

MATTHEW: THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

LESSON 32 – HOPE IN THE NATIONS— MATTHEW 12:15-21

Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all and ordered them not to make him known. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

After the controversy about the Sabbath day, Jesus withdraws from the conflict with the Pharisees. He continues on with healing the people following him, and he also orders the crowd to not make him known.

Matthew 12:15-16

Jesus withdraws from opposition. This retreat is informed and deliberate.

1. What does it mean that Jesus was “aware of this”? What about the confrontation in 12:1-14 is different than just questioning and debate?
2. Jesus refrains from conflict that would escalate into a final confrontation with his enemies. The work of Jesus is not just to be in conflict with his enemies. What does Jesus desire to accomplish (Matthew 1:21)?

Jesus orders the crowds not to make him known. Only after his earthly ministry has been accomplished does Jesus issue his great commission (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus will submit himself to the power of his enemies and die as a sacrificial payment for our sin.

Matthew 12:17-21

Jesus quotes from Isaiah 42. This quote diverges from the LXX, the commonly used Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. One consideration is that this is Matthew’s own translation of the Hebrew text or quoting Jesus’ own translation. This is the longest Old Testament quotation in Matthew’s Gospel. Two details to see in Jesus’ use of this quote: 1) Jesus is the one through whom God will bring forth his justice. 2) Jesus will bring forth God’s justice for the lowly and in a lowly way.

Isaiah 42 – Who is the servant? A people or an individual?

3. Read Isaiah 41:8-10; 44:1. How does this passage show the servant is the people of Israel as God’s servant?

4. The personal language of the servant not crying out or raising his voice (Is. 42:2) invites us to identify this servant as an individual. What other indications in 42:1-6 point to an individual rather than the whole people of Israel?
5. The servant acts on behalf of God's purposes for both Israel and the nations. Genesis 12:1-3 speaks of the vocation of Abraham's descendant. What has God promised to do through Abraham's descendant?
6. This passage from Isaiah points ahead to a coming savior for Israel and the nations. According to Matthew 12:18 – what has this servant come to announce?
7. How does the healing ministry of Jesus fulfill the promises shown in this citation?
8. Matthew shows the connection between Jesus' healing and his establishment of God's justice. What does this tell us about justice?
9. How does Matthew 12:19 help us understand Jesus' pulling away from the confrontation with the Pharisees?
10. Who does Jesus go forward for as the servant of God?
11. Justice for the nations means bringing forgiveness to the sinner and then bringing this new creation into a new kind of fellowship. How does hope get shared in this kind of fellowship?