

Briefing Document: Matthew Lesson 61-Christ and the Law

March 22, 2026

Executive Summary

This document synthesizes a theological discourse regarding the relationship between Christ, the believer, and the Mosaic Law, based on Matthew 5:19. The central thesis is that while Christ fulfilled ceremonial and civil aspects of the law, the moral law remains binding for believers. The discourse emphasizes that there are degrees of commandments—ranging from the "greatest" to the "least"—and that a believer's status and rewards in the kingdom of heaven are directly commensurate with their obedience to the totality of God's commands. Flagrantly setting aside even a "minor" commandment results in being "least" in the kingdom, whereas holistic obedience and instruction lead to being called "great."

The Continuity of the Law

The analysis explores the misconception that the New Covenant allows for the dismissal of Old Testament mandates. The discourse clarifies that Jesus did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it.

- **Fulfillment vs. Abolition:** In redemptive history, certain parts of the law—specifically ceremonial, civil, and judicial laws pertaining to the nation of Israel—were fulfilled or set aside by Christ's sacrifice. Evidence of this includes the ripping of the temple veil and the subsequent cessation of the Jewish sacrificial system following the destruction of Jerusalem.
- **The Moral Law:** Unlike ceremonial laws, the moral law of God has not changed "one jot or tittle." It remains a binding standard for Christian conduct.
- **The Danger of Manipulation:** Believers face the temptation to "loose" themselves from parts of the law that do not accommodate their personal desires or sins. This manipulation for selfish reasons is described as a departure from being "Christlike."

The Hierarchy of Commandments and Sin

The discourse addresses the question of whether all commandments and sins are equal in the eyes of God, concluding that there are indeed degrees of both.

- **Degrees of Commandment:** Jesus explicitly prioritized the commandments, identifying the greatest as:
 - *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’”* (Matthew 22:37-39).
- **Commensurate Judgment and Reward:** The discourse asserts that God's kingdom is characterized by commensuration. Just as there are degrees of reward in heaven,

there are degrees of punishment in hell (e.g., the punishment for Adolf Hitler versus a person who was "good" but rejected Christ).

- **The Jewish System:** Historically, Jewish tradition divided the law into 613 commands: 248 positive and 365 negative. This system often led to debates over which were "important" versus "easy," a practice Jesus corrected by emphasizing that neglecting "weightier matters" like justice, mercy, and faith while obsessing over minor tithes (like mint and cumin) is hypocritical.

Consequences of Disobedience in the Kingdom

The primary focus of the source is the warning found in Matthew 5:19 regarding the "least" commandments.

- **The Definition of "Luo":** To break a commandment in this context involves "loosing" oneself—releasing oneself from the obligation to follow the command.
- **The Objective Reality of Status:** Being "least in the kingdom" is not a matter of subjective reputation among peers; it is an objective status assigned by God.
- **Impact on Utility and Blessing:** While breaking a "least" commandment does not result in the loss of salvation, it severely impacts a believer's:
 - Place of blessing.
 - Fruitfulness and usefulness to God.
 - Magnitude of reward.
- **The Totality of the Law:** The discourse cites the principle that violating one point of the law makes one guilty of the whole:
 - *"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all"* (James 2:10).

The Call to Total Obedience

The document concludes with a call to introspection and a rejection of "complacent" Christianity.

- **Preserving Rewards:** Believers are urged to be vigilant so they do not lose the rewards they have worked for throughout their lives. As stated in 2 John 8: *"Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward."*
- **Lordship:** A distinction is made between acknowledging Jesus as Savior and submitting to Him as Lord. The discourse rejects the idea that a believer can disregard God's commands and still reflect a transformed life.
- **The Cost of Redemption:** The "Via Dolorosa" (the Way of Suffering) is highlighted as a reminder of the physical and spiritual cost Christ paid to redeem humanity from

the penalty of sin. This reflection is intended to motivate believers to apply Christ's sacrifice to their lives through obedience.

Greek Glossary and Phonetic Guide

Word	Phonetic Pronunciation	Brief Definition
Luo [¹]	loo'-oh	To loose, release, or dissolve; specifically used in the context of releasing oneself from the obligation of a commandment.

Footnotes

[¹]: The speaker refers to this as "lul" or "luo" in the transcript, explaining it as the act of "loosing yourself" from the obligation to follow a command. In the context of Matthew 5:19, it refers to the breaking or annulling of the law's binding authority.