

The Sermon on the Mount: A Reformed Exposition

Chapter 38: The Reaction of the Multitude

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And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes (Mt. 7:28-29).

With the sermon now completed, Matthew turns his attention to the response of the audience. The expression “and it came to pass” (*kai egeneto*) is a Hebrew way of describing a noteworthy historical event. Here it has the sense: “the result [of the sermon] was this.” The word translated “people” (*hoi ochloi*) means “multitudes.” It is the same word used in 5:1 (“and seeing the multitudes”) and serves to tie the whole narrative together. It is interesting that the very multitudes who were our Lord’s secondary audience (in 5:1 we are told “His disciples came to Him.” Jesus was focusing on His disciples, yet the multitudes had followed Him up the mountain also) become the focus of Matthew’s attention and not just the inner circle. The multitudes had followed Christ because of His miracles and fame (Mt. 4:23-25) and probably knew very little about Him or His teaching. He looked like an ordinary peasant, had no formal training at all and had no connection to the religious establishment. Matthew focuses on their response as a way to tell his readers that Jesus is special, unique and critically important. Also, as a Jew writing primarily to a Jewish audience, the evangelist wants his audience to recognize the radical and obvious difference between the Savior and the scribes. This epilogue is a very clever way of saying, “You have heard the sermon, now consider the One who preached it.” There was never a greater sermon than this because there never was so great a preacher. Before we look at these verses in detail, there are some important introductory matters to consider.

First, the conclusion demonstrates that this sermon was delivered at one time, before the same audience, and is not a compilation of sayings as most modern scholars assert. While it is possible that more was said on this occasion, our Lord certainly did not say less. The fact that certain portions are found in Luke’s sermon on a plain and in other places in the gospels simply proves that Jesus preached similar messages to different audiences.

Second, although we are told that the crowds were amazed at Christ’s doctrine and why they were astonished, there is nothing about how many people were converted to the Savior or how many committed themselves to Him. “We do not hear of any. Divine truth, even when preached to perfection, will not of itself affect the heart to conversion. The most overpowering *authority* produces no obedience unless the Holy Ghost subdues the hearer’s heart.”¹ “Note, it is possible for people to admire good preaching, and yet to remain in ignorance and unbelief; to be astonished, and yet not sanctified.”² Given the size of the church on the morning of Pentecost forty days after the resurrection, it is likely that few souls were saved on this occasion. Moreover, Matthew’s concern in this narrative is not to record conversions, but to point men to the divine and Messianic authority of Jesus.

¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 85.

² Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 5:99.

Third, this conclusion should not be skipped over as a minor afterthought, for the question of authority in religious, ethical and philosophical matters is critical. Anyone can come up with some new teaching and make all sorts of claims. The great and deciding thing on whether or not we should listen to what someone says and obey it is: by what authority does he make such a claim? If a person appeals to his imagination, or religious tradition or some mystical mumbo jumbo, then following such a person would be irreligious, unscriptural and irrational. But what if a person had ultimate authority, the authority of God Himself? As we look at this epilogue, we will see that Jesus had an authority and sanction behind His preaching that was unique because it was intrinsic to His own person as the Son of God and Messiah. Consequently, this conclusion serves as an exclamation point to an amazing sermon. It implicitly teaches that we must heed His teachings; there is no way to circumvent sections with which we may disagree. We must consider the Preacher and bow the knee before Him.

This point is especially crucial when we see the widespread admiration for this sermon by people who reject the authority of the Preacher. Many people including modernists, atheists, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and even communists will say how much they admire and respect the Sermon on the Mount. They will speak of its message as the very pinnacle of religious and social ethics. But when it comes to the Preacher, they do not accept what the sermon teaches about Him. With their unregenerate hearts, they look at the sermon through unbelieving, humanistic glasses. They look at Jesus as a great man or a wonderful teacher or some kind of prophet. But they fail to grasp the authority of the Savior which is so clearly displayed in this sermon. They fail to understand that the radical discipleship that the Savior demands is intimately connected to His person and work. They do not comprehend the fact that, if Christ did not have the incredible and awesome authority that He claimed, then His sayings are nothing more than human opinions such as those spoken by Confucius or Buddha. Without His intrinsic authority as the Son of God, all the teachings that come from Him would be merely human opinion. One could take them or ignore them. But once God opens our eyes to exactly who this Preacher was, the call to radical discipleship makes perfect sense. To those who have been given ears to hear this teaching, there is no other choice.

Also, the fact that Jesus has this unique authority in His own person and office as Mediator is important in a time when states increasingly seek total jurisdiction over man. When governments adopt macro-evolution, secular humanism and practical atheism, they inevitably move toward statism and totalitarianism. They do not believe in a transcendent God who reveals to man ethical absolutes, so they arrogate to themselves all power and bow to no one. They, at best, view religion as a department of state or as a corporation of fools that need to be regulated by the state. They view moral laws as flexible, changing and evolving and thus the concepts of liberty and the rule of law are progressively being redefined in terms of socialism and antinomianism. But what the state illegitimately claims, Christ has. Total power and authority resides with Him and, thus, all power on earth is limited, prescribed and resides under the feet of the Messiah. The modern state's claim of total jurisdiction is both immoral and blasphemous. The Savior is the only ultimate source of moral laws; and, the family, church and state are obligated to kiss the Son and administer and apply His laws within their respective spheres. Although we have primarily limited our study of this sermon to personal piety and the church, we must not fail to recognize the incredible implications of Jesus' claims on every area of life. "Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him" (Ps. 2:10-12).

As we look at this conclusion, there are two things we need to examine: the impact of the sermon on the hearers and the reason for that impact.

The Effect of the Sermon

In verse 28 we are told that “the crowds were astonished at his teaching.” The verb “were astonished” (*exeplesonto*) is a compound word using *ek*, “out of,” and *plesso*, “strike.” It literally means that “they were struck out of themselves.” A modern equivalent would be they were “struck out of their senses,” or that the message “blew their minds.” “In English it is very difficult, perhaps impossible, to reproduce the exact flavor of the picturesque verb used in the original to describe the people’s state of heart and mind. In addition to ‘were astounded’ the following have been offered: ‘were awed,’ ‘amazed,’ ‘filled with amazement,’ ‘dumbfounded,’ ‘astonished.’ The Amplified New Testament has ‘were astonished and overwhelmed with bewildered wonder.’ These renderings are all very helpful.”³ The verb tense used (the imperfect) indicates that their amazement lasted for quite some time. They had sat mesmerized beneath the feet of the Savior. They had been perfectly silent throughout the whole sermon. But, when our Lord became silent, they were filled with amazed wonderment as they contemplated what they had just heard. After nearly two thousand years we are amazed also: “what incredible doctrine and authority.”

To be overwhelmed with astonishment was a common reaction to Jesus’ ministry. The people were astonished by our Lord’s doctrine. They were not only amazed by this sermon, but also by His teaching on the difficulty of the rich entering the kingdom (Mt. 19:25; Mk. 10:23, 26); the resurrection of the dead as it relates to marriage and the afterlife (Mt. 22:33); and Jesus’ doctrine in general (Mk. 6:2; 11:18; Mt. 13:54). The crowds were amazed by the novelty of what they heard. They asked, “What new doctrine is this?” (Mk. 1:27). They had never heard anything like it. Christ’s knowledge and interpretation of Scripture, as well as His inspired pronouncements about Himself and work, were on a completely different level than any teaching anyone had heard before. They were astonished by His understanding. They asked, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?” (Mt. 13:54; Mk. 6:2; cf. Lk. 2:47). They were amazed by His ability to answer exceptionally difficult questions with ease. When the Pharisees sent officers to arrest the Savior, they returned without Him and said, “No man ever spoke like this Man” (Jn. 7:46). Even the Redeemer’s hardened enemies “marveled” at His answers (Mt. 22:22). They were amazed by His power. He could work miracles at will and even raise the dead (cf. Mk. 1:27; 5:43; 6:2; Lk. 5:9; 8:56; etc.). They were astonished by His authority. The demons cowered before Him and obeyed His voice (Mk. 1:27; Lk. 4:32). Moreover, He taught with a divine and royal authority that no man in history ever has had or ever will have. The people recognized that there is something very different about this Jesus of Nazareth.

The Reason for the Astonishment

In verse 29 Matthew gives us the reason for their amazement: “For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” There are two aspects to the reason. The content of the teaching and the way He expressed Himself was fully authoritative. Jesus spoke with an

³ William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 382.

authority that was extraordinary and unlike other men. Moreover, He did not teach like the scribes. The scribes' method of teaching was primarily to quote from various expositions of the law and expositors that existed in the great body of Jewish traditions. We will consider the teaching method of the scribes and then we will consider the authoritative features of Jesus' teaching.

The scribes were the teachers and scholars on the law. Here they are described as "their scribes" (*gramateis auton*) which is equivalent in meaning to "scribes of the people" in Matthew 2:4. They were the "experts" on the Jewish religion and, for the most part, were greatly respected by the people. There were a number of things that set them apart from Christ in the content and manner of teaching. First, they were really not interested in studying and teaching God's law itself as it had been revealed it to Moses; but, instead, they focused their attention on all the various traditions surrounding the law. They would discuss the decisions of Jewish tribunals on a matter. They would quote and analyze the teachings and traditions of notable rabbis from the past. They avoided a simple, careful exegesis of the Old Testament Scriptures and instead framed their opinions on a synthesis of past traditions. Consequently, they were always quoting famous dead rabbis as the source of their authority. Scripture was largely lost under their appeal to past traditions. "All of this appears plainly from the Talmud; e.g., 'R. Eliezar boasted that he had never said anything which he had not heard from his teacher.'"⁴ An appeal to tradition, which changes and evolves over time, is not genuinely authoritative because human traditions are fallible and often wrong. In fact, their traditions had superseded the law and had rendered it null and void (Mt. 15:1-9; Mk. 7:1-13). There is no comparison between a supposed human authority and the authority of God speaking in Scripture. Jesus "spoke 'with authority' (Mt. 5:18, 26; etc.); for his message came straight from the very heart and mind of the Father (John 8:26); hence also from his own inner being, and from Scripture (5:17; 7:12; cf. 4:4, 7, 10). They were constantly borrowing from fallible sources, one scribe quoting another scribe. They were trying to draw water from broken cisterns. He drew from Himself, being 'the Fountain of living waters' (Jer. 2:13)."⁵

Second, their obsession with past traditions led to a corrupt and evasive style of teaching. They avoided focusing on the simple weighty matters of the law and instead concentrated on such matters as the tithing of mint and cumin, how many steps a man could walk on the Sabbath and the ceremonial washing of pots and pans. They would have endless debates about unimportant matters and would ramble on and on about trivialities. Consequently, the people were shocked by the teachings of Jesus, which focused on heavy matters such as life, death, the kingdom of God and eternal destruction. Also, they were not used to heart-piercing applications that demanded a complete and uncompromising decision. The people grew up hearing dry, dull, lifeless sermons in their synagogues. They had been bored by unbiblical, cold, disjointed and dead preaching for years on end. Then along comes this unassuming, humble, uneducated man who "spoke with the authority of truth, the reality and freshness of the morning light and the power of God's Spirit."⁶ His preaching was radically different and superior, for He spoke with the authority of truth. There was a wonderful simplicity, perspicuity and majesty of speech to our Savior's preaching.

Third, whereas the scribes would go on and on with arguments from former rabbis Jesus would prove His propositions by the brilliant use of logic and plain, irrefutable examples and

⁴ John A. Broadus, *Commentary on Matthew*, 172.

⁵ William Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 383.

⁶ Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 1:63.

illustrations. The scribes simply expected people to accept the authority of their traditions as though antiquity somehow had the ability to transform arbitrary, irrational nonsense into truth. But, Christ spoke on His own authority and also often demonstrated the reality of what He said by pointing to irrefutable examples from nature and everyday life. Could anyone deny the beauty of wildflowers after a rain or the love a father has for His son? People can disagree with what the Nazarene has to say; but they can never prove that what He says is false or non-binding. Given our Lord's marvelous teaching, they can never give an adequate reason for unbelief. Jesus' teachings are supremely authoritative and render all men without excuse. Consequently, a person who rejects the Savior can only defend his unbelief by lying about Christ, distorting the truth and slandering His good name. Such people's damnation on the final day will be deserved.

Christ's Astonishing Authority

Having briefly noted the defective teaching of the scribes, we need to look at the aspects of our Lord's sermon that would have dumbfounded a first century Jewish audience. A brief survey of the sermon reveals many amazing authoritative features. We will see statements that presuppose a unique authority, some that clearly imply it and others that are explicit and unmistakable.

The first teaching that points to a unique authority is found in Matthew 5:12, where Jesus says that men will be blessed for being persecuted and slandered "for My sake." If Christ were simply a teacher or a prophet like Isaiah, we would expect Him to say, "Blessed are you when you are persecuted for God's sake or the kingdom of God's sake." But, no, He says "for My sake." Men ought to be willing to be slandered, beaten and even killed in the service of Jesus Christ. If the Nazarene were only a man and nothing more, such a statement would be blasphemous and exceptionally egotistical. However, He was not only man, but God of very God. As the Son of God and Messiah, He has the authority to demand total devotion and service to Himself. Once again, we see the absurdity of separating the person of Christ from the message of the sermon. If the Savior was not God's only begotten Son, then He was a megalomaniac, a madman who deserved to be arrested. But perish the thought; He was exactly who He claimed to be.

As we read a little further, we see another astonishing claim. Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Mt. 5:17). This is an amazing statement. Our Lord says that He came. This is not a reference to a local visit to Galilee or Capernaum, but to a coming into this world. His life and ministry was not like that of Moses or one of the prophets, for they were born into this world like everyone else. Christ, however, came from another place. He existed in the bosom of the Father eternally and then came from heaven into the world of men. He was incarnated and born in Bethlehem. This teacher is of one essence with the Father and His words carry the weight of divine authority. People who were paying close attention to our Lord's words would have been perplexed by Christ's reference to coming. It was implicitly a reference to His divine nature and Messianic office.

His statement about fulfilling the law and the prophets is also astonishing. He is not simply a prophet or teacher, but is the pinnacle and fulfillment of the whole Old Testament. He is the axis around which the whole Word of God rotates. He is the fulfillment of the great promise that runs from Genesis through Malachi. No wonder the first recorded words of His ministry are, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel" (Mk.

1:15). The Sermon on the Mount presents Jesus as the Messiah who was to come, the King of the Jews, the One of whom it is promised that His kingdom will have no end (Dan. 7:14). He is the One to whom all nations will bow and serve (Ps. 22:27-28; 72:8-11; 86:9; Mal. 1:11; etc.). He is the promised suffering servant who will redeem His people by His own sacrificial death. People, who say they like the Sermon on the Mount because it presents Jesus as just a humble teacher and no more, are completely blind to what it actually teaches. It teaches His incarnation and His great role as the Messiah-King over all.

Moreover, the statement that He came to fulfill the law must not be restricted to prophetic fulfillment. It also means that Jesus came to obey the law in exhaustive detail in thought, word and deed during His whole life. Christ here claims what no man has ever or will ever accomplish—sinless perfection. What the first Adam failed to do and what we all miserably fail to do, Christ—the second Adam—did. If people understood what the Savior was saying, they would see that the Nazarene was no ordinary human being. Here was someone born without original sin. Here was someone who came to earth to undo the consequences of Adam's disobedience by His perfect obedience. Here is a man who came to fulfill the covenant of works and all the positive requirements of the law for us. As Paul says, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Rom. 10:4). "For by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). And not only that, the Redeemer's obedience led to the cross of Calvary where He paid the penalty for sin in the place of His people. He met all the obligations of God's holy law for His people with regard both to precept and penalty. He achieved a perfect redemption by His sinless life and sacrificial death.

Christ's awesome authority is seen as He begins to teach on the moral law and corrects the false interpretations and traditions of the scribes. In refuting false teachers we would expect someone to appeal directly to the authority of God or the Old Testament Scriptures. But the common prophetic formulas such as "The LORD says," or "Thus says the LORD," are never used. Instead, Jesus repeatedly appeals to His own name and authority often using the emphatic assertion, "Assuredly, I say unto you" (Mt. 5:18, 26; 6:2, 5, 16); "I say to you (Mt. 5:20, 22, 28, 32, 34, 44; 6:25); or "I tell you" (Mt. 5:39). Our Lord does not simply present Himself to the people as a better interpreter of Moses than the scribes and Pharisees (although He certainly was the best interpreter who ever lived); but, as the lawgiver Himself who is refuting the scribal corruptions applied to *His own law*. The law that He Himself gave to Moses! Christ spoke with a clear confidence and calm absoluteness as "a Teacher who has no shade of doubt as to His hearers of the message which He brings."⁷ Consequently, His teaching on the law was non-negotiable. Even His bare statement had absolute authority; His words were royal, heavenly words. Even if what He said contradicted several generations of rabbinic traditions, the people had to immediately submit to His authority, for every word He spoke was infallible truth.

Therefore, with perfect confidence, He can stand before the crowds and tell them plainly that their religious leaders had it wrong with regard to the law. They missed the fact that it applies to the heart as well as outward acts and they often circumvented the truth by their misinterpretations and glosses. Our Lord did not hesitate to rebuke the whole religious establishment of the nation. Here is God come to earth to correct and instruct His erring people. He did not merely speak in the name of God, but as God. This type of authoritative teaching demanded a response, for in rejecting the Savior's words one rejects God's own words. No

⁷ Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 118.

wonder the people were dumbfounded. The light of the world was before them, the final spokesman of God (Heb. 1:1-2). Would they bow to this authority or remain in darkness?

His authority is exceptionally explicit when He warns the crowds of the danger of a false profession. “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Mt. 7:21). Although the term “Lord” is sometimes used like our word “sir,” in this passage it means much more. Here the Savior is addressed as one who must be obeyed (see Lk. 6:46); as one in charge of the final judgment. “Thus Jesus saw himself as more than a teacher, giving advice which people might or might not heed at their discretion; he was their master, issuing commandments, expecting obedience and warning them that their eternal welfare was at stake. Clearly, in all this Jesus was no ordinary rabbi.”⁸

When our Lord spoke of the final judgment, He placed Himself on God’s throne as the very One who has the power to cast people into hell: “I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’” (Mt. 7:23). This is an astounding statement. Every person’s eternal destiny is said to hinge on their relationship to Christ. This presupposes His divinity. If one is not known or loved by this humble Man from Nazareth, then he is rejected by God forever. Moreover, the eternal curse that Jesus pronounces is *not* simply being cast out of God’s present, but eternal banishment from His presence: “Depart from Me.” The very essence of hell is to not have love, fellowship and communion with Christ. Any man, whether the greatest of prophets, apostles, or holiest of the saints could never speak in this manner without blaspheming. But our Lord spoke this way all the time. If we do not have a relationship with Jesus, then we will suffer the worst fate possible—eternal separation from the Savior in hell. Now we understand why Christ is called the pearl of great price (Mt. 13:46), the rose of Sharon (Song 2:1) and the great hidden treasure which will cause a man to sacrifice all to get possession of it (Mt. 13:44). Thus, we see, once again, that the ethics of the sermon cannot be separated from embracing Jesus as Lord and Savior.

In describing this scene on the final day, our Lord gives Himself the role that every Jew had been taught belonged solely to God.⁹ He sits on the great white throne and examines all the evidence, all the works, even the secrets of men (Rom. 2:16). Then He is the one who renders the verdict. Does not this scene presuppose the Redeemer’s omniscience? Does it not assume the divinity of Christ and His exaltation as Mediator after His resurrection on the third day (cf. Mt. 25:31, 32; Jn. 5:27; Ac. 10:42; 17:31; Phil. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:1)? Jesus tells the crowds that a time is coming when all power and authority in heaven and on earth will be His (Mt. 28:18); that He will ascend to the right hand of God and sit on His throne (Ac. 2:34-35). “There is an original, supreme, judicial power; and there is also a judicial power derived, given by commission. Christ, as God, hath the first together with the Father.”¹⁰ Our Lord would elaborate on the significance of this teaching later in His ministry: “For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not

⁸ John R. W. Stott, *Christian Counter Culture*, 217.

⁹ “According to the Rabbinic view it is exclusively God who will judge the world...In Rabbinic literature there is no passage which unambiguously places the judgment of the world in the hand of the Messiah” (H. L. Strack and P. Billerback, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* [Munich, Germany, 1922-28], 2:465, as quoted in Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 315).

¹⁰ Burgen as quoted in J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: John*, 1:289.

honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” (Jn. 5:21-23). Before the Savior, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Jehovah (cf. Phil. 2:10, 11).

If the Holy Spirit had opened the crowd’s eyes, would they not have immediately have begun to worship Him and dedicate their lives to Him? If Jesus was not the Son of God and Messiah, then this teaching would have been the delusion of a madman, an egomaniac of the highest degree. But, it is all true. The Savior proved it with the great signs that He did and with the ultimate sign—His resurrection from the dead. Given this kind of teaching and authority, it is incredible that the crowds did not become His disciples at once. But, tragically, because of their depraved hearts, men love darkness rather than light. “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (Jn. 12:48).

As our Lord drew His applications and sermon to a close, He makes the startling assertion that every person’s final destiny is based on what they do with His sayings (Mt. 7:24-27). If we hear them but do not obey them, then we are doomed to everlasting destruction. Unlike the prophets, Jesus makes no attempt at assuring His audience that He is merely relaying information that He received by a vision, dream, voice or divine inspiration. His words have the same authority as the Ten Commandments spoken by God in Exodus 20. Christ doesn’t merely quote or interpret Scripture, but sets forth absolute truths from Himself. He is the source for truth, meaning and ethics. He is the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us “full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14). Moses gave the people the law that He received from God, “but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (Jn. 1:17). That is why He could say, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14:6). In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). Truth cannot exist without the Redeemer and it cannot be truly known without His Spirit. He is the divine Word who is the finality of revelation (Heb. 1). He is the light in which we see light (Ps. 36:9; cf. 119:105). Consequently, our eternal destiny depends on what we do with His teachings which describe what we are to believe concerning Him and how we are required to live our lives. He is the eternal Son of God and Messianic King who has authority to issue commands; demand an unwavering devotion and obedience; and who, as the final judge, can threaten eternal sanctions for lawlessness. It is obvious that there can be no neutrality regarding these amazing claims. The common idea among modern scholars that the Sermon on the Mount reveals only a humble Jewish rabbi who was setting forth His own view of ethics—that the Nazarene was simply setting forth His own unique interpretation of Judaism—is completely off the mark. His amazing claims about Himself cannot be separated from His ethical teaching. To attempt to do so is dishonest. Modernist scholars live in a fantasy land of their own creation. They are false prophets who want to strip the sermon of the gospel and the rich Christology we find throughout the New Testament.

The authority of Jesus presented in this sermon shows us that we can never make too much of Christ in our lives. We can never love Him too much or obey Him too much or worship Him too much. He is the Alpha and Omega of Christianity. He is the source of all life and the fountain of all virtue. Jesus is not just another rabbinic teacher. His authority is not founded upon the tradition of the fathers. He is not just a great expositor of the Torah. This Nazarene has an authority that resides in Himself. He is the most unique, remarkable man who ever lived. Only one time in all of human history did God come and live among men. The Savior is fully God and man in one person. That is why He can make such totally incredible exclusive claims. It is why He can present Himself as the foundation for all truth, justice and meaning. His authority is absolute, while all earthly authorities are purely ministerial. Because He is God, equal in power

and authority with the Father, and the exalted-glorified Mediator, He is worthy of all obeisance, honor and obedience. He that is one with the Father, who is coming to judge the quick and the dead, tells us how we must live our lives if we are to be His disciples and enter the kingdom of heaven. Consequently, we must listen very carefully to what He says and respond to all of it with a fervent, serious dedication. Matthew the evangelist wants us to see this authority so that we would bow the knee to Christ by believing His gospel and obeying His precepts.

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