

## **Study Guide: Matthew Lesson 52: Christ and The Law**

**January 11, 2026**

### **Overview of the Lesson**

This study guide examines the passage of Matthew 5:17-20, which outlines Jesus Christ's perspective on the Law of God. The lesson establishes the Old Testament Law as the absolute, eternal, and unchanging standard for truth and morality, directly contrasting this with a society operating on relativism and "philosophical humanism." It critiques modern tendencies to reinterpret, dismiss, or deny the authority and inerrancy of the Bible. The central argument is that Jesus did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it, raising its standard from a mere external practice, as taught by the scribes and Pharisees, to its true internal and moral intent. Upholding the Word of God is presented as the essential foundation for living a righteous life as described in the Beatitudes.

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### **Short-Answer Quiz**

*Answer the following questions in two to three sentences, based on the provided source material.*

1. What does the lesson identify as the primary problem with a society that tries to have rules without an absolute standard?
2. According to Jesus' words in Matthew 5, how permanent is the Law of God?
3. How does the source describe the modern approach to parts of the Bible that people disagree with or find inconvenient?
4. What was Jesus Christ's view of the Bible (specifically the Old Testament), and why is this view presented as critical for believers?
5. Why were the people of Israel, including their leaders, initially uncertain about Jesus' attitude toward the Mosaic Law?
6. List three key differences between Jesus' ministry and the practices of the scribes and Pharisees.
7. Did Jesus intend to lower the standard of the Law to make it easier? Explain His actual intent as described in the lesson.
8. What reason did some people in Israel have for hoping the Messiah would radically overturn the Old Testament?
9. What is the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament, according to the lesson?
10. How does the lesson connect upholding the Word of God with living out the principles of the Beatitudes (being salt and light)?

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### Quiz Answer Key

1. A society without an absolute standard, such as the Law of God, is unable to create a consistent legal system. Courts overturn one another's rulings because there is no ultimate truth or value, making it impossible to ground moral principles or legitimize social institutions.
2. The Law of God is absolutely permanent and unchanging. Jesus stated, "not one jot or tittle will by no means pass from the law, till all is fulfilled," indicating that not even the smallest detail of it would be set aside.
3. The modern approach involves reinterpreting verses to fit desired meanings, dismissing parts as merely "cultural," or denying their divine authorship and authority. This is done to evade the Bible's confrontation with sin in the modern world.
4. Jesus' view was that the Bible is an absolute, authoritative, and unchanging standard. This view is critical for believers because if Jesus, as the Lord, held the Bible in such high regard, His followers should adopt the same perspective to avoid drifting away from righteousness.
5. They were uncertain because His preaching was radically different from the prevailing theology of the scribes and Pharisees. His emphasis on inward morality, grace, and mercy, rather than legalistic rules, made them wonder if He was a revolutionary intending to subvert the authority of God's Word.
6. First, where the scribes and Pharisees expounded and bound the law on people, Jesus proclaimed grace and dispensed mercy. Second, they focused on external actions, while He emphasized inward morality. Third, He was a friend to sinners, while they were proud and hypocritical.
7. No, Jesus did not intend to lower the standard. He intended to raise the standard back to where it belonged, because the Pharisees had dragged it down by turning an internal law into a merely external one.
8. Some people were sickened by the legalistic religion of the Pharisees. They hoped the Messiah would arrive and throw out "all that law stuff" and overthrow the ancient order with radical changes.
9. The Old Testament is the essential foundation for the New Testament. The lesson emphasizes that it is very important to read, study, and know the Old Testament to fully understand the New.
10. The lesson presents upholding the Word of God as the direct answer to how one can live out the Beatitudes. After considering the difficulty of being "salt and light," the answer is given in verse 17: one must uphold God's absolute Law.

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### Essay Questions

1. Analyze the argument that a legal system cannot be built on "philosophical humanism." How does the lesson connect this to the need for God's Law as an absolute standard for society?

2. Discuss the contrast between Jesus' approach to the Law and the approach of the scribes and Pharisees. How did their differing perspectives lead to confusion and questioning among the people of Israel?
3. Explain the significance of Jesus' statement, "I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." How does the lesson interpret this in the context of the Old Testament's authority for Christians today?
4. The lesson criticizes modern reinterpretations of the Bible. Using specific examples from the text, explain the arguments against treating scripture as "cultural," containing "errors," or lacking authority.
5. Describe the historical context that prompted Jesus to clarify His position on the Law in Matthew 5:17-20. What were the people's expectations of a Messiah, and how did Jesus' "manifesto" confront their thinking?

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#### Glossary of Key Terms

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition (within the context of the lesson)</b>
<b>Absolute</b>	An ultimate, unchanging, and eternal standard of truth, morality, and justice established by God and found in His Word.
<b>Authoritative</b>	Possessing the inherent right to command belief and obedience; refers to the Bible as God's sacred and binding Word.
<b>Fulfill (the Law)</b>	To bring the Law to its complete and intended meaning; to uphold its true internal, moral standard rather than setting it aside or abolishing it.
<b>Inerrant</b>	The quality of the Bible being completely free from error in its original form.
<b>Jot / Tittle</b>	The smallest strokes or marks used in writing the Hebrew alphabet. Jesus' use of these terms signifies that not even the tiniest, most insignificant part of God's Law will ever be nullified.
<b>Mosaic Law</b>	The laws and commandments given by God to the people of Israel through Moses, primarily recorded in the Old Testament.
<b>Philosophical Humanism</b>	A system of thought that attempts to build a legal or moral framework based on fluctuating human principles rather than on an absolute, divine standard.
<b>Relativism</b>	The belief that there are no absolute truths and that morality is subjective and changes based on individual or cultural perspectives. The lesson describes this as a "sea of relativism" on which modern society floats without an anchor.

**Scribes and Pharisees** The religious leaders in Israel during Jesus Christ's time. They were characterized in the lesson as proud, hypocritical, and focused on an external, legalistic interpretation of the Law while ignoring its internal, moral intent.

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#### Greek Words in the Source Material

No Greek words were used in the provided source material.