

Study Guide-Matthew Lesson 73

Sunday AM-July 5, 2026

This study guide examines the teachings of Jesus Christ during His Sermon on the Mount, specifically focusing on Matthew 5:21-22. The lesson explores the difference between the traditional, external interpretation of the Law and the internal, spiritual reality that God requires of His people. By looking at historical context and the root of human behavior, the text challenges the definition of a murderer and emphasizes the importance of the heart's condition over mere outward actions.

Study Quiz: Short-Answer Questions

1. According to the lesson, who are "them of old" referred to in Matthew 5:21, and why is this distinction important?
 2. Why did the Jewish people during the time of Jesus Christ rely so heavily on oral tradition rather than reading the Hebrew scriptures for themselves?
 3. How did the shift from the Hebrew language to Aramaic affect the power of the rabbis and scribes over the common people?
 4. What is the biblical basis for the Rabbinic tradition mentioned regarding murder and capital punishment?
 5. How does the lesson define "the judgment" as used in the context of the Rabbinic teachings of that time?
 6. Why does the speaker suggest that the phrase "without a cause" should be removed from the interpretation of Matthew 5:22?
 7. According to the teachings of Jesus Christ in this passage, what internal emotions are considered equivalent to the act of murder?
 8. In what way did the scribes and Pharisees use their partial interpretation of the Law to justify themselves?
 9. What point does the story of the criminal "Two Gun" Crowley illustrate regarding human nature and self-righteousness?
 10. What is the recommended spiritual response for someone who realizes they are harboring anger or hatred toward another person?
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Answer Key

1. "Them of old" refers to the historical rabbis and their traditional teachings. This is important because Jesus Christ was pointing out that the people were following man-made traditions rather than the direct, full intent of God's Word.
 2. After the Babylonian captivity, the Jewish people lost their ability to speak and read Hebrew, shifting to Aramaic. Because they could no longer understand the original scriptures, they became entirely dependent on what the rabbis told them.
 3. The language barrier created a state of ignorance among the people, giving the scribes and rabbis great power. Since the people could not verify the scriptures for themselves, they had to accept the rabbis' interpretations as absolute truth.
 4. The Rabbinic tradition was based on the Sixth Commandment in Exodus 20, which forbids murder. It also drew from Numbers 35:30-31, which establishes that those who commit murder are subject to the death penalty.
 5. In the traditional Rabbinic sense, "the judgment" referred to a local, earthly court. It focused on the legal consequences of the act of murder rather than the divine judgment of God.
 6. The speaker notes that the best ancient manuscripts do not include "without a cause." He argues it was likely added by scribes who wanted to justify their own anger, whereas Jesus Christ's true teaching was a broader warning against anger itself.
 7. Jesus Christ teaches that whoever is angry with his brother or harbors hatred in his heart is a murderer. He emphasizes that the internal motive is just as sinful as the external act of killing.
 8. They focused only on the outward act of murder, which they did not commit, allowing them to feel holy. By ignoring the internal requirements of the Law, such as love and a pure heart, they created a false sense of self-righteousness.
 9. Crowley viewed himself as a kind person who would never hurt anyone, even though he was a violent murderer. This illustrates how the human heart can delude itself and find ways to justify even the worst sins.
 10. The lesson encourages individuals to repent and give their anger over to God. This involves forgiving the person who caused the hurt and choosing to no longer let those negative emotions have power over their lives.
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Essay Questions for Deeper Reflection

1. Compare and contrast the Rabbinic view of the Law with the interpretation provided by Jesus Christ. How does shifting the focus from "external actions" to "internal attitudes" change a person's understanding of sin?
2. The lesson discusses the "ignorance" of the people due to the loss of the Hebrew language. Discuss the importance of individuals being able to "check the scriptures" for themselves rather than relying solely on the teachings of others.
3. Use the examples of Psalm 51:6 and Deuteronomy 6:5 provided in the text to explain God's expectations for the "inward parts" of a person. Why is outward obedience insufficient in the eyes of God?
4. Analyze the concept of self-justification. Why do humans feel the need to justify their behavior, and how does the teaching of Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount strip away this ability?
5. The speaker mentions that the only difference between an angry person and a murderer is often just the "opportunity." Explore this idea by discussing how anger serves as the root of more violent sins and why Jesus Christ treats them with the same severity.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Aramaic:** The language spoken by the Babylonians and adopted by the Jewish people after their period of captivity, replacing their use of Hebrew.
- **Atone:** To make amends or provide satisfaction for a sin or a wrongdoing.
- **Babylonian Captivity:** A historical period during which the Jewish people were forced to live in Babylon, leading to significant changes in their language and culture.
- **Decalogue:** Another name for the Ten Commandments, which includes the command "Thou shalt not kill."
- **Indwelling:** The presence of the Holy Spirit living within a believer.
- **NKJV:** The New King James Version of the Bible, the specific translation used for the scripture references in this study.
- **Pharisees:** A religious group known for their strict adherence to traditional laws and outward displays of righteousness.
- **Rabbinic Tradition:** The collection of teachings, interpretations, and legal decisions handed down by rabbis over centuries, often prioritized over the written Word of God.

- **Scribes:** Scholars and writers in ancient Israel who were responsible for copying the scriptures and interpreting the Law.
- **Self-righteousness:** The belief that one is morally superior to others or acceptable to God based on one's own actions or adherence to rules.

Greek and Aramaic Terms Section

Term	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
Raqqa ¹	<i>RAH-kah</i>	An expression of contempt or a term meaning "empty-headed" or "worthless," used to insult a brother.

¹ **Raqqa:** This term appears in Matthew 5:22. In the context of the sermon, Jesus Christ warns that using this insulting word toward another person puts the speaker in danger of the council, as it reveals a heart of hatred. While used in the Greek New Testament, it is derived from Aramaic origins.