

## Episode #723 Matthew 5 Part 6-I Swear to God!

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was teaching His disciples on a mountain, what is commonly called the “Sermon on the Mount.” His teaching was for His disciples, every one an Israelite, and regarded the conduct of a disciple and in light of God’s coming kingdom. After assuring them that He had not come to abolish the law but to fill full every part of it, He began to contrast what was taught “of old” in the law with His Own teaching. He urges them to get right with their adversaries before they come into court. He points out of old it was said not to commit adultery, but He says that a man who looks at a woman to lust after her commits adultery with her in his heart. If anything in your life causes you to offend, it is better to cut that thing out of your life than to end up in Gehenna. Of old, Moses says a man should give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away. Yet the Lord says any man who sends his wife away, except for sexual misconduct, causes her to commit adultery. We are going to talk more about this teaching today.

III. Adultery: Of Old Versus the Lord’s Teaching.

- A. Matthew 5:31 (review). This was said in Deuteronomy 24:1. Speaks of the bill of “divorcement” or of repudiation. A wife no longer desired could not be kept in the house like a slave, or sent away and then, when she finds a new man, claimed again and accused of adultery! This bill of divorcement would give her freedom to find a new husband and not be taken advantage of. It was for her protection. Yet in Christ’s day they were abusing this to the mistreatment of women.
- B. Verse 32. Sexual immorality = an expression of sexual misconduct. He causes her to do this because she is forced to find a new man. Why the exception for the case of sexual misconduct? Because then she has already defiled herself or committed adultery! The law would have her stoned, but under the Roman Empire the Jews could not just execute when they wanted, any more than they could in the United States. To marry her that was divorced would be adultery because she was previously bound to a man from whom she was loosed for no good reason. But this had to do with the character of marriage in Israel, not just in general. Remember under the law many divorced people today would either be dead according to the law (because of sexual misconduct) or their former partner would be dead, meaning they would be widowed, not divorced.

IV. Vows: Of Old Versus the Lord’s Teaching.

- A. Verse 33. It was said in Leviticus 19:12. Also Exodus 20:7, Numbers 30:2, Deuteronomy 23:21. The oaths are pledges in this case.
- B. Verse 34. Heaven can be used as a substitute for God, but if this is done, what is the difference? Notice that heaven is the throne, not the earth.
- C. Verse 35. The footstool is that which is ruled over. The earth will be God’s footstool in the kingdom of God. Jerusalem will be the great capital in the kingdom of God, God’s city. See Psalm 48:2 for this name.
- D. Verse 36. Of course this means actually, though we have ways of masking it today. What does this mean? Even your head belongs to God!

E. Verse 37. Swearing comes of evil because men lie so that yes and no is not enough. In the kingdom lying will not be permitted, so swearing will not be necessary. If all men would hold themselves to their word then why swear?

V. Demanding Justice: Of Old Versus the Lord's Teaching.

A. Verse 38. This was said in Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, Deuteronomy 19:21. This is not talking about revenge, as is often mistakenly believed, but justice. When you pay for \$5.00 worth of merchandise you expect to receive \$5.00 worth of merchandise. This is "an eye for an eye." When our government demands that the punishment fit the crime, that is an eye for an eye.

VI. Conclusion: The Lord spoke of what was said "of old" in the Scriptures, then added His words to it as of equal authority! The Lord's words are of equal authority because He is the God Who wrote all the Scriptures, the Living Word of God Who gives us the Written Word of God. The Lord condemned the easy divorce laws of his day that gave men great power to harm women. Of old it was said to always fulfill your vows, but the Lord told them not to swear at all, but only to say yes and no. It was said of old that one should give an eye for an eye, and this meant justice. While these are not rules for today, we can learn much about righteous conduct from the Lord's words in this teaching.

Matthew 5:38-6:4 25:35 (verse 43)

Matthew 5:<sup>31</sup> “Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’<sup>32</sup> But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except [l]sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

<sup>33</sup> “Again you have heard that it was said to those of [m]old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’<sup>34</sup> But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne;<sup>35</sup> nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.<sup>36</sup> Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.<sup>37</sup> But let [n]your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

<sup>38</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’<sup>39</sup> But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.<sup>40</sup> If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also.<sup>41</sup> And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.<sup>42</sup> Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

<sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’<sup>44</sup> [o]But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,<sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.<sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?<sup>47</sup> And if you greet your [p]brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the [q]tax collectors do so?<sup>48</sup> Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Deuteronomy 24:1 “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some [a]uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house,<sup>2</sup> when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man’s *wife*,

Exodus 20:<sup>7</sup> “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Leviticus 19:<sup>12</sup> And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I *am* the LORD.

Numbers 30: <sup>2</sup> If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

Deuteronomy 23: <sup>21</sup> “When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you.

Psalms 48: <sup>2</sup> Beautiful in <sup>[a]</sup> elevation,  
The joy of the whole earth,  
Is Mount Zion *on* the sides of the north,  
The city of the great King.

Exodus 21: <sup>22</sup> “If men <sup>[a]</sup> fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that <sup>[b]</sup> she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman’s husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges *determine*. <sup>23</sup> But if *any* harm follows, then you shall give life for life, <sup>24</sup> eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, <sup>25</sup> burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

<sup>26</sup> “If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. <sup>27</sup> And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.

Leviticus 24: <sup>18</sup> Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, animal for animal.

<sup>19</sup> ‘If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him—  
<sup>20</sup> fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him. <sup>21</sup> And whoever kills an animal shall restore it; but whoever kills a man shall be put to death. <sup>22</sup> You shall have the <sup>[a]</sup> same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I *am* the LORD your God.’ ”

Deuteronomy 19: <sup>16</sup> If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, <sup>17</sup> then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. <sup>18</sup> And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, *if* the witness *is* a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, <sup>19</sup> then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. <sup>20</sup> And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you.

<sup>21</sup> Your eye shall not pity: life *shall be* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Jeremiah 32: <sup>35</sup> And they built the high places of Baal which *are* in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.’

Romans 3: <sup>12</sup> They have all turned aside;  
They have together become unprofitable;  
There is none who does good, no, not one.”

II Samuel 23: <sup>6</sup> But *the sons* of rebellion *shall all be* as thorns thrust away,  
Because they cannot be taken with hands.  
<sup>7</sup> But the man *who* touches them  
Must be <sup>[a]</sup>armed with iron and the shaft of a spear,  
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in *their* place.”