

# Jesus & the Old Testament

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 24 November 2024

Preacher: Mike Salvati

[ 0 : 00 ] If you would open up your Bibles to Matthew, chapter 5, this is our last installment for our fall series on the Beatitudes.

So during the fall, we've been focusing on one Beatitude at a time in Matthew 5, and then we're lingering a little longer, and so last week we were in the salt and light, and today we are in Jesus talking about His relationship to the Old Testament.

It is extraordinary. And so on page 963 of your pew Bible, or in Matthew 5, 17 through 20, let's hear what our King has to say.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them.

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

[ 1 : 06 ] Therefore, whoever relaxes one of these 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.

For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

May God bless the hearing of His word. There is a terrible epidemic in the United States.

This is me being dramatic. Terrible epidemic. Where do you put your old tech? Where does it go? We have drawers in the Salvati household with old phones and external disk drives, old laptops, even a camcorder or two.

[ 2 : 08 ] What? This old tech is out of date. It's irrelevant and useless. And so we put it in drawers and shelves, out of sight, out of mind.

I don't know what to do with them. Do you? Some people, when it comes to the Old Testament, the 39 books starting in Genesis, ending in Malachi, the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, some people, they think the Old Testament's like old tech.

It's out of date, irrelevant, and useless. The question is, what does Jesus think about the Old Testament?

And how do we, His kingdom citizens, how do we take on the same mindset of Jesus towards the Old Testament?

We must think about the Old Testament the way that our interpreter-in-chief, our forever king, has told us to understand the Old Testament.

[ 3 : 19 ] So just exactly how are we supposed to understand it? Well, Jesus is going to say something extraordinary. Maybe you've already picked up on it when I was reading it. Far from being out of date, irrelevant, and useless, Jesus is going to say something like, the Old Testament actually points to me.

And Jesus is never outdated. He's never irrelevant. He's never useless. Quite the contrary. Amen. So here's how I want you to walk away from this morning.

Here's the point. We need to understand the Old Testament the way that Jesus teaches us to understand the Old Testament. We need to be interpreters of the Old Testament as Jesus interpreted the Old Testament, which is essentially about Him.

It's an extraordinary claim. And so in order to help you this morning, I'm going to ask and answer five questions about this passage.

And Lord willing, you're going to walk away with a clearer sense of what the Old Testament is accomplishing. So question number one.

[ 4 : 33 ] Generally speaking, what did Jesus think about the Old Testament? What did Jesus think about the Old Testament? Well, He mentions the law and the prophets here in verse 17.

But if you flip back to the end, towards the end of the Sermon on the Mount in 7.12, you know this as the golden rule. He says, So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them. For this is the law and the prophets. So whatever Jesus thinks about the Old Testament, the law and the prophets, He has a high view of it. If you turn all the way back towards the end of Matthew chapter 22.

In Matthew chapter 22, verses 34 through 40, which I know is elder Steve Bickle's, one of his favorite passages. Amen. Jesus gets peppered with questions by a lawyer.

Teacher, verse 36, Which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to them, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

[ 5 : 36 ] This is the great first commandment, and the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets. Jesus has a high view of the Old Testament.

In our passage, verse 18, we see some other truths about how Jesus viewed the Old Testament. He sees it as enduring. He says, As long as there's a heaven, as long as there's an earth, there's going to be the Old Testament.

It's got a really long shelf life. The other truth that he points to is that he gets at the extent of it.

There's maybe a view of the Old Testament as, Yeah, generally speaking, that's from God in kind of big picture kind of ways. But did you see what Jesus said?

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot. The most minute details of the Old Testament.

[ 6 : 57 ] Not an iota, not a dot. We'll pass from the law until all is accomplished. The iota and the dot are referring to the smallest strokes of the Hebrew letters in the Old Testament.

The vowel pointing. The slightest stroke that distinguished one Hebrew letter from the next. It would be kind of like the hook on the English lowercase j that separates it from an i.

What Jesus is saying is it's all from God. Not just in its enduring nature. Not just in its detail.

But it's seeking to accomplish something. Before we talk about this little phrase, until it's all accomplished, would you just turn to your right in your New Testament to 2 Timothy 3.16?

The Apostle Paul, scholars believe, made up a word to get at the very nature of the Old Testament. Paul says, all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable.

[ 8 : 20 ] The Old Scripture, all Scripture he's referring to is all the Old Testament. And that English phrase, breathed out by God, is one word in the original language.

And what it's getting at is the God-originating nature of every word in the Old Testament. And what Paul is saying is simply kind of capturing what Jesus believed about the Old Testament.

Every word has come from the mouth of God. Of the Old Testament. Every word. Every word.

That's what makes it enduring. That's why down to the most smallest details, it's going to endure.

And it's going to accomplish something.

Until all is accomplished. It reveals there's a plan. You don't talk about something being accomplished unless something is seeking to get something done.

[ 9 : 26 ] There's a plan. There's a purpose. And we actually, in the verse before 2 Timothy 3.16, we get at the plan.

Paul talks about it this way. But as for you, verse 14. This is 2 Timothy 3.14 and 15. But as for you, continuing what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you've been acquainted with the sacred writings, the Old Testament, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Until it's all accomplished. The Old Testament is revealing God's plan for the fullness of time for all people everywhere to have a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

And that is going to culminate in a moment where Jesus comes back and he makes all wrongs right. And he judges the world, separating them like sheep and the goats.

And at that moment, God will have gathered all of his people from all of time to sing his praises.

Jesus, this plan that he's seeking to accomplish is a big plan and it's a glory plan.

[ 10 : 48 ] And Jesus is saying that plan is made known in the Old Testament. Jesus has a very high view of the Old Testament.

Because he believes it's God speaking. In fact, you can make an argument that Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, was actually there when the Old Testament was given.

It's enduring down to the details. It reveals a plan that is going to find its culmination in Jesus. That's a high view of the Old Testament.

How does Jesus view the Old Testament, generally speaking? Very highly. Second question. How did Jesus view his relationship to the Old Testament specifically?

Specifically, there's this word fulfill. In chapter 17, we read, I have not come to abolish them, the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them.

[11:57] In other words, Jesus didn't come to relax the law or reduce the law or to remove the law. He came to fulfill the law and the prophets and the Psalms, all of the Old Testament.

He came to fulfill it. So the question becomes, how does Jesus fulfill the Old Testament? What does that mean? What does that look like? And I get to tell you this morning, he fulfills it in more than one way.

The first way that you think of, generally, that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament is through Old Testament predictive prophecy. Like, if you flip back to Isaiah chapter 7, verse 14, I mean, we're getting ready for the Advent season.

We read this by Isaiah, And then we look at Matthew chapter 1, verses 20 through 23, and we learn this, That's just one prophecy, predictive prophecy.

From a prophet. Do you guys know the first predictive prophecy of the coming of Jesus? Genesis 3.15.

[13:42] It's actually a curse on the serpent. There's going to be a descendant of Eve that's going to crush his head. So there's this predictive prophecy in both the law and the prophets of the Old Testament, but that's just one way.

There's another way that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament, and it's by way of themes, or what some people call typology. It's like this.

In the Old Testament, you have this sacrificial system established, where there is sinning by God's people, and then they've got a sacrifice.

Blood must be shed to atone for the sin, and it happens over and over and over again. It happens all the way through the Old Testament, and when you get to the New Testament, in John chapter 2, when John sees Jesus, do you remember what he says?

Behold, the Lamb of God, who comes to take away the sin of the world. The greatest sacrifice.

Hebrews 10 talks about Jesus being the once-for-all sacrifice.

[14:55] There's no more need for the blood of goats and bulls, because Jesus has died once and for all. So there we have a theme, a kind of typology being kind of fulfilled in Jesus, and we have that with kingship, we have that with the priesthood, we have that with the temple, we have that with places.

It is all throughout your Old Testament being fulfilled by Jesus in the New. And then there's the moral fulfillment of Jesus, of the Old Testament. I'm guessing if I said, hey, can you rattle off the Ten Commandments, you'd be able to like, yeah, six of them.

And then if I ask, hey, of those six, have you been obeying all of them today? You're like, well, two of them. Check it out.

Jesus lived 33 years. Let's just take the Ten Commandments. Every day, every week, of every month, of every year, he perfectly obeyed, both in behavior and in emotion, heart intent, all of the Ten Commandments, every day of his life for 33 years.

And that's just ten of the commandments. I have a hard time obeying one every day. Jesus was morally perfect when it comes to the commands of the Old Testament law.

[16:33] He obeyed them, and we couldn't. He was the righteous one. It's 1 Peter 3.18, who gave his life for the unrighteous. And then, there's this other fulfillment that I'm calling gospel fulfillment.

At the end of Luke, if you want to turn there, Luke 24, it's on page 1052 of your pew Bible, Jesus has risen from the dead.

And he now is appearing to his disciples. And he shows up with two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. And this conversation ensues, and then Jesus says this in verse 25 through 27, O foolish ones, slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer for these things, a reference to his death, and enter into his glory, a reference to his resurrection? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets,

he interpreted to them and all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Jesus is clearly saying that there are an abundance of scriptures in the Old Testament that are pointing to me, and not just me, his death and his resurrection, the very good news that we get to proclaim.

[18:06] It's gospel fulfillment. And 24 continues, and his disciples are back in Jerusalem.

He shows up there in Jerusalem among them, says, hey, peace be with you. And then in verse 44, we read this, these are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures and said to them, thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things. It's gospel fulfillment. Jesus fulfills the Old Testament in a number of ways.

We call this a Christological understanding of the Old Testament or a Christocentric way of understanding the Old Testament. And it is absolutely remarkable because who makes a claim like that other than Emmanuel, God with us?

[19:23] How did Jesus understand his relationship to the Old Testament? Well, to put it short and sweet, he says it's about me. I came not to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Which brings up question number three. Another aspect of this fulfillment, we see it in the verses that follow back in Matthew 5 in verses 21 through 48, Jesus is talking about restoring the original intent of these Old Testament commands.

I mean, we just looked at Luke 24 and on a higher level, Jesus is saying the Old Testament is pointing to me, my death and resurrection in a variety of different ways.

But in verses 21 through 48, Jesus tackles six examples of how he restores the original scope and intent of the law of God.

He brings fullness to it. He restores it. He restores it. He restores the original intent of the law.

[20:54] And can I just tell you the way in which he restores it is found in verse 48 of chapter 5. He says, you therefore must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

And so he's going to explain these six examples by way of kingdom perfection. perfection. This is what true righteousness and holiness looks like.

In verses 21 through, I'll just point to verses 21 through 26, it starts by saying, you've heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder and whoever murders will be liable to the judgment. Verse 22, but I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to the judgment. Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the counsel and whoever says you fool will be liable to the hell of fire.

Do you know what he's doing? He's like, here's the true intent of the command you shall not murder. It's not only forbidding the actual physical act of murder, but it's actually addressing your anger and hatred to your brothers and sisters.

[22:07] he's saying your anger is murderous intent. So he's bringing out the fullness, the full meaning of the law.

And in verses 27 through 30 he does something very similar with the law you shall not commit adultery. You've heard that it was said verse 20, you shall not commit adultery, but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

So someone can think oh you should not commit adultery like okay I'm not going to touch anybody else's spouse, right? But what Jesus is saying is even if you look lustfully at someone else you've broken the command.

Your lust is adulterous intent. And so what Jesus is doing is he's moving beyond the behaviors and exposing our hearts.

Do you remember in times where people would talk about Jesus as one speaking with authority?

This is it. Here's the true intent of the law.

[23:16] It is to expose you. It's to show you who you really are and you can't hide behind your behaviors. You can't just manage your behaviors and think you're okay.

And so what he does in verse 31 with no fault divorce what he does in verses 33 through 37 in terms of how you use your words to swear oaths and he gets at in 38 through 42 when he gets at

this kind of this vindication we can feel an eye for an eye tooth for a tooth and he gets at in 43 through 47 when people say love your neighbor but hate your enemies and he's like what? Did you not know that your enemy is your neighbor and you're to love your enemy? He brings about the true intent of the law. He restores the original scope and reach of the command. Remember he was there when they were given. There's no escape. It exposes our hearts. We are shown for who we are and you know what it leads us to? Declaration of spiritual bankruptcy. of being able to say you know that's I'm a breaker of that command.

[ 24 : 41 ] I can't I don't obey that command. I'm I'm in debt I'm in over my head. That's the intent of the law.

That's how Paul talks about the use of the law when the law is a tutor. It brings us to the end of ourselves. It exposes our hearts shows us who we are and it shows us our desperate need for a savior.

The guy's speaking. So how does Jesus restore the commands? He brings he brings their true intent back.

He wants our hearts to be exposed leading us to spiritual bankruptcy leading us to mourning over our sin leading us to a meekness leading us to a true hunger and thirsting for true righteousness purity of heart mercy and it's a way in which he fulfills the law.

he brings back its true meaning. Can't escape it. Fourth question. What does it mean when Jesus says relaxing the least of these commandments?

[ 26 : 06 ] We read that in verse 19. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Remember Jesus has been reiterating in this passage that he did not come to remove the law or to reduce the law or to relax the law but he's come to restore the true intent of the law.

Maybe a better question to ask is who's Jesus talking about? Who's relaxing the commandments? Who does he have in mind? And the surprise is that he has in mind is the Pharisees. The religious professionals of the day.

it was these religious professionals that are the ones he quotes. You've heard that it was said to those of old in verse 21 27 you've heard that it was said verse 31 it was also said 33 again you've heard that it was said 38 you've heard that it was said 43 you've heard that it was said you should not you should love your neighbor and hate your enemy your Bible doesn't say that it's actually a relaxing of the law you're like what hey how does that work?

Here's how they're relaxing the law they're adding to the commands they're focusing on behavior and by doing so they are actually avoiding having the commands thoroughly search their hearts they're avoiding the exposure to be the sinners that they really were so these six examples that you have heard that it was said these are the distortions of the Pharisees this is actually them relaxing the commands so that they can manage the commands and feel good about themselves but Jesus says in every single of these six examples but I say to you let me just correct this relaxation of the command and he presses into the full intent and impact of it calling us to perfection he doesn't

[ 28 : 47 ] Jesus doesn't relax the standard of perfection of pure holiness he calls us to it and so these Pharisees they thought they were perfect examples of righteousness but you remember what Jesus calls them whitewashed tombs you look great on the outside but on the inside you're just rotten death kingdom citizens when we come across the commands instead of thinking okay okay how can I how can I make this command fit my life what we do is like oh I'm exposed I'm exposed my heart has been exposed I declare spiritual bankruptcy so relaxing the commandments is interpreting

God's commands in such a way to avoid the sin in your heart to manage behavior so let me ask you a question along these lines when you confess your sins to God what are you typically confessing are you confessing behaviors or are you also confessing sinful acts sinful behaviors and sinful attitudes sinful heart postures anger and hate and lust and greed and insatiable desire for comfort if you're not you've got room to grow to be able to say oh God would you expose my heart shine your light through your commands on the darkness in my heart so that I can walk in a purity of heart of acknowledging your sin now if you're in the room and you're actually saying something like this you know what let's see

I'm trying to remember the last time I actually confessed my sin in which I wasn't prompted hmm if you don't remember the last time you've confessed your sin you need to ask a different question

what does that reveal about you what does that reveal about your hunger and thirst for righteousness maybe you're not relaxing the commands as much as you are a little too relaxed about the commands you're not taking them seriously enough we must view the Old Testament the way that Jesus viewed the Old Testament not relaxing the commandments but allowing the commandments to search our hearts and expose us and then we cry out to him again and again and again one last question and answer chapter or chapter 5 verse 20 for I tell you unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and

Pharisees you will never enter the kingdom of heaven what kind of righteousness is this that exceeds the scribes and the Pharisees I mean weren't the scribes and Pharisees the most righteous people around they were the ones that would kind of wrap their cloaks around them when they were walking through just the normal everyday people so not to be touched and made unclean aren't they the most righteous people aren't aren't they the ones who are pictures of holiness if you ask them they would say of course we are but they were relaxing the commandments Jesus isn't calling us to a just like two notches better than the righteousness of the Pharisees by degree that's not the righteousness that

Jesus is referring to here he's talking about a different kind of righteousness he's talking about a righteousness that is given to those who declare spiritual bankruptcy those who are saying I am utterly unrighteous help me Lord and then they're made righteous don't you want to know how that works remember Jesus fulfilled the righteous requirements of the whole law and the prophets he did what we could never do and when a sinner declares spiritual bankruptcy for the first time they're like I am shot through by these commands I am exposed for the sinner that I am there's no way I could save myself I am justly under God's wrath when you recognize that and admit that to God and say oh help me

[ 34 : 33 ] Lord Jesus God forgives your sin debt Jesus pays for all that debt on the cross so there's no more debt over your head and it just doesn't end there it's God then credits your account with the very righteousness of Christ so not check it out the righteous one was made unrighteous so that the unrighteous ones could be made righteous and on the basis of that work by faith in Christ welcome to the kingdom what kind of righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees it's Christ's righteousness and without it no one can enter the kingdom of heaven and when

Christ's righteousness is imputed to you you are going to hunger and thirst for the real righteousness a heart righteousness that which the commands actually call us to I started talking about an epidemic where do you put old tech maybe your home has an old tech graveyard like our home does old tech that's irrelevant it's out of date it's useless but as we've been seeing Jesus here speak about the Old Testament what I hope you're seeing this morning is that Jesus is extraordinary and this claim by which he says he came to fulfill the Old Testament it's extraordinary so far from being out of date irrelevant and useless the Old

Testament is always to date it's incredibly relevant and it's super useful because it gives us Jesus it points us to him again and again and again the Old Testament is a Christological gold mine unto salvation but don't take my word for it take Jesus word for it I came not to abolish them the law and the prophets but to fulfill them that's something to be very thankful about and it changes the way you view the Old Testament let's pray God in heaven thank you for the Old Testament every word in it and thank you for these words of Jesus that give us light in order to understand the Old Testament that in ways that not we don't always understand but are ways that are glorious that these 39 books point again and again to your great work realized in the person of Jesus Christ by which you're gathering a people for yourself who will praise you for eternity God thank you so much for the Beatitudes thank you so much for these words of Jesus we've been gathering around this fall would you prepare our hearts as we enter the Advent season in Jesus name we pray amen amen so