

# The Gospel of Matthew

**Booklet 05 – Three Lessons**

**Lesson 12 - Matthew 5: 17-20**

**Lesson 13 - About Matthew 5:21-48, Matthew 5: 21-24**

**Lesson 14 - Matthew 5: 25-28**

## *The External Law And The New Authority Matthew 21-48 Part 1*

**International ESL/Bible Lessons**  
Intermediate to Advanced Level

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Much of the material in these lessons come from *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. I*, by William Barclay. Daily Study Bible Series.

I also use Bible Commentaries, Dictionaries and on-line sources. All pictures are from Google Images.

# The Gospel Of Matthew

## Lesson 12 - Matthew 5: 17-20. Jesus explains the Law and his mission

<sup>17</sup> “Do not think / that I have come / to abolish the Law / or the Prophets; / I have not come to abolish them / but to fulfill them. /

<sup>18</sup> For truly I tell you, / until heaven and earth disappear, / not the smallest letter, / not the least stroke of a pen, / will by any means disappear / from the Law / until everything is accomplished.

<sup>19</sup> Therefore anyone / who sets aside one of the least of these commands / and teaches others accordingly / will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, / but whoever practices / and teaches / these commands / will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. /

<sup>20</sup> For I tell you / that unless your righteousness surpasses / that of the Pharisees/ and the teachers of the law, / you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

### ***Vocabulary***

1. Abolish: To do away with. *The US has abolished slavery.*
2. Fulfill: To complete something. To supply something.
3. By *any* means: To enable someone to do something. (By *all* means gives someone permission to do something.)
4. Pharisee: One who tried to obey every single rule or recommendation of the Oral Law.

## **Questions**

1. What is the difference between a commandment or a law and a rule?
2. How dangerous do you think it is for Jesus to make such a strong statement?
3. Who do you think is listening to Jesus talk and teach?
4. Do you think the listeners understood the *common or oral* law about work and healing and all aspects of the *oral law*?

## **Notes:**

1. Remember this is wisdom literature.
2. The Jews use the expression *The Law* in four different ways:
  - 1) The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20)
  - 2) The first five books of the Old Testament called the *Pentateuch*
  - 3) The *law and the prophets* meaning the whole of the Old Testament.
  - 4) The *Oral* or *The Scribal Law*
3. It is the fourth expression of the Law, *Oral* or *The Scribal Law*, that Jesus utterly condemned. The Commandments of God are great broad principles which a man must take and interpret under God's guidance. There are NO rules and regulations in the Ten Commandments. But to the later Jews, this didn't seem enough.

4. The Scribes and Pharisee set out to write a rule for each and every situation possible in life. Thousands of rules were written. This *oral law* was actually finally written down in the third century AD, and that is called *The Mishnah*. In English The Mishnah makes a book of almost 800 pages. Later Jewish scholars wrote commentaries on *The Mishnah* and these are known as *The Talmuds*. The Jerusalem Talmud has 12 printed volumes, and the Babylonian Talmud has 60 printed volumes.
5. For example: What does it mean *to work on the Sabbath*? Is lighting a candle work? Is cooking food work? Is driving to a religious service work? Perhaps to carry one book is not work, but how heavy should the book be? Is walking work? A Jew was permitted to walk one mile, but is two miles work? Jesus wanted to do away with the pettiness of all of this, but not the broad principal of *keeping the Sabbath Holy*. (*Barclay: The Gospel of Matthew*)
6. Christian Bibles consistently refer to "the Law," / meaning the Law of Moses, / as given in the first five books of the Bible. / The Hebrew term / for this / is the *Torah*. / However, the correct translation of "Torah," / is not "law" / (not in the western legal sense of the word). / Rather, / Torah is correctly translated / as *revelation or instruction* from God.

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## Lesson 13 - About Matthew 5:21-48

This entire section, / from verses 21 through 48, / comprises one of the most important sections / in the New Testament. / First, / we need to look at the overview of this unit.

Here / Jesus teaches with *authority*. / No other man had assumed this much authority / or taught in the way Jesus did. / Mark 1:22 / tells of Jesus / at the very beginning of his ministry: / *"They were astonished at his teaching; / for he taught them / as one who had authority, / and not as the scribes."* / Matthew concludes his account / of *The Sermon on the Mount* / with these words: / *"And when Jesus finished these sayings, / the crowds were astonished at his teaching / for he taught them / as one who had authority / and not as their Scribes. (Matt. 7:28-29.)*

For the Jews, / the Law was the only authority, / and each scribe taught / and quoted only the Law of Moses. / For them, / it was totally unchangeable, / and their own thoughts / were not valued in the same way. / They felt the law was reverent / and they expected that same reverence / for all of Moses works.

Yet, / Jesus, / no fewer than 5 times / (Matthew 5: 21, 27, 33, 38 and 43) / quotes the law, / then contradicts it / and substitutes a teaching of his own. / He claimed the right / to point out the inadequacies / of the most sacred writing in the world / and to correct them / out of his own wisdom. / The Greeks explained *authority* / as the power to add / and the power to take away at will. / Jesus claimed that power / even with regard / to that which the Jews believed / to be the unchanging / and unchangeable word of God. / Jesus did not argue about this, / or seek in any way / to justify himself for so doing, / or seek to prove his right to do so. / He calmly, / and without question, / assumed that right. (Barclay, p. 134)

“Clearly one of two things must be true—either Jesus was mad, / or he was unique; / either he was a megalomaniac / or else he was the Son of God. / No ordinary person would dare claim / take and overturn that / which up to his coming / had been regarded as the eternal word of God.” (Barclay, p. 135.)

Jesus took the highest wisdom of man / and corrected it, / because he was / who he was.

His authority was one part, / but the standard / Jesus put up for men and women / was more surprising. / Jesus said that in God’s

sight / it was not only the man who committed murder / who was guilty; / the man who was angry with this brother / was also guilty / and liable to judgment. Not only the man who committed adultery, / but the man with unclean thoughts / and lust / was equally guilty.

Plato likened the soul / to a charioteer / whose task it was / to drive two horses. / One was gentle and easy, and obeyed. / The other was wild and rebellious. / One horse was named *reason* / and the other was called *passion*. / Life is always a conflict between the two—/ the demands of passion / and the control of reason. / So long as there is this inner conflict, / life must be insecure. / The only way to safety, / Jesus said, / is to eradicate the desire / for the forbidden thing forever. / Then, and then alone / life is safe. (Barclay, p. 137.)

Only God can judge men. / We see the outside, / God sees the secrets of his heart. / No one is free or perfect. / This new standard kills pride / and forces us / to look at the standard of Jesus.

### ***Vocabulary and Related Words***

| Adjective   | Noun                    | Verb         | Adverb        |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Reverent    | Reverend                | To revere    | Reverently    |
| Authorized  | Authority<br>Authorizer | To authorize |               |
| Astonishing |                         | To Astonish  | Astonishingly |
| Eternal     | Eternal<br>Eternity     |              | Eternally     |
| Eradicable  | Eradication             | To eradicate | Eradicably    |



# The Gospel Of Matthew

## Matthew 5:21--24

<sup>21</sup> “You have heard / that it was said to the people long ago, / ‘You shall not murder, / and anyone who murders / will be subject to judgment.’ / <sup>22</sup> But I tell you / that anyone / who is angry with a brother or sister / will be subject to judgment. / Again, / anyone who says to a brother or sister, / ‘Raca,’ / is answerable to the court. / And anyone who says, / ‘You fool!’ / will be in danger of the fire of hell.

<sup>23</sup> “Therefore, / if you are offering your gift at the altar / and there / remember that your brother or sister has something against you, / <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there / in front of the altar. / First go / and be reconciled to them; / then come / and offer your gift.

### ***Vocabulary:***

| Adjective      | Noun           | Verb         | Adverb |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------|
| Reconciliatory | Reconciliation | To reconcile |        |

### ***Questions:***

1. Locate the commandment. Now, what did Jesus add to that?
2. What does anger have to do with murder?
3. What does anger do to the relationship of family members?

4. What do you think *Raca* means?
5. What are you doing if you are offering a gift at the altar?

### **Notes**

1. I often teach that anger is a choice. We frequently forget that we can use self-control, even in the exercise of our will against anger. I have known that I was walking into a difficult situation, and I have decided that no matter what, I would not get angry.
2. In Jesus's statement, he is arguing as a Rabbi would argue. He begins with the least of anger, and proceeds to the anger that is punishable. This is how God is dealing with not only the outside that people can see, like murder, but the inside and the seething of anger.
3. In Greek there are two words for anger: *thumos* and *orge*. *Thumos* is the fast anger that comes and then is quickly gone. But the verb for *orge* is *orgizesyhal*, and that is the seething, long lasting anger that builds on the inside of a person. This is the word Jesus used, and it is truly dangerous.
4. Jesus condemns all anger, whatever the type. This is the ideal. The apostle Paul, in Colossians 3:8 orders his people to put off all anger, wrath, malice and slander. Seneca, the philosopher, calls anger a *brief insanity*.

5. *So Jesus forbids the anger which broods, the anger which will not forget, the anger which refuses to be pacified, the anger which seeks revenge.* Barclay, p. 139.
6. Anger in a man's heart and in his speech is equally forbidden. *Raca* is almost an untranslatable word. The tone in which it is said denotes contempt and disgust. *It is to call a person names, like idiot, a silly fool, and other much worse words.* It is the words of one who hates and treats another with contempt.
7. Jesus teaches that the person who destroys another person's name and reputation is liable to end up in Gehenna. We translate that as hell.
8. Gehenna is a word with a history. It really means the Valley of Hinnon. Old King Ahaz used that area for the worship of Molech, and children were burned as a sacrifice to that god. (2 Chron. 28:3). Later, King Josiah stamped out that form of worship and that god, and declared the place to be accursed. The residents of Jerusalem burned their trash there. So Gehenna, the Valley of Hinnon, became identified in people's minds with all that was accursed and filthy, the place where useless and evil things were destroyed. That is why it became a synonym for the place of God's destroying power, for Hell.

9. *So, then Jesus insists that the gravest thing of all is to destroy a man's reputation and to take his good name away. No punishment is too severe for the malicious talebearer, or the gossip over teacups which murders people's reputations. Such conduct, in the most literal sense, is a hell deserving sin.* (Barclay, p. 141.)
10. All these gradations of punishment are not to be taken literally. What Jesus is saying here is: "In the old days, men condemned murder; and truly murder is forever wrong. But I tell you that not only are a man's outward actions under judgment; his inmost thoughts are also under the scrutiny and the judgment of God. (Barclay, p. 141)

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## Lesson 14 - Matthew 5: 25 -28

### *Practical Advice*

<sup>25</sup> “Settle matters quickly with your adversary / who is taking you to court. / Do it while you are still together on the way/, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, / and the judge may hand you over to the officer, / and you may be thrown into prison. /  
<sup>26</sup> Truly I tell you, / you will not get out / until you have paid the last penny.

### **Adultery**

<sup>27</sup> “You have heard / that it was said, / ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ / <sup>28</sup> But I tell you / that anyone / who looks at a woman lustfully / has already committed adultery / with her / in his heart.

### ***Vocabulary and Related Words***

1. Adversary: Opponent. Rival. Enemy.
2. To settle: To decide on something. To solve. To make or become a resident. To pay what is owed.
3. To hand over: Surrender somebody or something. To give up.
4. To get out: To leave.
5. Adultery: Infidelity. Extramarital sex.

## **Questions**

1. How would people have an adversary arrested today?
2. What causes for disputes between people or families can you think of?
3. What happens when a fight or quarrel just keeps building bad feelings?
4. Can you actually apologize quickly or do you nurse your anger?
5. Adultery almost seems acceptable in this society. What damage do you think it does to a marriage and to trust between a couple?
6. Is Adultery acceptable in your country? Why or why not?

## **Notes**

1. Here Jesus is giving practical advice. Interpersonal problems abound in any society. We get aggravated or angry too often. Sometimes we find excuses or rationalize not paying our debts.
2. Jesus is “thinking more in terms of Jewish law; and this situation was by no means impossible under Jewish law. This is obviously a case of debt, for if peace is not made, the last farthing (penny) will have to be paid. Such cases were settled by the local council of elders. A time was appointed when plaintiff and defendant had to appear together; in any small town or village there was every likelihood of them finding themselves on the way to the court together. When a man was adjudged guilty, he was handed over to

the court officer. It was the duty of the officer to see that the penalty was duly paid, and if it was not paid, he had the power to imprison the defaulter, until it was paid.”(Barclay, 145.)

3. Jesus may have had two things in mind:

- Again and again, it is the experience of life, that if a quarrel, or a difference or a dispute is not healed immediately, it can go on breeding worse and worse trouble as time goes on.” This can get bigger than the two people very easily; involve the family, co-workers or friends. It can split a group, a village, a church or a workplace.

\* If at the very beginning, one of the parties had had the grace to apologize or to admit fault, a grievous situation need never to have come about. (Barclay, p. 145.

- It may also have a very spiritual connection. The Jews had and still have a Day of Atonement. It is set aside for making things right between God and the person. It is a solemn and serious day. However, that day does not make things right between humans. A man must make that right.

\*When a person is dying, he is advised by Hospice or perhaps a caregiver to think of people to “make things right with.” It can be a beautiful time as a dying person asks forgiveness for any hurt or harm he or she has done to another.

4. Now, we move on to the section on Adultery, and here Jesus sets a new standard. In Exodus 20:14, we have the simple commandment *You shall not commit adultery*. This was so serious that the adulterer could be put to death, generally by stoning. (Leviticus 20:10)
5. Now Jesus says that not only the forbidden action, but also the forbidden thought is guilty in the sight of God. God knows all.
6. This is not just the gentle look of a man at a woman or the other way around. It is lusting and desiring that woman or man including imagining the act in a person's mind. It is not complementing a person; it is sexually wanting that person.
7. In this day and age, sex sells. The standards have been all but thrown out. It is necessary for the personal integrity and loyalty of a person to be at its strongest as we read ads and watch videos or play games. Many are over muscling the men and over breasting the women. They are designed to excite. One viewing of *Dancing With the Stars* will show the sexualization of dancing to all viewers. Perhaps that is why the ratings are so high.
8. Integrity, loyalty, and fidelity matter in a marriage. Again, Jesus is dealing not just with the act or murder or adultery, but also with the emotions and desires that can be destructive.