

## A SERIES ON WHAT JESUS BELIEVED AND TAUGHT — AND LIVED

### fourth lesson

#### Beyond “the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees”

- I. Jesus’ inversion of blessed and cursed flew in the face of those in charge of the religion of Israel, the scribes and Pharisees (S & Ps)—as well as of the common people under their influence. They had succeeded in identifying God’s order (the Law and the Prophets) with man’s order, “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men . . . Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition.” (Mark 7:5–13)
- II. Hence, that the “cursed” of man’s order could, as dwellers in the kingdom of the heavens (*ten basileian ton ouranon*), be the salt of the earth and the light of the world—a position carefully reserved by the S & Ps for their own best practitioners—could only mean that Jesus was out to destroy the law and the prophets!
- III. Jesus’ reply is that only by going beyond or surpassing—not by setting aside—the “okayness” (*dikaioynē*) of the S & Ps can we come into contact with God’s governing from the heavens and thus become able to fulfill the law by becoming the sorts of persons God intended us to be. God’s kind of okayness is one of inner personality or heart, the kind of person.
- IV. Only trusting the king and the kingdom transforms the heart, making the kind of rightness (okayness) God has the kind we have. “Seek ye above all the rule of God and the kind of okayness He has.” (Matt 6:33) “For they [the S & Ps] being ignorant of God’s okayness, and going about to establish their own okayness, have not submitted themselves unto the okayness of God.” (Romans 10:1-10—study this whole passage on okayness and its kinds and sources) We “believe unto righteousness.” (Romans 10:10) Our acting in trust (without which there is no belief) meets the reality of the kingdom, and its life increasingly fills and transforms our souls. Our hearts, from which evil comes (Mark 7:23), is made good. (Matt 12:33, Luke 6:43-45)
- V. What are the marks of S & Ps “righteousness”?
  - (1) It seeks the honor that comes from men, not God. (John 5:44, Matt 23:5-12)
  - (2) Thus bringing bondage to appearance and to the opinions of others, and to self-justification. (Luke 16:15; Luke 11:46; Proverbs 29:25)
  - (3) It “says and does not.” (Matt 23:3-4)
  - (4) It murders “in a good cause.” (Luke 11:50-51)
  - (5) It keeps people out of the kingdom of God (Luke 11:52), and turns it “converts” into “twofold more the child of hell” than are the S & Ps themselves. (Matt 23:13-15)
  - (6) It is covetous and wealth seeking, serving mammon. (Luke 16:13-15)
  - (7) It trust in itself that it is righteous and despises and condemns others. (Luke 18:9)

AND MOST ESPECIALLY:

(8) Defines okayness in terms of externals, cleans the “outside of the cup and plate; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.” (Luke 11:39) etc.

VI. Jesus illustrates kingdom okayness (of the heart) over against S & Ps (“ye have heard”) okayness. (Matt 5:21- 7:27) Remember: He teaches against prevailing false assumptions.