the Baptist who was a Jew came preaching in the wilderness of Judea saying repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand who do you suppose John the Baptist was preaching to a Jew nobody else just the Jew and this is the one referred to verse three by Isaiah the prophet who of course was a Jew and John verse four himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt about his waist his food was locust and wild honey then Jerusalem was going out to hear him and all Judea and of course would have made all of these people Jews yeah they're all Jews the Jordan river where John is baptizing even that river was

Jewish everything here is Jewish as Jewish as you can get so come over if you will to chapter four and verse one now Jesus was led up by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil he was not Jewish he was not even human he was a fallen angelic being otherwise known as Lucifer who became Satan and the devil and Satan attempts to through the temptation three fold to derail and disqualify Jesus the Messiah before he gets his earthly ministry underway he does not succeed but he will not give up and he is still active and at it today his objective Satan's objective has always been to thwart the plan and program of

God that was thinly veiled in Genesis 3:15 about the seed of the woman and the seed of the woman that is the woman Eve will be the seed and the seed will be this one of whom Matthew is speaking here Jesus the Messiah now in chapter 4 if you will look at that chapter 4 and verse 12 when he heard John had been taken into custody Jesus withdrew into Galilee now Galilee of course is part of Israel but it's right next door to Gentile territory or non-Jewish territory because immediately to the north of course is present day Syria and Lebanon and we read that leaving Nazareth he came and settled in Capernaum which is by the sea in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali this was to fulfill that which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet we've already identified him as being a

[30 : 29] Jew and as you come on down all the way to verse 18 walking by the sea of Galilee Jesus saw two brothers Simon who was called Peter and Andrew his brother and who were these brothers yeah they were Jews you see there's just no escaping these Jews they're everywhere at least everywhere in the scripture and by the way speaking of them being everywhere they are scattered all throughout the world but out of the how many billions of people do we have in the world today is it six billion plus something like that you know the Jew does not even comprise one percent of the world's population not even one percent that means comparatively speaking there aren't very many of them but I want to tell you this the Jew in this tiny tiny percentile of humanity has made more significant enduring contributions to the whole of humanity than any other single group of people in existence that's amazing

I don't think there's any explanation for that apart from the divine initiative it is only because these were and are and always will be God's chosen people and the tragedy of this is there are a lot of Jews today who don't even know that or understand it and there are Jews who don't even believe it who deny it some would say yeah and it's that kind of talk that's gotten us in all this trouble well the Jew has been has been the recipient of enormous vilification persecution marginalizing ill treatment discrimination and that's going on for centuries and centuries and you know something most people don't really even understand the rationale for that but the scriptures make it very clear because the Jew has been assailed and assaulted for thousands of years for two basic reasons number one because of satanic involvement acknowledging and understanding and recognizing even if a lot of Christians don't the strategic nature of the Jew and the

Jew whoever he is wherever he is he doesn't know it but he's walking around with a big bullseye on his back he is a target for the antichrist he is a target for satan he is a target for those who simply do not understand the contribution that the Jew has made and how strategic he is to the plan and program of God and secondly because of their rejection of the Messiah they are committed to judicial blindness and blindness we are told by Paul blindness in part has happened unto Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles is come in that means when God is finished with adding people to the body of Christ people who have come to believe in Jesus Christ his death burial and resurrection and have trusted Christ as their savior all of these people whoever they are and wherever they are all over the world every time someone comes to faith in Christ they are placed in the body of Christ the spiritual body of

Christ whether they are Jew or Gentile bond or free male or female they are members of that one body God is building a spiritual body and when the body is complete and finished it's gone he removes it and then the Jew comes back on the front burner and will once again be a key player in the world scene in a way that he never has been and there will be 144 thousand of these Jews who will have come to faith in Christ as their own Messiah after the church has been removed and they will proclaim the gospel of the kingdom throughout the whole world and this gospel of the kingdom by the way is the very heartbeat of the sermon on the mount because it is mentioned so many times and if you don't understand what the gospel of the kingdom is and what it entails you're really at a tremendous disadvantage because it is such a key thing when John the Baptist came on the scene he became known as the one who was the forerunner of the

Messiah the one who introduced the Messiah and John says I am not he but he who comes after me I baptize with water but he who comes after me is mightier than I and he will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire and we knew that of course to be Jesus Christ so John is announcing the kingdom of heaven is at hand because the king is just about to appear and when Christ did appear what was his message same as John's the kingdom of heaven is at hand all of this is about this kingdom that's what the Sermon on the Mount is all about that lays the background for it and once you understand that you'll be able to see the perspective of the Sermon on the Mount and why it is not to us even though it is for us the Psalms and Genesis and Leviticus none of those none of those are to us but they are all for us and there is a huge difference a huge difference if you understand the distinction that is made in the scriptures between Jew and Gentile you will understand that throughout the

[36 : 43] Old Testament and up to and including the four gospels all Jewish all Jewish don't try to Christianize them oh of course there are all kinds of principles that we adopt from them absolutely there are principles in the Proverbs that we adopt there are principles in the Psalms that we adopt that are cross dispensational they are applicable for any and all dispensations but to practice them is different from principalizing them and we will make that distinction as we go along the truth of God is eternal and timeless but it is not all applicable to us and the most obvious example of that is one that I've used so many times I've probably worn it out but none says it's so clear as this and that's animal sacrifice why don't we sacrifice animals you read the

Bible and it says you shall bring a heifer you shall bring a calf you shall bring this you shall bring that why aren't you bringing those you say well that's not that's not for us now that's that was for them back then that was for the Jews but that's not for us now well you're right but why isn't it God hasn't changed but God's methodology has changed and God's plan and program is undergoing transition and the whole burden of the scriptures is to see the unfolding of the plan and program of God in a methodical ongoing transitional way so that we are not locked into any one period but there is a development of doctrine and a progression of doctrine from Genesis to Revelation and if you try to make it all static and apply all of it to your own life it will drive you up the wall you cannot do that so this is the first half of our introduction to the Sermon on the Mount and I just got through the introduction of the introduction and in our next session we will continue this but thank you for your participation and there may be a question we're running a little bit on time but by the way if there are any ladies who want to do anything back there regarding the food feel free to excuse yourselves and we'll just have a little brief Q&A; time here while you do that and they'll be uncovering or plugging in or doing whatever they need to do for a bunch of hungry troops who've been for the last 40 minutes talking about the Jews so and I trust by the way I trust that these tube steaks are kosher thank you Ron we'll have that in just a moment any question or comment before we dismiss yes well I think it's pretty well established historically and you can find this in secular history by the way you don't you a good encyclopedia will reveal that Herod was an Idumean from the land of Idumean which is present day southern southern Jordan this is in the area where

Petra is and Basra and down in that area it's very well established I think you can find that in secular history as well Herod the king and by the way this guy Herod he was a really extraordinary man he was an absolute genius he really was architecturally and design like he was just he was brilliant he would have he would have been an outstanding architect of his day but he was as evil and wicked as he was brilliant and in his latter years he suffered from an extreme case of paranoia and lots of times people who sit on the throne they never sleep well at night they're always looking over their shoulder because somebody's always ready to do you in and the common saying when Herod was in his latter years you're a lot better off being Herod's dog than Herod's son because if you were his son he might just assume that you are plotting to bump him off and take his place and Herod was known for putting some of his closest family members to death just because he suspected them not because he had any evidence he just suspected them so you could be easily eliminated by Herod but he was a brilliant evil wicked man he was the one that ordered the execution of the innocents and by the way there are multiple

Herods in the Bible there's Herod Antipas and Herod the Great and Herod Philip and different Herods so you have to keep your Herods straight too any other questions or comments well I want to close this with a special video many of you from grace have already seen it but it's my favorite group and it's my favorite song and I'm going to let that be our benediction but I just before we play it I want to I'm going to return a word of thanks for the food okay let's pray thank you so much father for what you've been pleased to reveal in scripture and we trust that we have given it an honest and a straightforward treatment and that you will offer any correction to the hearts and minds of those who may have received anything from me that was not in keeping with your truth thank you for the meal that has been prepared for us and for all who've contributed to it and thank you for being able to fellowship one with another around the table of food your gracious provision we bless you and thank you for it in Christ's name amen