

Session 28 – THE KINGDOM OF GOD – SERMON ON THE MOUNT 2

I. THE KINGDOM AND TORAH (*Matthew 5:17-20*)

- A. The word *torah* simply means “teaching, instruction.” It is usually connected with the root YRH which means, “to point, direct, teach.” Inasmuch as the word commonly refers to “the Torah of Moses” and “the book of the Torah of Moses” (the Pentateuch), one may think of the Torah as “law” in the sense of the covenant community’s “constitution”. That is certainly the dominant meaning of the word in the Hebrew Bible. Along with that concept, however, was the understanding of the Torah not only as a body of rules, but as an embodiment of wisdom (cf. Deut 4:1–8) which may be universally recognized for its effect on humanity (GREENBERG 1990).¹
- B. The *Old Testament* [First Covenant(s)] is composed of three major sections in the Hebrew Bible: Torah, Prophets, and Writings. This is what Jesus is referring to in Matthew 5:17-20 when He says, “the Law [and] the Prophets.” Addressing any possible argument against what He was saying or would say, Jesus reads the people and the thought that somehow He had come to *abolish* or end the *Torah*, specifically the Torah given by Moses. He gave that Torah to Moses.
- C. In one of the most sweeping sermons in the New Testament, Stephen highlights the Sinai event in the light of the truth of Jesus.
- ³⁰ “Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to [Moses] in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. ³¹ When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord: ³² ‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.’... ³⁸ This is [Moses] the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us... ⁵³ you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.” (Acts 7:30-32, 37-38, 53)
- D. Stephen clearly identifies the *angel* as the manifestation of Yahweh who he connects directly to Jesus. And it is Jesus who is directly involved in the giving of Torah to Moses. He is the glory that walked by when he was in the cleft of the rock. It was His hand that covered Moses. The point is Jesus was the person providing Torah to Moses to give to the *Congregation in the Wilderness*.
- E. The crowds, stirred up by Paul, accused Stephen of speaking blasphemies against Moses and the Torah. It is exactly the opposite however. Stephen upheld the Torah in his sermon and pointed out they had rejected Yahweh, the Torah, the prophets, and ultimately murdered the Righteous One, Jesus.
- F. There was then a fork or strand of Judaism in the first century that continued from the written Torah, Prophets, and Writings that was carried on by the Qumran and Essene communities and that core of theological thought was picked up by Jesus and His disciples and carried forward into the light of truth. (See previous session on Luke 4 and 11Q13 scroll). It was a rejection of the *oral law* adopted by the Rabbis, Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees and the leadership in Jerusalem.

¹ C. L. Seow, “Torah,” ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 874.

- G. Jesus says clearly, “I did not come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.” He identifies what He did not come to abolish or end and contrasts that with another action, *fulfill*. This Greek word *pleroo* means to cause to happen, with the implication of fulfilling some purpose—“to cause to happen, to make happen, to fulfill.”² The Hebrew aligned word is *ml’* and means the same, “be full; fill up; be full of; fill with; to fill a place with any thing.”

This is the same word used when Yahweh told Adam and Eve to *multiply and fill the earth*. Notice, the word *fulfill* doesn’t mean to bring to an end. It means the opposite. It means to do the thing.

Michael Rydenlik writes, “The meaning of “fulfill” is to establish completely (Cremer 1895, 500). The term is elastic enough to include at least two ways in which Yeshua established the Scriptures. First, Hill explains that Yeshua “establishes the Law and the Prophets by realizing (or actualizing) them completely in his teaching and his life” (1972, 117). Thus the Messiah’s perfect explanation and obedience to the Scriptures establishes them. Second, Yeshua established the messianic predictions of the Law and the Prophets with his life and ministry. Just as the entire Hebrew Bible prophesied a coming Messiah, so Yeshua fulfilled those predictions (Luke 24: 27, 44).”³

Keener notes, “To “fulfill” God’s law was to “confirm” it by obedience and demonstrating that one’s teaching accorded with it; to “annul” it was to cast off its yoke, treating God’s law as void.”⁴

- H. One of the best first century contexts can be seen in Brad Young’s work *Jesus the Jewish Theologian*, The Hebrew background of this verse clarifies its deeper meaning.[13] In rabbinic literature, the Greek words from the Gospel which are translated “abolish” and “fulfill” possess dynamic equivalents. The word “abolish” means “to interpret incorrectly.” In Greek the word *kataluō* means “abolish,” and its dynamic Hebrew equivalent *batel* also means “cancel, abolish, destroy,” but *batel* is often used in contexts that deal with interpreting Scripture. One cancels Torah when it is misunderstood. The word “fulfill,” moreover, refers to interpreting a passage accurately. In Greek the word *pleroō* means “fulfill.” Its Hebrew equivalent *kiyem* is derived from a root, that means “cause to stand” and possesses the sense, “to uphold, to observe, to fulfill, or to place on a firmer footing.” It too is used in contexts that deal with interpreting Scripture.[14]... When one misunderstands the proper meaning of Torah, one may not obey the Lord’s will and therefore will cancel the law. Hence a person may abolish Torah by misunderstanding the divine revelation. On the other hand, when one understands the proper meaning, one is able to obey God’s will and therefore fulfill Torah.⁵

- I. We could then write this verse as:

² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 160.

³ A Hendrickson Academic Title. *A Handbook on the Jewish Roots of the Gospels* (p. 586). Hendrickson Publishers. Kindle Edition.

⁴ Craig S. Keener. *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Kindle Locations 5461-5462). Eerdmans Publishing Co - A. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Brad H. Young. *Jesus the Jewish Theologian* (Kindle Locations 4423-4434). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

“Do not think I have come to incorrectly interpret the Torah or the Prophets, *so as to cancel the Torah*; I have not come to incorrectly interpret them, but to correctly interpret them, *so as to fulfill them*.”

With correct interpretation comes correct application. This is one of the critical issues of Biblical application today. The student of Scripture should first observe the verse, passage, chapter, book, and testament within first the context of the whole Biblical narrative, then its place in the Torah, Prophets, and Writings, then its New Testament place. Then within its book, chapter, and passage. Once observation is done, then, and only then, can a correct interpretation happen. After interpreting the verse, or passage, then it is applied to today's life and circumstances.

- J. In any case, Jesus then did not come to wedge an artificial barrier between the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament is not for the Jews and the New Testament for the Church. The idea here is *we are no longer under the Law*, but *under grace*, meaning the Old Testament is *Law* and the New Testament is *grace*. Both of these assertions in such a way are in no way anything close to anything Jesus said, the Apostles said, nor Paul. The Old Testament (or First Testament) had demonstrations of *salvation* by Yahweh's grace through faith; and those that approached Him this way were declared righteous.

²*For if Abraham was justified by works [Cw: i.e., keeping the law, which had not yet been given], he has something to boast about, but not before God.* ³*For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness...”* ⁵*And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,* ⁶*just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works [of the law]:*

⁷*“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”*

From where did Paul derive the idea of believing Yahweh as the means of salvation (i.e., being declared righteous)? From the Torah itself. Genesis 15:6. What about King David? Psalm 32:1-2. There are many, many more verses concerning grace by faith in the *Old Testament*. (Read Hebrews 11!)

Paul actually in Romans 4 removes the argument by using the Torah that somehow keeping the Torah was the means of righteousness. No. It never was and never will be. The Torah tells us believing God and His Word by faith is the qualifier for righteousness. Being *Torah observant* with respect to Abraham and David does point to how salvation comes both before and after Jesus. But it's not by *keeping commandments or the works of those commandments*. In other words, keeping commandments cannot save you in the Old or New Testaments.

- K. This then gives context to what Paul meant in Romans 6:14, the now famous verse that says:

¹⁴*For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.” (Rom. 6:14)*

Absent the context of the entire letter to the Romans (1-16) this verse naturally leads a person to read into this verse something it doesn't say. Paul will make an argument in nearly all of his letters, and certainly in all of his major ones, that concerns the New Covenant believer's relationship to the Torah and its blessings and curses found in Deuteronomy 28-30, as well as righteousness based on keeping the Torah.

This spills over into the entire letter to the Hebrews where we find the supremacy of Jesus as the ultimate answer.

L. We can't get into the full scope of what Paul says but the summary is this:

1. Paul was referring to the dead works of keeping Torah as a means of righteousness as no longer having any place in the life of the believer. This is what he means in Romans 6:14 when he says "You are no longer under the law, but under grace." And he drives this point home by exposing where the issue lies – in the members of the flesh, which he defines as the *law of sin and death*.
2. Jesus condemned this *law of works, the law of sin and death* in the flesh, and then died which ended its power in the life of the believer. In resurrection, He now presents the Torah of the Spirit of Life to the one who follows Him in resurrection. See Romans 6:6, 12-23, which now points the person to realize *keeping the Torah by faith results in sanctification*.

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

3. Romans 10:2-13 is the outline of the entire conclusion.

³...and seeking to establish their own [righteousness by works of the Torah], they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

What did we already note is the way to the righteousness of God? Believing faith, not works.

⁴ For Messiah is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

This was nothing new for Paul to say! The Torah points everyone to Jesus! To try to return to the yoke of keeping the Law as a means of righteousness is to only find this sign:



Jesus is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Jesus being the *end of the law* literally points us to the Sermon on the Mount for correct interpretation of Torah, and Paul's argument that righteousness is only by faith. The Torah's end is pointing us to Jesus, every-single-time. Thus the Old Testament narrative of the Coming Messiah who would end Adam's exile, and the exile out of Babylon and Assyria. The One would come and do Isaiah 61. The One we see in the Gospels and the New Testament. The Torah and Prophets all point to Him.

And this *righteousness* comes to everyone *who believes*! We've seen this before! Abraham and David both testified to this truth!

Paul's preaching of the *word of faith* (see. Rom. 10:8) is:

⁹ ...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord (or Yahweh), and believe in your heart God raised him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

¹³ for Whoever will call on the Name of the Lord will be saved. (Rom. 10:9-13)

³² And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD (יהוה YHWH) shall be saved. (Joel 2:32)

Paul equates the *name of Yahweh* in Joel 2:32 to the declaration that Jesus is *Yahweh* and directly identifies Him as *the Name*.

- M. Jesus points to the eternal nature of the Torah and Prophets in 5:18 and the power of even the *smallest* of letters and their power to impact even the greatest kings. Jesus is drawing attention to the small and the least as the way to greatness, even the Hebrew *yod*, the smallest of letters (jot or tittle). Note here the legend of Solomon's disregard for the *yod* in the Rabbinic work, Exodus Rabbah 6:1

When God gave the Torah to Israel, He inserted therein both positive and negative commandments and gave commands for a king, as it says, "Only he shall not multiply horses to himself. . . . Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither silver and gold" (Deut 17: 16– 17). But Solomon arose and studied the reason of God's decree, saying: "Why did God command, 'He shall not multiply wives to himself'? Is it not 'that his heart turn not away'? Well I will multiply and still my heart will not turn away.'" Our rabbis say: At that time, the yod (smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, y, the first letter of yarbeh, meaning multiply) of the word yarbeh (multiply) went up on high and prostrated itself before God and said: "Master of the Universe! Have you not said that no letter shall ever be abolished from the Torah? Behold, Solomon has now arisen and abolished one. Who knows? Today he has abolished one letter, tomorrow he will abolish another until the whole Torah will be nullified." God responded: "Solomon and a thousand like him will pass away, but the smallest tittle will not be canceled from you." ⁶

⁶ Brad H. Young. Jesus the Jewish Theologian (Kindle Locations 4460-4469). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

This rabbinic writing is from the 10th-12th Century CE (or AD). It would appear obvious where they sourced this legend from; at least in part.

- N. Continuing on this theme of smallness and the least Jesus identifies the power of everything in this passage as it relates to the Kingdom of God. The least commandments are those that if observed or obeyed will prevent the greater ones or will make them unnecessary. Thus, in essence will elevate them in their importance by moving from the *external command* to the *internal command and circumcision of the heart* by His Spirit. To relax the importance of the least commandment and teaches men to do so *will be called least in the kingdom of heaven*. However, the opposite is also true; whoever does the least commandments and teaches men to observe them *will be called great in the kingdom of heaven*.
- O. The value then of the *smallest* or *least* of commandments deal with the focal point that least to the greater commandments and qualifies a believer's place of standing in the kingdom, both with the King and their position within the believing community. Jesus contrasts this approach with the Pharisees and says, "unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never *enter the kingdom of heaven*." What is that righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? The self-righteous elevation of both their own interpretation (oral tradition) and disregard for the lesser commands.
- P. Jesus then gives us examples of the greater commandment and the power of the lesser or smaller commandment. "You have heard that was said of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment;..." (Matthew 5:21-22)

In this example Jesus demonstrates the lesser command as exceeding the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees who may in fact not murder, but would pass by anger as not impacting the greater commandment. Jesus says the first step toward disobeying the greater command is the disregard of the lesser command of the anger. Both result in judgment and one can lead to the other (anger → murder). Murder is always a result of anger. The points here stem from verses 17-20.

- Q. The summary then is that Jesus, the Head of the Church, the Son of David, the King of the Kingdom of God:

1) Gave Moses the Torah on Mount Sinai

2) Is the only One who *knows* what was/is in Yahweh's heart and mind and so knows what is meant by the Torah commandments

3) Jesus, through His Holy Spirit, discloses to believers/disciples correct interpretation of Torah which leads to keeping Torah and from there fulfill them.

4) Moses and Paul from both Testaments show the first steps to *keeping* the correct interpretation of Torah:

¹¹ "For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. ¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' ¹³ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and

bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' ¹⁴ But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. (Deut. 30:11-14; c.f. Romans 10:6-8)

5) Get the *correct interpretation*, then put it in your mouth and write it on your heart with your words and ask the Holy Spirit to bring wisdom, revelation, and understanding so you can hear it and do it. Then, by faith acting upon that word, do it. Then you will be *doing* the Sermon on the Mount.

II. SWEARING OATHS AND THE KINGDOM (Matthew 5:33-37)

- A. The direct mention of *kingdom of God* truth is seen in an allusion to Psalm 48, 110 and Isaiah 66:1 in this passage.

Notice the *locations* Jesus and definitions of those locations in relation to swearing an oath or vow.

- 1) Heaven – it is the Throne of God
- 2) Earth – it is His footstool
- 3) Jerusalem – the city of the Great King (see Psalm 48)
- 4) Your Head – cannot make a hair white or black

- B. Compare with Psalm 110 and Isaiah 66:1

1) Yahweh says to David's Adon (Lord and Master – his *Son*) "Sit at My right hand." This *location* is Heaven where Yahweh's Throne is (Isa. 66:1)

2) He will *sit at Yahweh's* right hand *until* His enemies are His footstool. The location of this *footstool* where enemies are is the earth (Isa. 66:1).

3) Jerusalem is the *location* of the ultimate place of *His House* (Isa. 66:1), the City of the Great King. The attention here is drawn toward God's House (His Temple) on His Mountain and the Great King which brings together both the Priest and the King. We also see a direct reference to the City of the Great King in Psalm 48:

¹Great is Yahweh and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His holy mountain, ² beautiful in elevation is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north [*zaphon*], ***the city of the great King***.

³Within her citadels God has made himself known as a fortress. (Ps. 48:1-3)

It is here we have a polemic against the false gods of the nations (Baal), and all of the Watcher traditions (Annunaki/Apkallu) and in its place the statement of the Most High, who is the Great King.

Psalm 48:2 describes Mount Zion in Jerusalem as the joy of all the earth *in the far north*. The use of *north* as a direction is not captured in English. It is the Hebrew *zaphon*.

In pagan mythology the chief god of the pantheon dwelt on Mount Zaphon ("Zaphon" themes are found in the ancient Near East; e.g., see Exod. 14:2). The reference may be to a mountain in Syria, thirty miles north of Ugarit, called Jebel al-Aqra'. It may be that the psalmist is borrowing the imagery but not the theology to assert that Yahweh is the exalted God, and the true holy mountain is Zion. Or as Craigie

suggests, the psalmist may be here affirming that the aspirations of people for a place on earth where the presence of God could be experienced were fulfilled in Zion, the true Zaphon.⁷

Etymologically, Zaphon can be derived from šāpâ ‘to spy’ (EISSFELDT 1932; BONNET 1987). Less likely are derivations from šāpan ‘to hide’ (DE SAVIGNAC) or from šûp ‘to float’ (LIPÍŃSKI 1987–89).

[If taken both as “to spy” and “to hide” you can see the watcher idea as well as the occult practices through the hiddenness of the wicked curse taken on Mount Hermon. – Cw]

40 km to the north of Ugarit, Jebel al-Aqra‘ rises to the height of about 1770 meters. The identification of Jebel al-Aqra with mount Zaphon in the Ugaritic texts, first proposed by EISSFELDT (1932), is unanimously accepted. Its peak being often shrouded with clouds, Mount Zaphon was regarded as a holy mountain in the mythological and ritual texts of Ugarit.

In the earlier Hurrian and Hittite traditions of North-Syria, the mountain[s] Hazzi (Zaphon)... is already venerated as a divine abode and also figures as a guarantor of Hittite treaties (RGTC 6 [1978] 106) and there are traces of a Hittite ritual addressed to mount Hazzi (CTH 785; AOATS 3 [1974] 260–263; RGTC 6 [1978] 106). In relief 42 of Yazilikaya, Hazzi and Nanni serve as a pedestal for the weathergod of heavens.

In the god lists of Ugarit, Zaphon is regarded as a deity.. The god list KTU 1.47:1 begins with ’l spa. This does not mean ‘divine Zaphon’ as in KTU 1.3 iii:29; iv:19; 1.101:2), but is to be understood as ‘gods of Zaphon’ (LIPÍŃSKI 1971; BONNET 1987). It is also an indication that Mount Zaphon had become the place for the assembly of the gods who had, according to the older tradition, assembled on El’s divine mountain. This new role of →Olympus taken over by mount Zaphon (cf. also KTU 1.4 vii:5–6) is further stressed by dbh špn ‘offering (for the gods) of Zaphon’ (KTU 1.91:3; 1.148:1).

In the Ugaritic mythological tradition, Mount Zaphon receives its holiness from Baal’s palace built on its peak (KTU 1.3–4). Nearly always in the mythological texts Mount Zaphon is mentioned together with Baal because mount Zaphon is his divine abode.⁸

The Psalmist then captures this idea of the dwelling of the gods and says, “It is Mount Zion that is the true Zaphon. It Great God Yahweh and His divine council. This is what the writer of Hebrews has in mind, in part, in Hebrews 12:

²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³and to the assembly [ekklesia] of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven...(Heb. 12:22)

⁷ Allen P. Ross, A Commentary on the Psalms 1–89: Commentary, vol. 2, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2011–2013), 123.

⁸ H. Niehr, “Zaphon,” ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 927–928

Psalm 110:4 - Yahweh then has sworn an oath to *this* Son of David, “You are a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek [King of Righteousness, King of Peace; c.f. Heb. 7:1-2]. Thus, *this King is the Great King*.”

¹⁹...a better hope is introduced [in the Kingly-Priestly Ministry of Jesus], through which we draw near to God. ²⁰And it was not without an *oath*. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, ²¹ but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him:

“The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever.’”

²²This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. (Heb. 7:19-22)

Isn’t this what we are seeing in the Sermon on the Mount? Jesus giving the *correct* revelation on the Torah commands? Are these not *better* than the law on tablets of stone? That “made nothing perfect” or complete? (Heb. 7:19)

C. Notice the Hebrews reference to Psalm 110: Yahweh, God the Father, *He* has sworn an oath.

And God declared with a solemn oath that this king would be a priest forever, a royal priest—making his loyal subjects a kingdom of priests. The verb “swore” draws on a very human enterprise, that is, confirming the words of a promise or an agreement by invoking the higher power. But since there is none higher than God, he swore by himself. The reason for the use of a divine oath was to communicate to people that God was obligating himself to fulfill his word—his life and reputation were hereby put on the line (not that he ever lied or went back on his word—the oath was for their benefit). For our greater confidence in his promises, he bound himself by solemn oath.

To reiterate this point the text uses another very human expression: “he will not relent” (or “repent”). The volitional aspect of the verb (נָחַם; s.v. Ps. 119:76) means “to change one’s mind”; and the emotional aspect means “to grieve, regret” (see Exod. 13:17 for the former, and 1 Sam. 15:11 for the latter). Here the expression confirms the oath with the volitional meaning: God will not alter his plan or his purpose. The use of this verb is figurative where God is concerned (an anthropomorphism); it is designed to emphasize the absolute certainty of the promise.⁹

4) He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head. (Ps. 110:7)

The victorious King, after shattering the kings of the earth on the day of His wrath, will be refreshed from the brook by the way. This too is a picture of the *living water that flows from the Temple*.

The king enjoys victory because God fights for him and in him; but he will tire in the battle, and the LORD will not. So the focus shifts here to the king who will be exalted in the victory. The “brook” is the often-dry river bed that flowed with water in the rainy season; they were therefore taken as a sign of God’s blessing on the land. VanGemeren suggests that the drink the king takes here may be more ceremonial, an expression of his confidence in the LORD’s provision. The picture of the conquering king

⁹ Allen P. Ross, A Commentary on the Psalms (90–150): Commentary, vol. 3, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2016), 354.

drinking from such a brook is a sign that in his kingdom the streams will flow in great abundance (see Isa. 35:6).

Consequently (“therefore”) this king will find honor and glory. The imagery of “lifting up the head” is used in the Bible to refer to exaltation to, or restoration to, the position of honor and dignity in the kingdom (see the cup-bearer in Genesis 40:13; and David’s description of God as the lifter-up of his head in Psalm 3). The meaning of the verse seems to capture the theme of the psalm, the exaltation of the king over his domain. Not only will Yahweh enjoy honor and glory when all enemies are defeated, but his king will receive honor and glory.¹⁰

- D. The quote Jesus appears to point to in Matthew 5:33 is from Leviticus 19:11-12

¹¹ ...You shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. ¹²You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am Yahweh (יהוה).

This being the case then we have two passages to consider in light of Jesus commanding His disciples to not swear falsely and to not take oath at all. Remember we see Him making the *correct interpretation* so it can be applied correctly and thus fulfilled in Him and His followers. We can contrast God the Father swearing a true oath, not one in falsehood with a false oath.

The *small command* we should elevate is, “Do not take an oath at all...Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’”

- E. Why would Jesus have to tell His disciples and followers to avoid oath taking, especially doing so in a false pretense? Because humans, apart from Him, have a bent toward creating circumstances that would in effect take advantage of another person through swearing a false oath. Perhaps the initial swearing of an oath would be genuine, but over time may come be not what was intended and the oath taker would look for a way around the conditions. In either case, it is a false oath. God the Father and His Son Jesus are not this way. And placing the value on the *smaller commandment*, Jesus says, “Don’t swear an oath at all!”
- F. We see then a contrast of Yahweh swearing an oath and promise to His Son and that of the oath and curse spoken by the Watchers on Mount Hermon (another picture of Zaphon and Bel’s council). Jesus frames the smallest command which will keep one from breaking a greater command in this context and says, “let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes’ and ‘no’ be ‘no’.” In other words, the agreement in your words should, in the grace of God, be kept and thus you will be safe from swearing a false oath.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 357-358.