

The Sermon on the Mount and the Epistle of James

Explanation

Rarely noticed by general readers, yet quite evident on closer inspection, are the parallels between the phraseology of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 and the vocabulary of the Epistle of James. Over twenty conspicuous similarities can be identified. Various explanations may account for this similarity. Above all, this consistency shows that James and his broad, early Christian audience knew and revered the words of their Lord and Master, especially the directives found in the Sermon on the Mount.

Reference

Patrick Hartin, *James and the Q Sayings of Jesus*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series, vol. 47 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 144–72.

The Sermon on the Mount and the Epistle of James

MATTHEW

JAMES

<i>Blessed</i> are the ...	5:3–11; 11:5	<i>Blessed</i> is the man ...	1:12; 1:2; 2:5
Blessed are they that <i>mourn</i> , for they shall be comforted.	5:4	Be afflicted, and <i>mourn</i> , and weep ...	4:9
Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain <i>mercy</i> .	5:7	For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no <i>mercy</i> .	2:13
Blessed are the <i>pure in heart</i> : for they shall see God.	5:8	Draw nigh unto God, and <i>he will draw nigh unto you</i> . <i>Purify</i> your hands ... and <i>hearts</i>	4:8
Blessed are the <i>peacemakers</i> : for they shall be called the children of God.	5:9	And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that <i>make peace</i> .	3:18
Blessed are ye, when men shall ... <i>persecute</i> you ... for my sake,... for so <i>persecuted</i> they the <i>prophets</i> which were before you.	5:11–12	Take ... the <i>prophets</i> , who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of <i>suffering affliction</i> , and of patience.	5:10
Whosoever shall <i>break one of these least commandments</i> ... he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.	5:19	For whosoever shall keep the whole <i>law</i> , and yet <i>offend in one point</i> , he is guilty of all.	2:10
Thou shalt not <i>kill</i> , thou shalt not commit <i>adultery</i> .	5:21–30	Do not commit <i>adultery</i> ... Do not <i>kill</i> .	2:11
Whosoever is <i>angry</i> with his brother ... shall be in danger of the judgment.	5:22	The <i>wrath</i> of man worketh not the righteousness of God.	1:20
Whosoever looketh on a women to <i>lust</i> after her hath committed adultery ...	5:28	But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own <i>lust</i> , and enticed.	1:14–15

Swear not at all; <i>neither by heaven ... nor by the earth.</i>	5:34–37	<i>Swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth.</i>	5:12
Be ye therefore <i>perfect ...</i>	5:48	That ye may be <i>perfect ...</i>	1:4
And <i>lead us not into temptation</i> , but deliver us from evil.	6:13	Let no man say when he is <i>tempted</i> , I am tempted of God ... <i>neither tempteth</i> he any man.	1:13
Lay not <i>up</i> for yourselves <i>treasures</i> upon earth, where <i>moth</i> (<i>sēs</i>) and <i>rust</i> (<i>brōsis</i>) doth <i>corrupt</i> (<i>aphanizei</i>).	6:19–21	Your <i>riches</i> are <i>corrupted</i> (<i>sesēpen</i>), and your garments are <i>motheaten</i> (<i>sētobrōta</i>). Your gold and silver ... the <i>rust</i> (<i>ios</i>) of them shall be a witness against you ... ye have <i>heaped treasure together</i> .	5:2–3
He will <i>hold to the one</i> , and <i>despise</i> the other. Ye cannot serve <i>God</i> and <i>mammon</i> .	6:24	Whosoever therefore will <i>be a friend</i> of the world is the <i>enemy of God</i> .	4:4
<i>Judge</i> not that ye be not <i>judged</i> .	7:1–2	He that ... <i>judgeth</i> his brother, ... <i>judgeth</i> the law.	2:13; 4:11; 5:6
<i>Ask</i> , and it shall be given ...	7:7–11	If any of you lack wisdom, let him <i>ask</i> of God ...	1:5–6
<i>Ask</i> , and it shall be given you ... For every one that <i>asketh</i> <i>receiveth</i>	7:7–8	Yet ye have not, because ye <i>ask</i> not.	4:2–3
If ye then, being evil, know how to give <i>good gifts</i> (<i>domata agatha</i>) ... <i>Father</i> which is in heaven give(s) good things ...	7:11	Every <i>good gift</i> (<i>dosis agathē</i>)... cometh down from the <i>Father</i> ...	1:17
Do men gather <i>grapes</i> (<i>staphulas</i>) of thorns or <i>figs</i> (<i>suka</i>) of thistles?	7:16	Can the <i>fig</i> tree ... bear olive berries? Either a <i>vine</i> (<i>ampe-los</i>), a <i>fig</i> (<i>suka</i>)?	3:11–12
Whosoever <i>heareth</i> (<i>akouei</i>) these <i>sayings</i> (<i>logous</i>) of mine and <i>doeth</i> (<i>poiei</i>) them.	7:24	But be ye <i>doers</i> (<i>poiētai</i>) of the <i>word</i> (<i>logou</i>), and not <i>hearers</i> (<i>akroatai</i>) only.	1:22