

St Matthew

Chapter 12:15-21

The Unheard Voice (12:15-21)

Jesus knows of the Pharisee's council against Him, and so He withdraws, but a great crowd follows His. As is His custom, He looks with mercy and compassion on the people, and heals all them, but He also warns them not to make Him known. Jesus often gives this command following a healing, that those who have benefited from His being the Creator of the Universe Incarnate would keep it a secret. For example:

- And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one knows about it." [*Matthew 9:30*]
- And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. [*Mark 7:34-36*]
- But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened. [*Luke 8:54-56*]
- See also Matthew 16:20; 17:9; Mark 1:43-45; 8:27-30; 9:9f; Luke 5:14f; 9:21.

This is sometimes called by Bible Scholars the “Messianic Secret”, that Jesus is revealing Himself slowly, and keeping who He is and what He has done quiet until the time is right. In the Matthew text before us we are told that Jesus' keeping quiet is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, that the Messiah would be humble.

Isaiah 42:1-4. Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1-4. Of all of the quotations of the Old Testament in the Gospel loaded with them, this is the longest. This section is commonly called 'the First Servant Song', the first of four. The Servant Songs of Isaiah are as follows:

- Isaiah 42:1-9
- Isaiah 49:1-7
- Isaiah 50:4-9
- Isaiah 52:13-53:12

These portions of Isaiah are full of tremendous Christology, teaching about the coming Messiah, His life, His character, and most of all His suffering and dying for the sins of the world.

In the text quoted Isaiah speaks of the quiet and humble character of the Messiah until He sends forth justice and victory. Then in His name the Gentiles will trust. So it is that after the Lord Jesus wins His victory over the devil and righteousness for us, He send His disciples out to fill the ears of all the earth with the good news of His death. “All authority on heaven and earth has been given unto Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations...” [*Matthew 28:19f*]



Isaiah the Prophet