

Jesus & The Law

or ...

The Coming of the Kingdom of God

Jesus Words on the Law

- *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law **until all is accomplished.**” (Matthew 5:17-18) (NRSV)*
- *“Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law **until all is accomplished.**” (Matthew 5:17-18) (RSV)*
- *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law **till all be fulfilled.**” (Matthew 5:17-18) (KJV)*

Jesus Words on the Law

- *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law **until everything is accomplished.**”* (Matthew 5:17-18) (NIV)
- *“Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to complete them. I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law **until its purpose is achieved.**”* (Matthew 5:17-18) (Jerusalem)
- *“Don’t misunderstand why I have come – it isn’t to cancel the laws of Moses and the warnings of the prophets. No, I came to fulfill them, and to **make them all come true.**”* (Matthew 5:17-18) (Living Bible)

The Words ... speak

Jesus said ...

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- *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law **till all be fulfilled.**” (Matthew 5:17-18) (KJV)*

Paul said ...

- *“**For Christ is the end of the law ...**” (Romans 10:4)*

Jesus & The Law

... in Jesus' own words

You Have Heard It Said ...

- *“You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘**You shall not murder**’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that **if you are angry** with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and **if you insult [abuse]** a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and **if you say, ‘You fool’**, you will be liable to the hell [Gehenna] of fire.” (Matthew 5:21-22)*

Just because you don't murder ... doesn't make you righteous ...

Don't be angry ... verbally abusive ... or insulting ...

These can lead to greater sin ...

But I Say to You ...

- *“So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go;
first be reconciled to your brother or sister,
and then come and offer your gift.*

Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.”
(Matthew 5:23-26)

**Don't stand before God ... self-righteously ... if your brother or sister
“has something against you.”**

You Have Heard It Said ...

- *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell [Gehenna].

And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell [Gehenna].” (Matthew 5:21-22)

Get rid of the causes of your sinfulness.

It would be better to be maimed and disfigured than to sin against God by abusing your fellow man.

Repent ... change your life ...

You Have Heard It Said ...

- *“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’*

But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.” (Matthew 5:31-32)

You Have Heard It Said ...

- *“Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’*

But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’; anything more than this comes from the evil one.” (Matthew 5:33-37)

Simply put ... be a person of your word.

You Have Heard It Said ...

- *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’*

But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.

Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.” (Matthew 5:38-42)

Beneficence ...

You Have Heard It Said ...

- *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’”*

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

(Matthew 5:43-48)

A command to be perfect !?

Greatest Commandment

- *“... and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ‘Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?’ He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”*
(Matthew 22:35-40)

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” (Luke 6:31)

“That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. That is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary (explanation); go and study it.”
(Hillel the Elder from the Babylonian Talmud)

Greatest Commandment

Mark 12:29-31, Matt 22:37-39, Luke 10:27

- *“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”* (Deut 6:4-5)
- *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* (Lev 19:18)
- *“There is no other commandment greater than these.”* (Mark 12:31)
- *“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”* (Matthew 22:40)
- *“... do this, and you will live.”* (Luke 10:28)

“You are not far from the kingdom of God.” (Mark 12:34)

The Law and the Kingdom

- *“It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.” (Matthew 15:10)*
- *“... whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and that is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander” (Matthew 15:17-19)*
- *“... these are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.” (Matthew 15:20)*

Jesus is saying ... in effect ... that all of the laws are not equal. Those that pertain to human relationships are more important than those that pertain to rite and ritual or diet. Don't the prophets say the same?

What is Required?

- *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: **justice and mercy and faith**.
It is these you ought to have practiced **without neglecting the others**.
You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!”*
(Matthew 23:23-24)

Jesus does make a distinction within the Law ... between laws

...

Those laws that foster justice and mercy are more important ... or take precedence over those that deal with dietary regulations ... rite ... and ritual.

Justice ... Righteousness

“I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and grain-offerings, I will not accept them and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.

Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” (Amos 5:21-24)

Even worship of God ... as directed by Him within the scripture ... has no efficacy if the worshippers heart is not “right.”

Law of the Heart

“The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt - a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, 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 within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Law of the Heart

No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Justice must come from individuals ... and individual hearts ...
not from law codes and law books ...

There will be justice when people demand it ... and decide to do something about it.

Law of the Heart

“The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?’

They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them,

‘Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.’

Law of the Heart

And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her,

‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, sir.’

And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.’” (John 8:3-11)

The Message – Not New

Hosea ... “I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings.”

Amos ... “... let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

Micah ... “He has showed you ... what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

An Interpretation

- Jesus is God's self-interpretation in history.
If we accept the incarnation, then our understanding of God now includes the temporal experiences of Jesus, i.e., rejection, suffering, death ... and his entire life and *teaching*.
- Jesus was a teacher ... not just a sacrifice.
- The life of Jesus provided mankind the example of selfless obedience and an ethical guide.

Jesus ... Paul
A Case in Point

Divorce

Jesus on Divorce

“Some Pharisees came to him, and to test him they asked, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?’ He answered, ‘Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning “made them male and female”, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.’

They said to him, ‘Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?’ He said to them, ‘It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but at the beginning it was not so.

And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery.” (Matthew 19:3-9)

Jesus on Divorce

“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’

But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.” (Matthew 5:31-32)

The law ... and Jesus' interpretation of it seems rather simple ...

Paul on Divorce

“To the married I give this command - not I but the Lord - that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

***To the rest I say - I and not the Lord** - that if any believer has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. And if any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.*

For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

*Paul is clearly speaking like a “church official” here.
He is **correcting** Jesus!*

Divorce

But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound.

***It is to peace that God has called you.** Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:10-16)*

”Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. **For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.**

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.” (Matthew 10:34-39)

A Difference of View

Jesus preaches to the people ... anyone who will listen ... about how to make the **Kingdom of God** on the earth a reality. **Jesus teaches people how to live** in accordance with God's will.

Paul writes letters to **churches about church** ... beliefs ... behavior ... authority. His letters are written to specific groups ... about specific problems ...

Let us not confuse the church of Paul with the Kingdom of God of Jesus ...