

Jesus Interprets the Law

by Paul Bramsen

Paul Bramsen's sermon emphasizes Jesus' role in interpreting and fulfilling the law while highlighting the essence of true worship beyond rituals.

Scripture: Matthew 5:17, Mark 2:19, Mark 7:18, Luke 13:14, John 4:23

Topics: "Jesus Teaches", "Spiritual Freedom"

Description

Paul Bramsen preaches about the wisdom of interpreting daily experiences, making personal rules for living, considering others' experiences, and ultimately obeying the words of God's prophets. Jesus, as one of God's prophets, confirmed and fulfilled God's law, permitting what was once forbidden. He emphasized the importance of spiritual worship over outward customs and ceremonies, freeing people from strict rules about food, fasting, holy days, and sacred places.

Transcript

Wise people interpret what happens to them in their daily lives and make rules for themselves about what is the right way to live. Wiser people also consider the experiences and ideas of others. The wisest people are those who obey the words of God's prophets. Jesus is one of God's prophets. His rules for life are true for everyone.

The Qur'an teaches that Jesus came not only to confirm laws God had already given, but also to change parts of that law. Certain things that were forbidden before, would now be permitted. Jesus would settle the arguments people had about certain behavior. To prove his teaching was from God, Jesus performed many miracles. They were signs that his message was true. Jesus urged people to fear and worship God and to obey Jesus' teachings. (Sura 3:49b-51; 43:63-64)

The Bible, which is my authority in matters of faith, agrees that Jesus confirmed God's law. Jesus said,

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." (Matthew 5:17)

The Bible agrees that Jesus permitted things that were once forbidden. Religious people often consider certain foods clean and lawful to eat, but they believe other foods are unclean and unlawful to eat. Jesus relaxed such laws. Jesus said,

"Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him `unclean'? For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.") (Mark 7:18b-19)

Religious people often have very exact laws about fasting. When people complained that Jesus' disciples ate during the times when people were supposed to fast, Jesus answered:

"How can you make the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them. In those days they will fast." (Mark 2:19-20)

In this way Jesus suspended the laws about fasting for those who were with him.

Religious people often celebrate special holy days. The Jewish people called the last day of each week their Sabbath. It was a holy day and no one was to work on the Sabbath. When Jesus healed people on the Sabbath, they accused him of breaking God's law by working. Once Jesus healed a crippled woman on the Sabbath.

"Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, 'There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.' The Lord answered him, 'You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, . . .whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?'" (Luke 13:14-16)

Thus Jesus declared that it is right to do good to others on the Sabbath.

In many religions, certain places are considered sacred. Several times every year Jewish people were required to offer sacrifices and worship at the temple in Jerusalem. The Samaritan people, who only accepted the first five books of the Bible as God's word, believed they should worship God on the mountain where Moses worshiped instead of going to the temple.

Once a Samaritan woman challenged Jesus about which place was the correct one to go to for worship. Jesus solved this argument between Samaritans and Jews by saying:

"True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth . . . God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:23b-24)

In other words, true worship is not done because you are in a temple or on a mountain. True worship is spiritual without pretense and can be done anywhere.

Jesus confirmed God's laws but freed people from the rules of clean and unclean foods. He freed people from rules about fasting and rules about holy days and holy places. He taught that true worship is not obedience to outward customs and ceremonies at specific places. True worship is spiritual. It comes from the heart.

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