

“Jesus did not come to
destroy the Law”

Matthew 5:17-20

Introduction to Matthew 5:17-20

- As Jesus was entering His work, it was important to state what He came to do.
- He would shock people in two ways –
 - Scribes and Pharisees would charge Him with Law-breaking. Mk.2:23-24
 - Jesus would fulfill the Law, turning attention to the new covenant.

I. What Does Mt.5:17-20 Mean To Us?

17: law, prophets (summary of OT)

NOT – BUT sequence

- Not destroy: as building, Mt.24:2; Ac.6:14.
- But fulfill: as of divine promises, 1:22.

Jesus fulfilled types of the law,
and prophecies of the Messiah.

18: a false claim

- Some say law was in constant state of change while Jesus was on earth, until it finally became the new law. Wrong!
- Nothing would pass until all was fulfilled.
- OT remains authoritative (God's word) but its role differs...

It pointed to
new covenant

It is fulfilled in
new covenant

Now we hear Jesus

18: a false claim

- Jot – smallest letter.



- Tittle – smallest mark.

All would be fulfilled, not discarded.

19: light / heavy commandments

- Rabbis distinguished light and heavy commandments (though both should be kept)
- **Break** –annul, cancel, loose from obligation.
 - Mt.18:18.
 - Jn.5:16, 18.
 - Jn.7:21-24.

19: this is a test (1/3)

- Even weak disciples keep 'great' commands. Real test: 'lesser' commands.
- One who breaks one least command under OT would do same under NT. Cf. Mt.4:4
- Jesus: keep least commands, 19. (23:23; Ja.2:10-11).
- One who respected God's commands under old covenant would bring same respect into new covenant.
 - Wrong view of commands would mean lowly position in His kingdom...or worse.

19: this is a test (2/3)

- **Called least:** do these enter His kingdom?
Yes, with consequences – (v.19)
- **“Called”** – 2:23; 5:9; 22:43; 1 Jn.3:1, etc.
 - Careless, Mt.7:21-23, 24-27
 - Disciples, Mt.18:1-4; 20:20-28
 - Different talents, Mt.25:14-30
 - Lawyer, Mk.12:28-34
 - Jews, Ac.2:...42, 47 (5... 6:1-6... 6:7) → 15
 - Simon, Ac.8

19: this is a test (3/3)

- **Called least:** do these enter His kingdom?
 - John Mark, Ac.15 (2 Tim.4:11)
 - Corinth, 1 Co.5; 2 Co.12:19 – 13:3
 - Galatia, Gal.1:6
 - Peter, Gal.2:11
 - Ph.1, 3, 4
 - 2 Th.3:6
 - 1 Tim.1:18-20
 - Hb.5, 6

“Though one may now enter the kingdom of heaven having of himself far less righteousness than that of the Pharisees, yet he must attain to righteousness superior to theirs, or he cannot abide in the kingdom”

– McGarvey.

20: shock treatment

- People tend to exalt religious leaders
- Most of them would oppose Jesus to the end, Lk.11:45-54
- Three groups –
 1. 19a: Least in kingdom: discard least commands, keep great ones.
 2. 19b: Great in kingdom: faithfully keep all, great and small.
 3. 20: Scribes / Pharisees: generally would not enter kingdom.

I. What Does Mt.5:17-20 Mean To Us?

II. Lessons To Learn

1. Jesus relied on God's word
to remain pure. Mt.4

- His opponents distorted Law to escape its decrees, Mt.23:16-22.
- Talmud
- Mt.23:25-26

2. Jesus spoke with authority. Mt.5:18

- He quotes no famous rabbis: only Himself and the Word (Mt.4).

3. Jesus taught others to take God's word seriously, Mt.5:19.

- Most people do not take Christ seriously because they listen to others who know more than Christ (?)

4. Jesus threatened judgment against violators of God's law, Mt.7:21

- What matters at the Judgment?
- Not just respect, but 'doing' what He says, Mt.7.

5. Jesus said the Mosaic Law would end, Mt.5:18

Gal.3²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

²⁴ Therefore **the law was our tutor** to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

²⁵ But after faith has come, **we are no longer under a tutor.**