

A GOSPEL for the MULTITUDES or the MILITANTS?

(Mt 4:23-5:1)

I. “SEEING”

- A. Preeminent Physical Sense
 - 1. Acuity apparently infinite—open to, absorbing, universe of things
 - 2. Attuned to Light, with its infinite import—c.f. Michael Denton’s *Light*
- B. Prescient Spiritual (Intuitive) Capacity
 - 1. St. John’s refrain, e.g. I Jn 1:1-5
 - 2. Jesus’ divine power to “divine” our hearts
- C. Manifestly: Jesus SEES (i.e. knows) us
 - 1. All about us—as we are—constituted by our heritage and experiences—“Just As I Am” power
 - 2. All potentialities—as we might be—possibilities for future, gifts & obligations

II. “MULTITUDES”—thousands followed Jesus, as they do celebrities today (e.g. Taylor Swift concerts).

- A. Healer (Jesus) and healers today
 - 1. Various diseases and infirmities push us to seek help to restore health—an eminently fine endeavor
 - 2. Variety of past prescriptions—Hadacol, Dr. Carter’s little liver pills, health foods without end
 - 3. Variety of healers—Mexico clinics; New Age gurus; Christian Science healers; Charismatic faith healers
 - 4. For Jesus, physical/mental healing was needed but never ultimate concern
- B. Messiah (Christ) and reformers, revolutionaries, today
 - 1. Jewish Zealots ever-alert for leader to vanquish Romans
 - 2. Modern zealots embrace multiple causes, promote multiple agendas
 - a. Amidst 1930s Depression, political “saviors” thrived—Hitler, FDR, Huey Long
 - b. Social Gospel endeavors intertwined with Progressivism & denominations affected as politics (social reforms, socially-favored causes, human-focused endeavors)
- C. Teacher
 - 1. Many found Jesus’ words/teaching life-changing
 - 2. Today’s teachers offer alluring messages
 - a. Jordan Peterson’s amazing appeal
 - b. Charles Stanley’s impressive impact
- D. Much good in appeals to and movements by multitudes—crowds assembled may mobilize in great ways—Billy Graham crusades,
- E. Many dangers when crowds wrongly assembled or led—cf. Charles Mackay’s *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*; Charles Murray’s *The Madness of Crowds: Race, Gender, Identity*; Reinhold Niebuhr’s *Moral Man in Immoral Society*

III. “DISCIPLES”—some (many? few?) actually follow Jesus to mountain.

- A. Discipline of disciples includes: listening to words, following instructions,
- B. Historical impact of “creative minorities” stressed by Arnold Toynbee in *A Study of History*, innovators in Gale Pooley and Marian Tupi’s *Superabundance*
- C. Revolutionary cadres
 - 1. American Revolutionaries—Sam Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine
 - 2. French Revolutionaries—Robespierre, Thomas Paine,
 - 3. Russian Revolutionaries—Lenin & Bolsheviks
 - 4. World-wide Sixties Revolutionaries—SDS, Tom Hayden
- D. Creative minorities shaping Church
 - 1. Benedictines & Cluniacs & Cistercians
 - 2. Protestant Reformers: Luther, Zwingli, Anabaptists, Calvin, Thomas Cranmer
 - 4. First & Second Great Awakenings: Jonathan Edwards; John & Charles Wesley; George Whitefield; camp meetings, evangelists, Finney & Moody
 - 5. Jesus Movement in ‘60s & Asbury revival
- E. Current calls for awakening, renewal, revival
 - 1. “Benedict Option” by Rob Dreyer?
 - 2. Recent Asbury outpouring & prospects for revival