

# The Sermon on the Mount (Part 2)

## The New People of God

### Study 1 – Jesus and the Scriptures

#### Introduction

Today many Christians struggle with the question of the Old Testament and its role within the believer's life. We know from the New Testament that certain things have changed, e.g. the sacrificial system has been abolished in the light of Jesus' death and the kosher food laws have been abolished on the authority of Jesus' word (e.g. Hebrews 10:1-18; Mark 7:14-23). However, other things remain and are in fact strengthened by the New Testament, e.g. Jesus' teaching about the fundamental importance of love for God and for our neighbour (Matthew 22:34-40) or his teaching about faithfulness and purity in Matthew 5:27-30. The key question is "How do we decide what remains and what has been set aside?"

The answer to this question is of course multi-faceted and cannot be given in full in the present study. One vital part of the answer concerns the relationship between Jesus and the Old Testament and it is this relationship in particular which is in view in Matthew 5:17-20. As we shall see, this relationship is best summed up by the word *fulfilment*, a word that reminds us that the Old Testament informs our understanding of Jesus while at the same time being transformed by His coming.



#### Investigate and Think



**Read Matthew 5:17-20; 7:28-29**

- What does the phrase 'the Law or the Prophets' refer to? (see also Matthew 7:12; 11:13; 22:40 where Jesus speaks of 'the Law and the Prophets')

- What did the coming of Jesus **not mean** for the Old Testament Scriptures?
- How does Jesus reinforce this teaching that his coming does not abolish the Old Testament? (5:18 – note the word ‘Law’ is just shorthand for the Law and the Prophets)
- The words ‘I tell you...’ (5:18,20; see also 5:22,28,32,34,39) emphasise Jesus’ claim to great personal authority. In this passage, what is Jesus basing His authority on?
- What word does Jesus use to make this point? (5:17)
- Re-Read Matthew 7:28-29. In what particular way does Jesus therefore *fulfil* the Law and the Prophets?

**Read Jeremiah 31:31-34**

Jeremiah 31 speaks about the blessing that the LORD will bring to His people when the exile is brought to an end and a new covenant is established.

- What will the LORD do with regard to sin as part of this New Covenant? (vs34)
  
- What will happen to the Law of the LORD when the New Covenant is established? (vs33)
  
- What will be true for the 'least to the greatest' of God's people when this New Covenant is established? (vs34)

**Now Re-read Matthew 5:17-20**

- In its context, how does this passage underline the fact that Jesus is the one who brings the exile to an end and who ushers in the New Covenant of forgiveness and Law on the heart?
  
- How does this help us to understand the statement "unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven"?

- What will be true of the 'least and the greatest' in the kingdom of heaven according to this passage?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Obedience to whose commands will constitute greatness in the kingdom of heaven? Why?



## **Apply**

- What have you learnt about Jesus from this passage?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- In what way has this passage encouraged or challenged you?