

Jesus and the Law

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount served as a kind of new "giving of the Law," as well as a commentary and expansion on the Ten Commandments. Jesus' Law in the New Testament is called the law of love, and the law of Christ and the "law of the Spirit of life."

But the Law of Moses plays a solemn role in generating the fear of God that is necessary for repentance and entry into the Kingdom of God.

Matthew 5:17-18 - "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."

In **Matthew 5:17**, the first word for fulfill = *pleroo* - "to make full, to fill, to fill up ... to fill to the full" or "to render full," or "to complete" (Thayer's Lexicon)

The second "fulfill" in **Matthew 5:18** is *ginomai*, which means "to become, to take place, be accomplished" and means that the Law will be in effect until all of God's plan is completed, at which time the heavens and earth (and the Law) will pass away.

The Law is still in force:

James 2:10 - "Whoever keeps the whole Law but stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (**Romans 3:23**)

Isaiah 42:21: "The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will exalt the law and make it honorable." Jesus "exalted" the Law by showing its spiritual intent.

Jesus took the demands of the Law as outward behavior and applied it to our inner lives, to the heart.

"Righteousness" would now concern the conscience, the heart and the thoughts.

Matthew 5:20 - "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Which basically means that none of us can enter.

Matthew 5:21-28 presents a more strict interpretation of "Thou shalt not kill" and "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Then, in **Matthew 5:29-30**, Jesus presents a radical and impossible solution - cut off the

parts of your humanity that directly cause you to break the Law. The eye and the hand participated in Eve's original sin of desiring and taking the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But covetousness involves the whole of who we are.

The chapter ends with the admonition "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (**Matthew 5:48**)

The New Testament writings show that the only solution is to repent, pick up your cross, leave your self behind and enter into the one perfect Life that has ever existed, Jesus' own.

Then we can un-self-consciously "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (**Galatians 6:2**) as His life flows through us.

Romans 8:1-2 - "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

The Law of Moses is always out there, waiting to remind us of our weakness and to compel us back to repentance whenever we get off the Mercy Seat and try to go our own way.