

## October 8 Answers

- 1) The first part of Jesus' sermon on the mount. Jesus began with a series of blessings and woes which showed the people **who** would be a part of the kingdom of God. It would not be the rich, the well-fed, the laughing, or the popular. Instead, it would be those who were poor in **spirit**, hungry for **righteousness**, weeping over **sin**, and **persecuted** for their faith. From the beginning of His sermon, Jesus wanted the people to understand that it was the condition of their **hearts** that made the difference. Inner purity, not outward appearance, was the mark of a true citizen of the kingdom. Jesus then encouraged the people to be **salt** and **light** to the world. They were to act in such a way that their faith would be seen by all. At this point, Jesus could no doubt sense the people's silent question: 'Aren't those who keep the Law approved of God and sure to enter the kingdom?' Jesus addressed this question, for He wanted them to understand that He had not come to abolish the Law but to **fulfill** it, and He prefaced His answer with a startling statement: "Unless your righteousness **exceeds** that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:20). Jesus explained that the Pharisees indeed kept the Law, and even added laws of their own, but their **hearts** were far from God. They didn't murder, but they did **hate**; they didn't commit adultery, but they did **lust** after their neighbor's wife; they didn't divorce illegally, but they did **twist** the Law in order to get rid of a wife they didn't like; they didn't make false vows, but they did craft their speech to **avoid** keeping their word; they didn't let crime go unpunished, but they did return **evil** for evil; they didn't hate those who were good to them, but they did hate their **enemies**. In each case, Jesus revealed how the scribes and Pharisees missed what the Law was all about. The Law was meant to show them how to love God and others, but they had twisted it to suit their own selfish desires.