

JESUS AND THE LAW

MATT. 5:17-20

INTRODUCTION:

The question is often put -- what is the relation of this new order to past history. The same thing was true in regard to Jesus and His Kingdom. As he came, would he destroy all the past. Or would he be a fulfillment. A continuation of the past. People stretching necks to hear

John the Baptist NOT go to the temple or offer sacrifices - Jesus made his message clear.

V. 17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the Prophets. But to fulfill. Now this marks the beginning of a (new section) in the sermon. Before the description has been that of the Christian.

French revolution - leader Robespierre - everything change - Even Days of Week - 10 instead of 7 - Renamed streets - Jesus no idea changing all -

It is like a (parent) saying to a child who is going away from home to a party. Now remember who you are - you must behave in such and such a way that you will give honor unto your parents and to your family. This is the same appeal that the leaders of a (college) or university make as they go out into the world. They are to be citizens of the world. They want them to be a credit to the University. That is what Jesus is saying -- we are children of God. Citizens of the kingdom of Heaven.

Now the (question) of course always comes - (how) this is to be done. And of course he is going to tell you that you are to live a life of righteousness -- that is the word that will sum up Christian living, according to the Sermon on the Mount. Did The New Leader Believe in Holy Writings?

Now (before) Jesus comes to deal with some of the details, he lays down a general principle. Some people do not like our Lord's method here. But it is always right to start with a certain principle.

First, V. 17 and 18, Jesus is going to teach us that everything he does is in absolute harmony with the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Second, V. 19 - 20, that his teachings of the Old Testament are in complete disharmony and disagree with the teachings of the Pharisees and Scribes.

Now understand these two great principles that he is going to teach. Because in V. 17 - he is going to tell us that he is not like the Pharisees who are teachers of the law. There is much confusion in regard to our Lord's teaching. There are many unusual things about him - he is not a Pharisee. He has not been trained as a Pharisee - he has not been to their schools. So they look at him and say who is this man who teaches.

Jesus did not come into his position as a teacher among the usual lines. Or through customary channels. There also created problems for him. Because the leaders were rather confused.

He deliberately criticized the Pharisees and the Scribes in their teaching.

Remember they were the acknowledged leaders and the religious teachers. And a man who did not belong to their schools - who not only taught but denounced their authoritative teaching was certainly different. He preached a different doctrine. Furthermore, he mixed with Publicans and sinners. Eating with them.

Now the big questions was - did this new teacher believe in the holy writings. The Pharisees and Scribes claimed to be exponents of the Holy

doing away with the law, and with the Prophets.

The next thing to note is one of the main difficulties which Jesus had. First was he going to continue the teaching of the law. Now there are some who say there is a great difference between the four Gospels and the Epistles. And that Jesus Christ was not the real founder of Christianity - but that Paul was with his doctrine which he preached. Of a simple, glorious Gospel.

Now the second main problem is the exact opposite. There are those who say that Jesus abolished the law completely. He introduced grace in place of it. The law was given by Moses. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ".

Then the Christian had nothing to do with the law - they agree that the Bible says, we are under grace and we are not under law.

Now Jesus is going to answer these and tell what he meant by the law and by the Prophets.

First, what is meant by the law in particular. I think the entire law - this is given to the children of Israel and is specifically consisted of three parts.

First, moral. ✓

Second, judicial. ✓

Third, ceremonial. ✓

You can read this in the book of Exodus, Lev., and Numbers. You will find that this is how God gave it.

1. The moral law consisted of the Ten Commandments, and the great moral principles. They were layed down once and for all.

2. The judicial law - which means the legislative law, given for the nation of Israel in peculiar circumstances at that time. It indicated that men were to order their behavior. In relationship to others under various conditions.

3. Ceremonial law concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices - and all the ritual ceremony in connection with their worship in the temple and elsewhere.

Now when Jesus refers to the law - he refers to everything that it teaches - life, conduct, behavior. The law includes everything that is taught in the very types - the different offerings - all the details concerning the Old Testament. Many people say they do not understand the books of Exodus and Lev. About the meal and the salt and all the various things - but these are types. And they are all prophesy in a certain way.

The next thing to note is what does he mean by prophets. The term means all that were have in the books of the Old Testament. There again, we must never forget that there are two main aspects. The prophets actually taught the law and they applied and interpreted it.

They went to the nation and told them that the trouble with them was that they were not keeping God's law. Their main endeavor was to call the people back to true understanding of it. They caused it to be read again and expounded. In addition to this, they foretold the Messiah. They were forth

tellers.

Now that really leaves us with the final term - fulfill. To complete - finish. It does not mean to add as already been begun, up to a point. And here is a fulfillment of it. And the real meaning of the word fulfill is the carrying out. To fulfill in the sense of giving full obedience to it. Carrying out everything that has been said and stated in the law and in the Prophets.

Now there are two or three things that we must remember. First, of all, God's law is absolute. It can never be changed - not even modified to the slightest extent. It is absolute and eternal. It's demands are permanent and it can never be reduced til Heaven and earth pass. And that last expression means, the end of the age. Heaven and earth are signs of permanence. While they are there, says our Lord, nothing shall pass away not even a jot or a tiddle.

There is nothing smaller than these - the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet and the smallest point in the smallest letter - Heaven and earth shall not pass away until every detail of the law shall be absolutely and entirely fulfilled.

Jesus hasn't come to destroy or indeed to modify to the slightest extent the teachings of the law or the Prophet. He rather tells them that he has come to fulfill and carry them out with perfect obedience. All the law and all the Prophets point and will be fulfilled in him in every detail.

Jesus puts his seal of authority upon the whole of the Old Testament - the law and the Prophets. His quotations from the Old Testament - almost

every part of it was a part of God's word.

You will find so many people today who seem to think that they can believe on Jesus Christ and yet, more or less reject all that is in the Old Testament. If we say that we do not believe an account of the creation or in Abraham as a person, if we do not believe that the law was given by God to Moses - but think that it was a clever work by some Jewish legislature. If we say that, then we are in contradiction to everything that our Lord Jesus Christ said about himself - the law, and the Prophets.

There were men of God who were given the word of God and they wrote it down. And these references to Christ have vital significance. Because they cast light upon his coming into the world.

Let us pause for a moment and think how our Lord fulfills what was written by the Prophets in the Old Testament.

Peter makes mention of that in his 2nd Epistle. He is writing to comfort people who were living in very hard and difficult times. Who were experiencing persecution. He is now an old man and realizes that he has not long to live. Therefore, to give them some final comfort before he goes, he tells them there are things. How for instance how he and James and John had the privilege of seeing the transfiguration of our Lord. And how they even heard that voice from the excellent Glory - who said, this is my beloved son, hear him.

Yet, Peter said in effect, I have something else better than that to tell you. We need not to place your confidence on my testimony and experience. There is the more sure word of prophesy--go back and read the Old Testament prophets. And see where verification of Christ Jesus. This is of vital

Now Paul makes a similar statement in 2 Cor. 1:20 - all the promises of God are yea and in him, amen. All the promises are in this wonderful person - that in effect is what our Lord is saying here. The fulfillment of the prophesy is true. And it is one of the most remarkable things that you can encounter.

(Think) of the exact prophesy as to his birth, the place of the birth, even Bethlehem Judah. All of these were fulfilled exactly. Think of the extraordinary things that were foretold of his person. It makes it almost incredible that the Jews should have ever stumbled at him.

It was their own ideas which led them away. They should not have thought of the Messiah as a worldly king. Because the prophets had told them just the opposite. But they were blind out of prejudice. Looking at his word.
Gal 4:4 - Fullness of time must come

Think of the extra ordinary (description) of the type of life which he lived. A bruised reed shall he not break - and smoking flax shall he not quinch. In that wonderful description of the personal life, think of the account of what he was going to do. Foretelling of his miracles, his physical miracles, the kind of thing he was likely to do and teach. And the kind of Gospel that he was going to preach.

Some people are still foolish enough to be amazed at it. Hence, you can preach the Gospel out of the Old Testament as well as out of the New. In fact, it is full of the Gospel.

Think about the prophesy in reference to his (death), even the kind of death as you read in Psalms 22, for instance, and you will find there a literal accurate description of what actually happened on Calvary's Cross. Prophecy

is found in songs and well as in Prophets. Literally and completely what he foretold of himself.

Now in the same way - even the Resurrection was foretold in the Old Testament. Still more amazing in a sense are the prophesies of the bringing in of the Gentiles.

It is very clear that what happened on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit descended on the infant church - that many of the people were amazed and baffled. But Peter said you should not be surprised at this. It is that which was said by the Prophet Joel.

Now this should help you in your relationship to the past. Because today we have a generation who believe that all the forefathers stood for and all the mission of the former generation should be done away with. And they feel that everything should be in revolution. That in the works and ways of God - everything should be changed. But Jesus confirms, I do not come to destroy. But he says every jot and every tittle.

Now of course Jesus came as a fulfillment of the priesthood. And the temple. It is probable that he did not have a copy of the Old Testament Scriptures, for his own private use. For the Bible was within reach and was kept in the synagogue. And it was committed to memory by heart as by children. They knew the Scriptures. And nothing could exceed our Lord's reverence for the Scriptures because he quoted and used them from the first until the last.

✓ V. 19 - Therefore, he did not come to disregard and destroy, and let loose the law or the prophets. He came to make it of long effect.

Now he is thinking very differently from what they thought of their environment. We hold to nothing but the five books of Moses - and we consider this the law. The Pharisees said, we hold the law but there is more than the law of Moses. They (divided the law) in other words they said - the law is heavy and light. Great and small. You see the small you could kinda disregard. But you could not disregard the heavy. Sins little & large

Now some of this interpretation was in regard to the older law - the (spoken law) which had come out of tradition. You see by it then, they considered this to be important to them. And this is exactly what Isaiah said, in vain do they worship me - teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandments of God - ye hold to the traditions of men.

Jesus said, leaving off, sending off the commandments of God - they hold to the traditions of men. Now that is what they are doing. You are setting aside the commandments of God. You annull and appeal the commandments in order that you may keep your own law. Now Moses said, so this, and some of the teachers were saying - you do thus and so. Now Jesus comes and said, I have come - not doing as you do. And what you do. And what you say. Because what you are doing - you are trying to cover up and plow under like a plow in the field and making it of none effect. You validate it and you annull it. Jesus said I have not come to do that. You may think so, but I have not come to do that.

So they said, well that's fine - he is right where we stand. But then when he added the Prophets, that got them in hot water. Because they did not consider the Prophets an authority. They held only the five books of Moses.

Now Jesus does not nullify these. The kingdom of Heaven is what the law and the Prophets aimed at. This kingdom of Heaven - why was the law given. Now the Lev. term of it was to prepare Israel to be a blessing to man. Using it as an instrument in blessing the man. That is what it was for - to bring about conditions where they were interested in blessings for mankind.

But the Jews did not see it like that. As if in itself it had all of the virtues. God was preparing the people by teaching by clean and unclean animals. They thought that the animals were clean - religious in themselves. Now we don't think upon that basis. As someone has said, if we want a piece of ham - we think it is the finest cleanest thing in the world.

So in V. 18 - to get this background - their trouble is about law mostly. They think more about the law, and they do not think so much about the Prophets. The trouble then has come about by setting aside the law by their laws. By something that they have. Now Jesus said, until Heaven and earth pass away, one jot or not one small character of the letter in the alphabet shall pass away until all become - it's all fulfilled.

All accomplished.

V. 19. Breaking The Law

Now if you go downtown - there is certain laws about red lights. And all of that. Now I don't say I fulfill the law. No, you say I obeyed the law. You obeyed the law. Now when Jesus talks about until all become - that is to say they are valid in their requirements until what they aimed at, their purposes have come about. They are incomplete without their purposes. A thing that does not gain its purpose is not complete. The purpose must come about for it to be complete. They aimed at what comes to be. And you can't twist that around.

Now I wish there was some way that we could make this a practical application, as to your situation today. The commandments of God - concerning baptism and following the Lord Jesus Christ, and coming to the Lord's Supper. All of these things he has - Christ has come to be the fulfillment of that law.

The cross on Calvary has great meaning. I suggest that if we are not clear in our understanding of the law, we will never understand the meaning of the cross. There are people who talk about the cross and it is purely a sentimental matter.

Now the purpose of the cross is not just to arouse pity in us.

I don't think the great purpose of the cross was a primary display of God's love.

I think the purpose of the cross must be finally understood in the terms of the law.

What was happening upon the cross, was that our Lord Jesus Christ was enduring his own body - the penalty prescribed by the holy law of God for the sin of man.

The law condemns sin and the condemnation that it pronounces is death - the wages of sin is death. The law pronounces that death must pass upon all who have sinned against God and broken his holy law.

When Christ said, I came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it, one way he fulfilled it was taking the punishment of sin. The punishment is death and he died. The law must be fulfilled.

Do you get the picture. God cannot put it on one side in any respect. Punishment; could not be put aside. God is forgiving us.

He has said that sin has to be punished by death and you and I can be forgiven only because the punishment has been thus exacting. God's law has been fulfilled absolutely. Because he was punished. He punished sin in the holy spotless blameless body of his son upon the cross on Calvary's hill. Christ in fulfilling the law on the cross, and unless you interpret the cross and Christ's death upon it, in strict terms of fulfilling the law - you miss the Scriptural view.

In so dying upon the cross, Jesus was the (fulfillment) of all of the Old Testament types. Go back to Lev. and Numbers and read about the burnt offerings and the (sacrifices). And read about the tabernacle and the temple ceremony. Read about the alter and the laver of washing. And go back through those details and ask yourself what do all of these things mean. What are they for. What is showbread and the high priest and the vessel. What are they meant to do. They are nothing but shadows, types, prophecies of what is going to be done finally by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ by his death and all he had done is an absolute fulfillment of all of these types and shadows. He is the high priest - he is the offering, and the sacrifice. He has presented his blood in Heaven so that that whole of the ceremonial law has been fulfilled.

This is also the argument of Paul in (Romans 8:2-4) For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do - it was weak through the flesh. God, sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh - and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives us the law of the love and power to live by it. We have received the spirit. And we are not at enmity now with God.

Jeremiah, the prophet, looked at it in these words. He said, I am going to make a new covenant. And the difference between the new and the old - no longer will the law be on the tables of stone outside you - but on the fleshly tables of the heart. This is the same things that Hebrews 8 talks about.

When the veil in the temple was rent and twain at his death, we see Jesus Christ, the altar, and the sacrifice and the fulfillment of all of these things.

We must tonight recognize the fact that this Kingdom will proceed and that law breakers will be punished. Let us make no mistake about that. Those who die unbelieving in Jesus Christ are under the condemnation of the law.

The relationship of the Christian to the law is no longer under the law in the sense that the law is a covenant of works. The whole argument in Gal. 3 is that the Christian - salvation is not dependent upon keeping it. It has been delivered from the curse of the law. And this is the difference between law and grace. We tend sometimes to have a wrong view of law and to think of it as something that is opposed to grace - but it is not.

Parsons' Priesthood Destroyed & we now have unchangeable priest.

Law really is our schoolmaster. Law was never meant to save man - because it could not. Some people tend to think that God said to the nation, I am now giving you a law. But the law was given and promised to Abraham and his seed in order that he might see the true character which God demands. That it might show forth the exceeding sinfulness of sin. That it also might show men that they could not justify themselves before God. Hence Paul describes it, schoolmaster. Shall we continue to sin that grace may abound.

God forbid. The trouble with us is that we so often have a wrong view of holiness at this point.

What is grace - it is the marvelous gift of God having delivered man from the curse of the law - enables him to keep it and be righteous as Christ was righteous.

V. 20 - Bring us to the conclusion -- of the matter. It helps us to see that the standard of the new man of righteousness is beyond doubt of even any system or set of rules to guide this society. Christ requires his people to do certain things because they are of certain character. The new order calls for new righteousness. The Kingdom of Heaven demands more, than just rule keeping. The law was given to protect the rights of others.

Let me illustrate a servant in your home, who has been carefully trained and may fulfill all of the outward demands of household work. But how different is the service which is compelled by an outward rule and compensated for by a specified wage. From the service which the wife and mother gives inspired by love and the sacrifices it makes.

The law could not produce perfect character - because it could not yet deal with the principle. Our Lord, on the other hand, came to teach that love would fulfill all the demands of the law of the prophets and more. He taught that to love one's neighbor would be the fulfilling of the law, and that obedience to every commandment is summed up in one word. Thou shalt love.

Thus Christ is shedding his love abroad in our hearts - becomes the end of the law for righteousness for all who believe. What he aimed at is righteousness in the Kingdom was far more superior to that of the Scribes and the Pharisees.

Meeting his divine will. This is a quality of man and see the right prevail over all. The right cause and that is God's cause. And he sees sin as a great enemy of man. A great wrong against man. And he wants to see man redeemed from the power of sin. It's what the prophet said. Now this righteousness is the kind that Jesus claimed to teach and be the fulfillment of. The whole city came to see a man.

If salt lost its savour - they have nothing - no substitute.

Exept your Righteousness - Not Make easier or reduce demands of law -

No hope of Heaven - They were separatist -

What was their idea of Religion?

- 1- External righteousness - Praised God not as other men -
2. Concerned ceremonial more than with Moral - wash hands -
3. Religion of Man made rules & regulations - Tradition -
4. Concerned with own Righteousness - what they could do -
5. Tragic Attitude Toward Others - Absence of love
No Mercy

Like Ship - anchor - cable tacks 20' - bottom no good -