

C. Other Aspects of Old Testament Law v 33 - 48

04/26/20

Jesus shows us that God's Law is ~~more than~~ just the ten commandments.

1. Oaths, v 33 - 37

Solemn oaths are an act of worship. OT law restricted oaths to God only, Deuteronomy 6:13; and such oaths were binding, Psalm 15:4. But over the years the religious leaders had cheapened the oaths by inventing the idea of swearing by other things. They taught that one could avoid divine judgment by swearing by anything other than God's name: like, heaven, earth, Jerusalem or the temple. Jesus clarifies the truth that all things are of God, therefore our oaths are ultimately unto God; but our Yea's and Nay's are to fellow men.

2. Retaliation, v 38 - 42

An 'eye for an eye' is thrice codified in God's Law (Ex 21, Lev 24, Deu 19). It was given by God to the civil *judges* to guide them. In Israel, the magistrate was the 'minister of God' executing divine judgment according to the unchanging principle of sound jurisprudence: punishment should be made to fit the crime - no more, no less. This statute ensured both the justice and mercy of Divine Law. It curbed any judge from either going too hard (e.g. a life for an eye, or a limb for a tooth) or too soft on any criminal.

Sadly the Jewish leaders had condoned individual retaliation by mis-teaching the law since the Jews had become vassals to the Gentile powers. Jesus refuted their erroneous teaching in three little words: *resist not evil*, Mt 5:39. 'Resist not' means think not of taking the law into your own hands.

We should expect both unprovoked injury and injustice in our fallen world. God sees these events everywhere, but He forbids us to recompense evil for evil, both in the Law and the Gospel, (Pr 20:22, 24:29; Rom 14:17-21). Vengeance is the Lord's; and when we take it upon ourselves, we rob God of his right and glory. Christ left us the perfect example, 1 Peter 2:21-23.

Our Saviour specifies three instances where we must patiently endure:

(i) bodily injury, v 39 (ii) loss of property, v 40 (iii) loss of time, v 41

Jesus concludes with the instruction that we must not only do no harm to our neighbors, but we ought to labour to do them good, v 42.

3. Love, v 43 - 48

The Mosaic law said the opposite of 'hate thine enemy', Lev 19:17-18; Deu 10:19, 23:7. Isaiah warned : *For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed*, Isa 9:16.

Here Jesus corrects the false teaching of the Pharisees; he tells us to *love, bless, and pray* for our enemies. Love is an act of the will, not an emotional feeling. Love is a sign of maturity, a reflection of our Father, and a testimony to the world that Christianity is better than religion.

Christ's command is based on his manner of life: he loved us when we were his enemies, Romans 5:8-10. God loved His enemies by giving His Son, and He is still trying to win them. He desires that we co-labour with Him. That standard of life is rendered *perfect* in Christ's estimation.