

# The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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George L. Faull, Editor

## Matthew 5:17-19 and the Law

Dear Brother Faull,

I have a good friend who is out of the country for his job and is messaging me with questions about **Matthew 5:17-19** and the Law. It is difficult to take him through that subject by Facebook messaging. Not at all the same as sitting down with our Bibles and flipping through for an evening.

I would like to send him a concise organized teaching about it. He is teaching a Jewish person about Jesus, which led him to his own questions. Do you have a booklet that focuses on this?

### ANSWER:

I can answer this with a quick note.

The Bible tells us to compare spiritual things with spiritual things. There are four gospels with a purpose. Some additional information is found in other Scriptures to harmonize the difficult ones.

Let's take the first verse. Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, OR THE PROPHETS; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.

A man courts a girl and she grows to love him and accepts his proposal for marriage. Her little brother loves him greatly, but he cries and cries when someone told him that his sister's friend is not going to be engaged to his sister anymore.

He misunderstands and asks him, "Is it true you're not going to be my sister's fiancé anymore?" The man sits down and explains to the boy.



"No, she will not be my fiancé anymore and we will not be engaged anymore. I am going to fulfill the promise I made to her when we became engaged., Tomorrow she will be my wife and you will be my brother-in-law. I am not destroying the engagement; I am fulfilling it by making my fiancé my wife".

Oh how happy the boy is to know what it means to fulfill instead of destroying or breaking the engagement. So, Christ fulfills the Law and the prophets. He makes them true as promised.

And as we notice above, more is added in the other Gospel. "Not till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

Sounds like heaven and earth is going to pass before all is fulfilled. But no, in no wise would these things not be fulfilled. Now read it in the other Gospel **Luke 16:17**, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, **THAN** one tittle of the law to fail."

He had just said in the preceding verse, "the law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it."

If I say that Hell will freeze over before I deny the Lord, it is not a promise that Hell will ever freeze over. Jesus is saying it would be easier for Heaven and earth to pass away than for the Law and prophets to fail.

As for **verse 19** it is not speaking of the Old Testament Commandments but rather the commandments he had been giving in the Beatitudes, and about being salt and light.

In **verse 20** He says that our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, or you (plural – you all) shall in no case enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

He then shows the commandments they kept were surface obedience to the old law, but Jesus shows the Law is much deeper and must affect the heart and our emotions.

The man who keeps the beatitudes and lives and teaches them, will be called great in the Kingdom. But the man who breaks them will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Which would you prefer to see in your children, the attitudes of the beatitudes or that of a Pharisee, a superficial keeper of the commandments of the law?

Jesus gave the beatitudes so we would not be like the scribes and Pharisees. They were "letter of the law people", but Spirit of the law people were keepers of the intent of the law.

Jesus' teaching fulfills the Law for they are people fortunate enough to recognize their spiritual poverty and mourn over their sins. They have meekness (strength under control) and hunger and thirst for righteousness, are merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, persecuted for righteousness sake, reviled, and lied about and able to rejoice for suffering for this lifestyle.

These kinds of people are preservers of the world like salt and light that cannot be hidden, shining because of their good works, bringing glory to the Father in Heaven. That sure does not destroy the Law but fulfills it.