



The Sermon on The Mount
Bible Study Session 4
Matthew 5:17-20



Study By
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Greek NT

5.17 Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας· οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι. 5.18 ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν· ἕως ἂν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ, ἰὼτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται. 5.19 ὃς ἐὰν οὖν λύσῃ μίαν τῶν ἐντολῶν τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων καὶ διδάξῃ οὕτως τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἐλάχιστος κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν· ὃς δ' ἂν ποιῇ καὶ διδάξῃ, οὕτως μέγας κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν. 5.20 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ περισσεύσῃ ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη πλεῖον τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.

La Biblia de las Américas

17 No penséis que he venido para abolir la ley o los profetas; no he venido para abolir, sino para cumplir. 18 Porque en verdad os digo que hasta que pasen el cielo y la tierra, no se perderá ni la letra más pequeña ni una tilde de la ley hasta que toda se cumpla. 19 Cualquiera, pues, que anule uno solo de estos mandamientos, aun de los más pequeños, y así lo enseñe a otros, será llamado muy pequeño en el reino de los cielos; pero cualquiera que los guarde y los enseñe, éste será llamado grande en el reino de los cielos. 20 Porque os digo que si vuestra justicia no supera la de los escribas y fariseos, no entraréis en el reino de los cielos.

NRSV

17 Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. 18 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. 19 Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

NLT

17 Don't misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to fulfill them. 18 I assure you, until heaven and earth disappear, even the smallest detail of God's law will remain until its purpose is achieved. 19 So if you break the smallest commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be great in the Kingdom of Heaven. 20 But I warn you -- unless you obey God better than the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees do, you can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven at all!

The Outline of the Text:

I. Jesus came to fulfill the Law, v. 17

Fulfill = Unclear meaning for *πληρῶσαι*
 Law and Prophets = Hebrew scriptures

II. This mission rests on solid grounds, vv.18-20

Two reasons for the claim in v. 17:

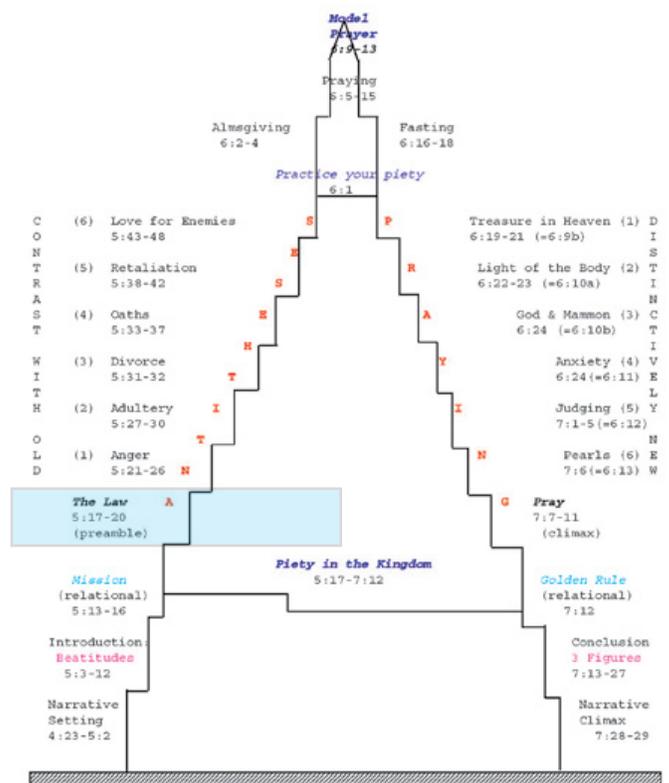
a. The Law doesn't change, vv. 18-19

The Law = Law of Moses; Hebrew scriptures, v. 18
 Implications: Christians & the Old Testament, v. 19

b. Keeping the Law is challenging, v. 20

Entrance Saying of Jesus, cf. 7:21-23
 Scribes & Pharisees of Jesus' day
 Different demands than religious legalism

The Literary Structure of the Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 4:23-7:29



Source: Lorin L. Cranford, *Study Manual of the Sermon on the Mount: Greek Text* (Fort Worth: Scripta Publishing Inc., 1988), 230. Adapted from Gunter Bornkamm, "Der Aufbau der Bergpredigt," *New Testament Studies* 24 (1977-78): 419-432.

Diagram of the Sermon on the Mount
Mt. 5:17-20

23 ^{5:17} **Do not suppose**
that I have come
to destroy the Law or the Prophets;

24 **I have not come**
to destroy
but

25 **-----**
to fulfill.

^{5:18} For

26 **I solemnly tell you,**
until Heaven
and
earth pass away,
one letter
or
one stroke of a letter will not pass
from the Law
until all be accomplished.

^{5:19} Therefore
whoever may break one
of the least of these commandments
and
----- may so teach men
27 **will be called least**
in the Kingdom of Heaven;
but
whoever may do them
and
----- may teach them
28 **this one will be called great**
in the Kingdom of Heaven.

^{5:20} For

29 **I tell you,**
unless your righteous far exceeds that
/-----|
of the scribes and Pharisees,
that you will never gain entrance
into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Summary:

The thought flow revolves around the declarations in statements 23-25, which serve as foundational to the passage. The admonition to not misunderstand Jesus in statement 23 is re-enforced by the negative/positive assertions in statements 24-25. The foundation for this claim of a positive connection of Jesus to the Old Testament rests upon two bases, as the "for" (*γάρ*) conjunctions in statements 26 and 29 indicate. First is the assertion of the unchangeableness of the Law in statement 26. Out of this comes implications for those in the Kingdom, which are set forth negatively (#27) and positively (#28). Obedience to the Law and encouragement of others to obedience is mandated by Jesus. The second reason for Jesus' stance to the Law grows out of a dramatic contrast between His understanding of Kingdom righteousness and the views of the scribes and Pharisees, as reflected in statement 29. Note that both reasons are introduced by solemn pronouncement of divine truth: #26 "I solemnly tell you" (*ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν*), and #29 "I tell you" (*λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν*). This solemn tone emphasizes the importance of these two reasons underlying Jesus' positive stance to the Law and to the Old Testament in general. Thus, the passage asserts a positive connection of Jesus to the Law and to the Old Testament based upon two very important reasons.