

CAME NOT TO DESTROY THE LAW BUT TO FULFILL

Matt. 5:17-47: “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.”

INTRODUCTION:

1. Thayer on the Greek Word Πληρῶσαι To fulfill says, “To cause God’s will (as made known in the law) to be obeyed as it should be, and God’s promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfillment.”
2. In Matt. 5:1-16, Jesus had been talking to the multitude about the characteristics of the citizens of the Kingdom of heaven and that these characteristics were necessary in our lives in order to produce happy people.”
3. In Matt. 5:17-48, Jesus begins a discussion of the Righteousness of the Kingdom. And he begins to draw sharp contrasts between His teaching and interpretation of the Law of Moses and the construction and the addition which the Rabbis had put upon it.
 - A. Instead of coming to destroy either the law or the prophets, Jesus came to fulfill all the types of the former, and eventually, all the unfilled predictions of the latter. He Did These Things: (1) Partly in His own person, and (2) partly by His administration of the affairs of His kingdom.

David Lipscomb has said: “When we dis sever and dissociate the teaching of the New Testament from those of the Old, we disjoin what God has joined. He has given the two successive and united developments to man. No man from the New Testament alone can ever learn the full and perfect lesson that God has conveyed to man. Neither if he takes the New Testament alone can he fully appreciate the will of God as revealed to man and his dealings with man. They are complements one of the other, and as necessary to each other as the two blades of a pair of shears.”

- (1) “Break one of these least commandments,” probably refers to the jot and the tittle. Or, making even a small change in the Law of Moses.

4. The Law of Moses Has Been Fulfilled In Christ

- A. Eph. 2:11-18: “Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh -- who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands -- that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.”
- B. Col. 2:14-17: “having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross, having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”
- C. Rom. 7:1-6: “Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, even to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.”

D. Heb. 7:12: “For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.”

(1) Jer. 31:31-34: “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah -- not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them,” says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, says the Lord, I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,’ says the Lord. ‘For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.’”

(2) Heb. 8:6-13: “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: ‘Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah -- not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them,’ says the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days,’ says the Lord, ‘I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’ In that He says, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”

5. While Certain Basic Statutes May Be Repealed The Principle Underlying Them Is Eternal.

- A. "A principle is the fundamental basis or that which determines the nature of anything, while a statute, in its ideal, is the statement of a principle of right in mandatory form, by competent authority, with adequate penalty for disobedience. A statute is the medium through which a principle is applied. The statute is enacted and may be repealed, while the principle is eternal and remains immutable." (Thomas, Sermon on the Mount, pp. 36-37)

NOTE: Thus, nine of the Ten Commandments and other aspects of the Law of Moses are still binding - not because they were a part of the law - but because they are eternal principles. That in their very nature they have always been right.

6. Jesus Thesis Is That The Righteousness of His Kingdom Would Succeed That Which the Pharisee Had Made the Law of Moses.

- A. The Law of Moses had been mutilated by the Pharisees. They had made it into something which God never at any time intended. "They had made void the law of God by their vain traditions."

A.T. Robertson has said, "The Talmud itself gives the seven varieties of the Pharisees, and all but one of them are afflicted with hypocrisy, the sin, that Jesus so vigorously denounces, and that stirs the modern apologists of Phariseism to such a rage."

I. IN THE FOLLOWING VERSES JESUS DEALT WITH SIX BASIC LAWS.

I. First Place, The Law Against Murder. (Verses 21-22)

- A. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not murder; and whosoever shall murder shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother (without a cause) shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

B. Jesus Here Deals with the Gradation of Attitude Leading to Murder.

- (1) Anger
- (2) Hatred
- (3) Contempt

a. Raca - Vain, Empty, Worthless

b. Moro - Μωρε Expression of Contempt for a Man's Person.

- (1) He knew that sin homes in the mind.

C. The Hell Fire is Gehenna and means internal place of punishment.

2. Secondly: Law of Reconciliation. (Verses 23-26)

A. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

- (2) The offender has the obligation to make immediate reconciliation.

3. Thirdly, The Law Against Adultery. (Verses 27-32)

A. "Ye have heard that it was said of old time, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery': But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

B. Jesus Recognized That the Thought or Desire Would Precede the Act.

- (1) Point out some factors which would influence a person's thoughts along this line: (i) Nudeness; (ii) Public Bathing; (iii) Immodest Dress; (iv) Suggestive

Literature; (v) some movies and T.V. programs; (vi) Being in the wrong place with the wrong people at the wrong time.

4. Fourthly: The Law Against Divorce. (Verses 31-32)

A. “It hath been said, ‘Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.’ But I say unto you, ‘That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth hereto commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.’”

(1) Marriage had sunk to a new low in Palestine during the time of Christ. (See also Matt. 19:3-11).

5. Fifthly: Law Against Foreswearing Oneself. (Verses 33-37)

A. “Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not forswear thy self, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: nor by the earth; for it is His footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be Yea, yea: Nay, Nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

B. James 5:12: “But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea and your nay, nay, lest you fall into condemnation.”