



CHAPTER (5) SYNOPSIS = Jesus' Sermon On The Mount Address.

1. Leading the Jewish crowds to a mountainside sb viewed as a clear sign that Jesus has become Israel's new Moses.

Like Moses, Jesus goes to the mountain for the purpose of teaching God's people the conditions of their identity, as well as the laws and promises (blessings and curses) of their covenant relationship (mtn ascension = 1-2 w/Exo 19:1-3// blessings and curses = 3-12 w/Luk 6:20-26 w/Deu 28// conditional identity = 13-16 w/Exo 19:4-6//giving of the Law = 17-18, 21, 27, 33, 38, 43 w/Exo 20-24).

2-5. (vv1-12; blessings and curses) DISCUSSED

6. (vv13-16; conditional identity) DISCUSSED

7. Jesus preserves the entirety of the Old Testament Scriptures as authoritative for God's people under the New Covenant¹:

7.1. The OT Scriptures are not to be destroyed but rather observed and obeyed (17)²

7.2. Even the smallest detail of the OT Scriptures will remain in effect as long as this world exists (18)

7.3. People wb condemned or rewarded based on their response to the OT Scriptures (19)

7.4. It is imperative that we be found faithfully obedient to the entirety of the OT Scriptures if we want to go to heaven (20).

8. There are many today who think that the obligation to obey the Old Testament Scriptures has been removed (in part or whole) as essential to salvation for the New Covenant Christian³. What they fail to consider is not only the content, clarity and consequences of Jesus' teaching in Mat 5:17-20, but also that:

8.1. God views His OT Scriptures as remaining in force forever since they are more perfect than creation, as precious as God's name, the very keys to abundant life and salvation (Deu 4:2, 12:34, 30:11-20, 32:45-47; Isa 40:8 w/1Pe 1:23-25 w/2Ti 3:15-16; Psa 19:7-11, 119:24, 96, 160, 138:2; Jam 1:25; Rom 7:12; Many people treat God's OT Scriptures – esp. His Law, as no longer serving the purpose of abundant life and salvation. They instead serve only to condemn. Paul's stmts about the Law are often interpreted w/this exclusive purpose- e.g. Gal 3:10, 21; 1Ti 1:9-10⁴)

8.2. The OT prophecies regarding the coming Messiah and New Covenant also speak about the Law as that which will be cherished by and taught to God's people (Deu 18:15-18; Isa 2:1-5, 8:11-9:7; 42:1-4, 21; Jer 31:31-34; Eze 36:25-27; Mic 4:1-2; Mal 4:1-4)

¹ "The way to test the greatness and incisiveness of any truly evangelical theology is to ask how it relates biblical law to God's gospel of grace. The history of the Church's achievement on this issue has not been remarkable or convincing." – Walter Kaiser

² Jesus' initial prohibition ("Do not think") implies that there were some among His Jewish audience under the assumption that the Law might one day be removed or such insistence was necessary due to humankind's natural inclination toward antinomianism. Since the OT Scriptures make no reference to their cessation, it is most likely the latter which became the basis for His statement.

³ As discussed this is the majority position today. It has many supporting scholars/theologians including some from the Reformation: "The Law and the Decalogue has no right to accuse and terrify the conscience in which Christ reigns through grace, for Christ has made this right obsolete." - Martin Luther; "In the new era the...good news of salvation/restoration in Christ has displaced the ...law as the foundational guide to community life." – Roy Ciampa; "Believers in Christ do not find God's will through the law; are not instructed through the law; and are not obliged to obey the law" – Brian Rosner. It is relevant to note that Dr. Rosner's very recent work on the Law (*Paul and the Law*, 2013) also makes no mention of Mat 5:17-20.

⁴ John MacArthur writes, "What was the purpose of the law? Paul's answer is that the law reveals man's utter sinfulness, inability to save himself, and desperate need of a Savior. *It was never intended to be a way of salvation* (emphasis mine)." If what MacArthur says is true (the Law's sole function is condemnation and contributes nothing to salvation) then Paul stands in direct contradiction not only to God – Who states the Law is essential to life/salvation (again Deu 30:11-20), but also himself (e.g. Gal 5:19-21; Eph 6:1-2).

8.3. The primary way the Bible teaches us to identify false teachers and gospels is by their rejection (in part or whole) of God's OT Law/Scriptures as something we must observe in order to be saved (Deu 12:34-13:3 w/2Pe 2:1-3, 19-21; Jud 1:3-4; Eph 5:1-7; 1Jo 2:1-7, 2:24-3:8; Again, how most people interpret Paul, makes all FT's in the OT the good guys – for preaching against obedience to the Law, and all God's prophets – who preached faithfulness to the Law, the bad guys – e.g. Jer 5:4-7 w/12, 6:14-19, 7:1-23, 8:4-10, 9:1-14, 23-25, 11:1-16, 16:10-11. In this light consider then - Rom 9:30 – 10:4⁵)

8.4. Rejection of (or disobedience to) God's OT Law is the biggest reason people go to Hell (Isa 51:7-8 w/Mar 9:48 w/Luk 16:19-31; Pro 28:4 w/Rom 1:18, 31-32; Rev 21:8 – “faithless” = unfaithful to God's OT commands/law – see Psa 119:158; Today, we are made to believe that the biggest reason people go to hell is b/c they are trying to earn their salvation⁶.

8.5. Those in the first century (i.e. the time of Jesus and the Apostles) viewed as apostasy the act of covenant members becoming convinced that the OT Law was no longer necessary to salvation (Act 21:21, 28; This was true in the OT as well - Deu 29:18-20; In this light consider - Heb 10:26-29 = “dies” - Present tense = The author is assuming that the disobedience previously mentioned, is the result of deciding to “set aside the Law of Moses” by individuals in the NC. IOW: this is the “sinning deliberately” of v26. According to the author, the penalty for committing such a crime is still in force just as the Law remains in force – i.e. death. However, the deathly consequences associated w/this crime w/ worse since the “witnesses” requiring such Law-abiding compliance - as well as those offended, are greater. They are “the Son of God”, “the blood of the covenant” and “the Spirit of grace”.)

⁵ Consider John MacArthur's notes on Rom 9:30-10:4: “‘law of righteousness’ – Righteousness *earned* by keeping the Law... ‘works of the law’ – By doing everything the law prescribed... ‘their own righteousness’ – Based on their conformity to God's law... ‘Christ is the end of the law’ – Paul means that belief in Christ ends the sinner's futile quest for righteousness through his imperfect attempts to *save himself* by efforts to obey the law.” Notice, all actions of obedience to the law are viewed as a negative, as attempts to merit/earn salvation. No doubt, MacArthur would agree that whatever view the Jews possessed regarding the Law in Jesus' day emanated from their ancestors – which is the same as saying, this too was their view of the Law. But if that is the case, then the prophets of the OT - who clearly preached strict adherence to the Law, were indeed the bad guys. Could it be that MacArthur (and those who view obedience to the Law as promoting works-based salvation) are instead completely misinterpreting the role/place obedience to the Law plays in salvation? Is it possible, that obedience to the Law can be both essential to salvation and at the same time never establishing merit?

⁶ Nicholas Batzig states that the desire to earn/merit our acceptance before God is inherent to all of us as part of our sin nature: “There is another kind of legalism we must be on guard against—the practical legalism that can imperceptibly take control of our hearts. By nature, our consciences are hardwired to the covenant of works. While believers have become new creatures in Christ, they still carry around with them an old man—an old Adamic sin nature. The default mode of the old nature is mentally to slide back under the covenant of works. We are ever in danger of becoming practical legalists by nurturing or overlooking a legalistic spirit.” ([Legalism Defined](#), Ligonier.org). Batzig's words create problems on many levels. Not only did the covenant of which Batzig speaks (Covenant of Works) never exist, but such an assumption also implies that God established a salvific framework for man which was inherently sinful (i.e. one that encouraged man to think he could earn His way to heaven)! However, possibly more ridiculous, is the faulty idea that such merit motivation is the boogey man Christians need to be most vigilant against. In the twenty years I have been a Christian, I have never experienced – nor met another Protestant, with such inclinations or silly notions.