

Dr. David Turner, Matthew

Lecture 3B – Matthew 5:17-48: The Sermon on the Mount II: Jesus, Moses, and the Disciples

NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Briefing Document, 3) Study Guide, FAQs

1) Abstract

This academic lecture, focusing on Matthew 5:17-48, examines **Jesus's relationship with the Mosaic Law** as presented in the Sermon on the Mount. It explains that Jesus came not to abolish but to **fulfill the Law**, meaning he accomplishes its purpose and becomes its ultimate, authoritative interpreter. The lecture analyzes six specific contrasts Jesus makes, demonstrating how his teachings **transcend traditional interpretations** of the Old Testament by the Jewish leaders, pushing for a **deeper moral righteousness** in his disciples. Ultimately, the text argues that Jesus's message provides a "new Law" for his followers, leading them toward an **ideal of perfection** mirroring their Heavenly Father's moral attributes.

2) Briefing Document: This detailed briefing document reviews the main themes and important ideas from Dr. David Turner's Lecture 3B, "Matthew 5:17-48: The Sermon on the Mount II: Jesus, Moses, and the Disciples."

Briefing Document: Jesus, Moses, and the Disciples in Matthew 5:17-48

Source: Excerpts from "Turner_Matthew_Lect03B_English.pdf" (Dr. David Turner, Matthew Lecture 3B – Matthew 5:17-48: The Sermon on the Mount II: Jesus, Moses, and the Disciples)

I. Overview of Matthew 5:17-48

Matthew 5:17-48, a core section of the Sermon on the Mount, focuses on the relationship between Jesus, the Law, and the disciples. It begins with a **general**

introduction (5:17-20), establishing Jesus' stance on the Law, followed by **two sets of three specific contrasts (5:21-32 and 5:33-48)**. These contrasts compare traditional Old Testament teachings with Jesus' transcendent interpretations.

The overarching message is that "the fulfillment of the Law, as Jesus teaches it, means that if we have the idea that we need to dominate other people by anger, by lust, by legal technicalities like divorce, by oaths, by retaliation or by hatred, that Jesus will confront us and change us from that mentality." (p. 1)

II. Jesus and the Law: Fulfillment, Not Abolition

A. General Principle (Matthew 5:17-20): Jesus explicitly states, "He has come not to destroy but to fulfill the Law." (p. 1) This declaration signifies the **eternal validity of the entire Law (5:18)** and positions Jesus as its "ultimate interpreter" (p. 1).

Disciples are commanded to obey and teach His interpretations (5:19) to achieve a "unique righteousness fit for the kingdom, 5:20" (p. 1), which must "exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees" (p. 1).

B. Continuity and Discontinuity: The relationship between Jesus and the Law involves both "continuity and discontinuity." (p. 1)

- **Fulfillment:** Jesus' mission "accomplish[es] their purpose, and it stresses the continuity of the mission of Jesus with the ethical intent of the Hebrew Bible." (p. 1) He did not merely "reaffirm, reestablish, or confirm the Law" (p. 1); such a view "would render the six specific examples of Matthew 5:21-48 as superfluous." (p. 1) Jesus was "not simply saying, Ditto, what Moses said, I say." (p. 2)
- **Transcendence:** While not abolishing the Law, Jesus' teaching "must in some sense transcend it." (p. 2) This means avoiding two extremes:
 - Overstating discontinuity (Jesus abolished the Law).
 - Underestimating discontinuity (Jesus only reaffirmed Moses).
- **Matthew's Definition of "Fulfilled":** For Matthew, "Jesus is the ultimate goal of the Law and the prophets, the one to whom they point." (p. 2) His ministry "fulfills the ethical standards and eschatological promises of the Law and the prophets." (p. 2) Consequently, "he becomes the sole authoritative teacher of the Law, and his interpretations take on the character of new Law for his

disciples." (p. 2) These teachings are "not new in the sense of having no root in the Hebrew Bible, but in the sense of transcending the traditional understanding of the Law promulgated by the Jewish leaders." (p. 2)

C. Jesus' Authority: Jesus' authority "transcends that of the previous divine revelation through Moses." (p. 4) He does not deny God spoke through Moses but "affirms his own transcending revelatory agency in strong language." (p. 4) This authoritative teaching sets Him apart from Moses and the Jewish leaders.

III. The Disciples and the Law: Under Grace, Not Law?

A. Apparent Tension with Paul: The binding authority of the Law on Jesus' disciples (5:19-20) can seem "astonishing to Christians who believe themselves to be under Grace, not Law," especially when considering passages from Paul's epistles (e.g., Romans 6, 7, 10:4). (p. 2)

B. Reconciling Matthew and Paul: Dr. Turner explains that "Paul's situations, audiences, and problems were very different from Matthews'" (p. 3)

- **Paul's Context:** Paul's ministry was to extend the Gospel to Gentiles, teaching them that "they were not obligated to follow the Law." (p. 3) This caused "tension with Christian Jews." (p. 3)
- **Paul's Practice:** Paul himself continued in "synagogue worship and other Jewish practices" throughout his ministry. (p. 3)
- **Paul's Target:** "Much of Paul's seemingly negative teaching on the Law was not directed against the Law per se, but against teachers who erroneously wished to bring his Gentile converts under the Law." (p. 3)
- **Shared Principle:** Paul taught that "obedience to Jesus through the Spirit would fulfill the Law's righteous requirements" (Romans 8:1-4) (p. 3), aligning with Jesus' teaching that love fulfills the Law (Romans 13:8-10, Galatians 3-14, Matthew 22:34-40). (p. 3)

C. Conclusion for Matthew's Community: Matthew's Christian Jewish community is taught that "Jesus fulfills the Law of Moses by upholding its perpetual authority and by interpreting it in an ultimately definitive manner, which leads his disciples to a righteousness that surpasses that of the Jewish leaders." (p. 3)

IV. The Six Specific Contrasts (Matthew 5:21-48)

These examples are **not "antitheses" (contradictions)** but rather "**contrasting statements**" that reveal Jesus' transcendent interpretation of the Law. (p. 4) Jesus is not contradicting Moses but "unfolding implications, which were in Moses all along, although undetected by the current religious leaders of Israel." (p. 2)

Each contrast generally presents:

1. The traditional teaching (often attributed to the Pharisees' understanding of the Old Testament).
2. Jesus' contrasting teaching.
3. Further application or explanation (absent only in the third example). (p. 3)

In some instances (1st, 3rd, 4th, 6th contrasts), Jesus addresses "contemporary paraphrases of the implications of the law" or modified citations. In others (2nd, 5th contrasts), He cites the Old Testament "word for word." (p. 4) This demonstrates that Jesus' teaching exposes "the errors of those teachers as it expounded on Moses in an ultimate way." (p. 5)

A. Specific Examples of Transcendent Righteousness:

1. Murder (5:21-26):

- **Traditional:** "You shall not murder."
- **Jesus' Teaching:** Prohibition of murder "implicitly prohibits the anger and abusive speech that lead to murder." (p. 6) "Anger and angry words are tantamount to murder." (p. 6) This requires reconciliation before worship.

1. Adultery (5:27-30):

- **Traditional:** "You shall not commit adultery."
- **Jesus' Teaching:** Prohibition of adultery "implicitly prohibits the lust which leads to adultery." (p. 6) Jesus directly links lust to adultery, setting a "more stringent standard of sexual ethics." (p. 6) "Lust is tantamount to adultery." (p. 6)

1. Divorce (5:31-32):

- **Traditional:** Permitted divorce (though not condoned in OT).

- **Jesus' Teaching:** Marriage is a "sacred union inviolable except when infidelity occurs." (p. 6) "Divorce and remarriage, except in the case of infidelity, are tantamount to adultery." (p. 6) Divorce is a "temporal concession to human sinfulness," while "permanent marriage is the original model for humans." (p. 6)

1. **Oaths (5:33-37):**

- **Traditional:** Proper use of vows; often abused through "casuistry" (manipulative use).
- **Jesus' Teaching:** Vows would be "unnecessary if disciples consistently took to heart the biblical admonitions to tell the truth." (p. 6-7) Jesus "forbids what the letter of the law permits, but he does so to uphold the spirit of the law against the bearing of false witness." (p. 7) "Casuistry or manipulative use of vows is tantamount to bearing false witness." (p. 7)

1. **Retaliation (5:38-42):**

- **Traditional:** "An eye for an eye" (lex talionis), understood as proportionate justice to limit conflict.
- **Jesus' Teaching:** Disciples should "respond with grace" instead of "any retaliatory response to wrongdoing." (p. 7) Insistence on "taking one's own vengeance is tantamount to denying that God will avenge his people." (p. 7)

1. **Love of Enemies (5:43-48):**

- **Traditional:** "Love your neighbor" (Leviticus), with the added, traditional, and unstated implication "hate your enemies."
- **Jesus' Teaching:** "All humans, not only one's friends, are to be loved." (p. 7) He makes "love of enemies the preeminent evidence of one's filial relationship to the Heavenly Father." (p. 7) "Hating one's enemies is tantamount to paganism." (p. 7)

V. The Command to Be Perfect (Matthew 5:48)

The lecture concludes by emphasizing the profound command in 5:48: **"Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect."** (p. 8)

- This is an "awesome command" and, "technically speaking, in one sense of the word, is impossible because God is infinite and we can't be perfect in infiniteness like Him because we're finite creatures." (p. 8)
- However, God desires us to be "like Him and be perfect like Him in His moral attributes" (communicable attributes such as "love, holiness, mercy, etc.") (p. 8) rather than His incommunicable attributes (like omnipotence).
- This pursuit of perfection means applying the six contrasts to life: "If we're like our Heavenly Father is perfect, we'll not only quit hating our enemies... We will not insist on retaliation... We will have integrity in our speech. We won't divorce our spouses... We won't commit adultery... And finally, we certainly won't murder or exercise the anger, which will lead all too often to murder." (p. 8)
- This "tallest order" is achievable because "God has created us in His image, and He has recreated us in Christ as a new humanity" (p. 8), enabled by "the truth of the Word... the power of the Holy Spirit... and the encouragement of our brothers and sisters in the Christian community." (p. 8)

VI. Conclusion: Impact on Discipleship

Jesus' ethic in Matthew 5:21-48 is profoundly counter-cultural, particularly to "the macho individualism of American culture." (p. 7) It challenges:

- "Anger and the aggression that seek to dominate other people." (p. 7)
- "The misuse of women by adultery and divorce." (p. 7)
- Lack of "integrity in speech." (p. 7)
- "Retaliation." (p. 7)
- Lack of "loving their enemies." (p. 8)

These teachings are "pointers in the direction of the righteousness which is greater than that of the Jewish leaders in 5:20." (p. 8) This transforming message extends to religious activities and attitudes toward material things, dynamically shaping the disciples' conduct.

3) Study Guide:

Navigating Matthew 5:17-48: Jesus, the Law, and the Disciples

Study Guide

This study guide is designed to help you review and deepen your understanding of Dr. David Turner's lecture on Matthew 5:17-48. The lecture focuses on Jesus' relationship to the Law and the implications for his disciples, particularly within the context of the Sermon on the Mount.

I. General Principles: Jesus and the Law (Matthew 5:17-20)

- **Jesus' Purpose:** Understand that Jesus came not to destroy the Law but to *fulfill* it. What does "fulfill" mean in this context?
- Accomplishing the Law's purpose and stressing continuity with its ethical intent.
- Transcending traditional understandings and becoming the authoritative interpreter.
- **Eternal Validity of the Law:** How does verse 18 establish the Law's enduring authority?
- **Disciples' Role:** What is the disciples' responsibility regarding Jesus' interpretations of the Law (verse 19)? How does this relate to moral uprightness?
- **Surpassing Righteousness:** What does it mean for the disciples' righteousness to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (verse 20)? What is the nature of this unique righteousness?
- **Continuity and Discontinuity:** Explain the two extremes that must be avoided when discussing Jesus' relationship to the Law (abolishing vs. only reaffirming). How does Matthew define "fulfilled" through Jesus' mission and teaching?
- **Jesus as Ultimate Authority:** How does Jesus become the sole authoritative teacher of the Law, and how do his interpretations take on the character of "new Law"?

- **Jesus vs. Rabbinic Interpretations:** What is the key difference between Jesus' claims and those of later rabbinic literature regarding the Law's implications?

II. Disciples and the Law: Law and Grace

- **Astonishing Obligation:** Why might Jesus' statements in 5:19-20 be "astonishing" to Christians accustomed to Paul's teachings on "Grace, not Law"?
- **Reconciling Matthew and Paul:** How does Dr. Turner reconcile the seemingly divergent views of Matthew and Paul on the Law?
- Consider Paul's different situations, audiences, and problems (Gentile converts).
- Paul's continued Jewish practices vs. flexibility for Gentile converts.
- Paul's negative teaching on the Law's target (teachers attempting to bring Gentiles under the Law as a rule of life).
- Paul's understanding of obedience to Jesus through the Spirit fulfilling the Law's righteous requirements (Romans 8:1-4).
- Paul's identification of "weightier matters" with love (Romans 13:8-10, Galatians 3-14).
- **Conclusion for Matthew's Community:** Summarize Matthew's message to his Christian Jewish community regarding Jesus, Moses, and the Law.

III. Specific Examples: Matthew 5:21-48 ("You have heard it was said, but I say to you")

- **Structure of Contrasts:** Describe the consistent structure of these six specific examples (traditional teaching + Jesus' contrasting teaching + further application/explanation).
- **"Antitheses" Misconception:** Why is it a "mistake" to call these six examples "antitheses"? What is the crucial distinction between "contrasting" and "contradictory" statements?

- **Key Matters in Contrasts: Contrasting Parallel of People:** Explain the significance of "ancestors" vs. "you" (disciples).
- **Agency of Speaking:** How does the Greek text emphasize Jesus' transcending revelatory agency and authority?
- **Jesus vs. Moses/Pharisees:** Discuss the complex question of whether Jesus is contesting Moses or the contemporary experts (Pharisees).
- Categorize the contrasts where Jesus deals with paraphrases/modified citations vs. word-for-word citations.
- How does Jesus' teaching both transcend the Old Testament and expose the errors of the Jewish teachers?
- Identify examples where "exposition plus exposure" is clear (3 and 6).
- **Hermeneutic of Jesus:** What is the "most likely" understanding of Jesus' relationship to the Law and the Prophets?
- Jesus as the "end or goal" of the Law, its ultimate definitive interpreter.
- How does Jesus fulfill the Law without contradicting or preserving it unchanged? He reveals its ultimate meaning.

IV. Six Specific Contrasts in Detail

For each contrast, be able to explain:

- The traditional teaching based on the Old Testament.
 - Jesus' contrasting teaching.
 - The implication of Jesus' teaching (e.g., anger is tantamount to murder, lust is tantamount to adultery).
 - How Jesus' teaching transcends the traditional understanding or directly addresses misinterpretations.
1. **Murder (5:21-26):** Anger and abusive speech implicitly prohibited.
 2. **Adultery (5:27-30):** Lust implicitly prohibited; linking 7th and 10th commandments.

3. **Divorce (5:31-32):** Marriage as sacred union, inviolable except for infidelity; divorce as temporal concession.
4. **Oaths/Vows (5:33-37):** Unnecessary if truth is consistently told; against manipulative casuistry.
5. **Retaliation (5:38-42):** Law on retaliation designed to limit conflict; disciples respond with grace.
6. **Love of Enemies (5:43-48):** Love all humans, not just friends; preeminent evidence of filial relationship to Heavenly Father.

V. Conclusion and Application

- **Continuity with Law and Prophets:** Reiterate the extent of continuity in Matthew 5:21-48.
- **Antithetical to American Culture:** How does Jesus' ethic contradict aspects of American culture (macho individualism, anger, aggression)?
- **Contemporary Sensibilities:** How do Jesus' words resonate with contemporary issues (misuse of women, integrity in speech, retaliation, love of enemies)?
- **"Be Perfect as Your Heavenly Father is Perfect" (5:48):** Explain the "tallest order."
- Distinguish between "communicable" and "incommunicable" attributes of God.
- How can believers make progress towards this perfection through the Word, Holy Spirit, and Christian community?
- Relate this command back to the specific examples (anger, adultery, divorce, vows, retaliation, love of enemies).

Quiz: Matthew 5:17-48

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Dr. Turner, what does Jesus mean when he states he has come "not to destroy but to fulfill" the Law and the Prophets in Matthew 5:17?

2. Why is it problematic to refer to the six specific examples in Matthew 5:21-48 as "antitheses"?
3. How does Matthew's portrayal of Jesus' authority in Matthew 5:21-48 compare to that of Moses or contemporary Jewish leaders?
4. Explain how Dr. Turner reconciles Paul's teaching on "Grace, not Law" with Jesus' emphasis on the perpetual binding authority of the Law for his disciples in Matthew 5:19.
5. In the context of the first contrast (murder), what does Jesus teach is "tantamount to murder," and how does this transcend the Old Testament's prohibition?
6. Regarding the third contrast (divorce), what is Jesus' primary teaching about marriage, and under what specific circumstance does he permit divorce and remarriage?
7. How does Jesus' teaching on oaths in Matthew 5:33-37 critique contemporary casuistry, and what is its ultimate aim?
8. According to Dr. Turner, what was the primary design of the Old Testament concept of "lex talionis" ("an eye for an eye"), and how does Jesus transcend this in the fifth contrast?
9. In the sixth contrast (love of enemies), what traditional addition does Jesus implicitly address, and what does he present as the preeminent evidence of one's relationship to the Heavenly Father?
10. What does the command "Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48) imply for believers, particularly in relation to God's "communicable attributes"?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Jesus means he has come to accomplish the purpose of the Law and the Prophets, stressing continuity with their ethical intent while transcending traditional understandings. He acts as their ultimate interpreter, bringing them to their intended goal.

2. Calling them "antitheses" implies Jesus is contradicting the Law, which would negate his statement in 5:17 that he did not come to abolish it. Instead, Jesus is contrasting his transcendent teaching with traditional interpretations, not formally contradicting Moses.
3. Matthew presents Jesus as speaking with a "transcending revelatory agency," emphasizing his own authority over that of Moses. Jesus is depicted as the sole authoritative teacher whose interpretations take on the character of new Law for his disciples.
4. Turner explains that Paul's audience and problems were different, often addressing Gentile converts who were not obligated to the Law as a rule of life. Paul's seemingly negative teaching was against those who tried to bring Gentiles under the Law, while he affirmed that obedience to Jesus through the Spirit would fulfill the Law's righteous requirements.
5. Jesus teaches that anger and abusive speech are "tantamount to murder." This transcends the Old Testament's focus on the act of murder itself by addressing the inner attitudes and words that often lead to such a capital crime.
6. Jesus teaches that marriage is a sacred union, inviolable. He states that divorce and remarriage, except in the case of infidelity, are tantamount to adultery, presenting divorce as merely a temporal concession to human sinfulness.
7. Jesus' teaching on oaths refutes contemporary "casuistry," which was a manipulative use of vows. His ultimate aim is to uphold the spirit of the law against bearing false witness, emphasizing the necessity of integrity in speech.
8. The primary design of "lex talionis" was to limit conflict and ensure proportionate justice, preventing excessive retaliation. Jesus transcends this by teaching his disciples to respond with grace instead of taking their own vengeance, allowing God to avenge his people.
9. Jesus addresses the traditional addition that one should hate one's enemies, which was not in the Old Testament text. He presents love of enemies as the

preeminent evidence of one's filial relationship to the Heavenly Father, contrasting it with paganism.

10. This command implies that believers are to strive to emulate God's moral attributes, often called "communicable attributes," such as love, holiness, mercy, and grace. It is a "tallest order" that signifies continuous progress in reflecting God's character in their lives.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the concepts of "continuity" and "discontinuity" as they apply to the relationship between Jesus' teaching and the Old Testament Law in Matthew 5:17-48. Discuss how Dr. Turner navigates these two extremes, providing specific examples from the text to support your points.
2. Dr. Turner argues that it is a "mistake" to call the six specific examples in Matthew 5:21-48 "antitheses." Explain his reasoning for this assertion, clarifying the distinction between "contrasting" and "contradictory." How does this understanding impact the interpretation of Jesus' authority and his relationship to Moses?
3. Discuss the tension that arises for Christians familiar with Paul's epistles when encountering Jesus' statements about the perpetual binding authority of the Law in Matthew 5:19-20. How does Dr. Turner reconcile the teachings of Matthew and Paul on the Law, considering their different contexts and audiences?
4. Select three of the six specific contrasts in Matthew 5:21-48 (e.g., anger, lust, divorce, oaths, retaliation, love of enemies). For each chosen example, explain how Jesus' teaching goes beyond the traditional understanding of the Old Testament command and what new standard of righteousness he establishes for his disciples.
5. The lecture concludes with an emphasis on the command "Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Explain the profound implications of this command, differentiating between God's "communicable" and "incommunicable" attributes. How does this command summarize and drive home the ethical demands of Jesus' teaching throughout Matthew 5:17-48?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Antithesis:** A statement that is contradictory to another; specifically, in the context of the lecture, a term deemed a "mistake" to describe Jesus' teachings in Matthew 5:21-48, as it implies contradiction rather than contrast or transcendence.
- **Casuistry:** The use of clever but unsound reasoning, especially in relation to moral questions; specifically, in the lecture, the manipulative use of vows criticized by Jesus in Matthew 5:33-37.
- **Communicable Attributes (of God):** Moral characteristics of God that humans, created in His image, can emulate or participate in, such as love, holiness, mercy, and grace. These are contrasted with incommunicable attributes.
- **Continuity (of Jesus and the Law):** The idea that Jesus' mission and teaching maintain a connection with and uphold the ethical intent and purpose of the Hebrew Bible and the Law of Moses.
- **Discontinuity (of Jesus and the Law):** The idea that Jesus' teaching, while not contradicting the Law, transcends it and introduces new implications or interpretations that go beyond traditional understandings.
- **Eschatological Teacher:** A teacher whose authority and interpretations are understood to be definitive and ultimate, pointing towards the end times or the culmination of God's redemptive plan. Jesus is presented as the sole authoritative eschatological teacher of the Law and the prophets.
- **Fulfill (the Law):** In Matthew 5:17-48, this means Jesus has come to accomplish the purpose of the Law and the Prophets, bringing them to their intended goal, not merely reaffirming or abolishing them. His teaching transcends previous interpretations.
- **Grace:** A theological concept often associated with Paul's epistles, referring to God's unmerited favor and salvation received through faith in Jesus, often seen in contrast to living "under Law."
- **Hebrew Bible:** The collection of sacred texts that constitute the Old Testament for Christians, foundational to the Law and the Prophets.

- **Incommunicable Attributes (of God):** Characteristics of God that are unique to Him and cannot be shared or emulated by humans, such as omnipotence (all-powerful), omniscience (all-knowing), and omnipresence (present everywhere).
- **Law (Torah):** Refers primarily to the Mosaic Law, given to Moses at Sinai, encompassing ethical, ceremonial, and civil commands found in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible).
- **Lex Talionis:** A legal principle from ancient law, especially in the Old Testament ("an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"), advocating for proportionate justice or retaliation. The lecture emphasizes its original intent as limiting vengeance.
- **Pharisees:** A prominent Jewish sect or party during Jesus' time, known for their strict adherence to the Law, both written and oral traditions. Their righteousness is presented as needing to be surpassed by Jesus' disciples.
- **Prophets:** Refers to the collection of prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible, which, along with the Law, point to God's plan and the coming Messiah.
- **Righteousness (Surpassing):** The moral uprightness and adherence to God's will that Jesus demands of his disciples, which must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, fitting for the kingdom of God.
- **Scribes:** Experts in the Law, responsible for copying and interpreting sacred texts during Jesus' time. Their righteousness is also presented as needing to be surpassed.
- **Sermon on the Mount:** A collection of teachings and ethical principles delivered by Jesus, recorded in Matthew chapters 5-7, considered a foundational discourse on kingdom living.
- **Transcendent Teaching:** Jesus' teaching that goes beyond or elevates the traditional understanding of the Law, revealing its deeper, implicit meaning and stricter ethical standards for his disciples.

4) FAQs

1. What is the main purpose of Jesus' coming in relation to the Old Testament Law, as discussed in Matthew 5:17-20?

Jesus states that he has come "not to destroy but to fulfill the Law and the Prophets." This means he aims to accomplish their ultimate purpose, stressing a continuity with the ethical intent of the Hebrew Bible. However, this fulfillment is not merely a reaffirmation of the Law. Jesus' teaching transcends traditional understandings, becoming the "sole authoritative teacher of the Law." His interpretations take on the character of a "new Law" for his disciples, not in the sense of being entirely novel, but by unfolding the implications of the Law that were "all along" present but "undetected by the current religious leaders of Israel." Therefore, he brings the Law to its intended goal and ultimate meaning.

2. How does Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:21-48 relate to the traditional understanding of the Old Testament Law, and why is it inaccurate to call these "antitheses"?

Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:21-48 presents a series of "contrasts" with the traditional teachings based on the Old Testament, but it's a "mistake" to label them as "antitheses." An antithesis implies a "contradictory statement," which would mean Jesus was abolishing the Law, directly contradicting his own statement in Matthew 5:17. Instead, Jesus' teaching is "not contradictory to anything in the Hebrew Bible, although it must in some sense transcend it." He unpacks the true meaning and implications of the Law, exposing the errors of traditional interpretations by the Jewish leaders while upholding the Law's ethical authority. This involves both "exposition" of the ultimate goal of Moses and the prophets and "exposure" of the "darkness that benights the teaching of the Jewish leaders."

3. What is the significance of Jesus' authoritative teaching style in Matthew 5:21-48, particularly in contrast to earlier revelations?

In Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus emphasizes his own revelatory authority, using the phrase "but I say unto you" in contrast to "You have heard it was said." This highlights that Jesus himself is speaking "with an authority that transcends that of the previous divine revelation through Moses." While he does not deny that God spoke through Moses, Jesus "affirms his own transcending revelatory agency in strong language."

This authoritative way of speaking was clearly recognized by his hearers. His teachings are not merely interpretations akin to rabbinic literature, but carry a superior, definitive authority, establishing him as "the ultimate definitive interpreter" and the "authoritative eschatological teacher of the law and the prophets."

4. How does Jesus' teaching on "righteousness" in the Sermon on the Mount surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20)?

Jesus' teachings in Matthew 5:21-48 demonstrate a "surpassing righteousness" that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. This is achieved by moving beyond mere external compliance with the Law to address the internal attitudes and intentions that lead to sin. For example, the teaching links anger and abusive speech to murder, and lustful thoughts to adultery. It also critiques the manipulative use of vows and insists on a standard of truthfulness that makes vows unnecessary. This "greater righteousness" is not about abolishing the Law, but about revealing its "ultimate meaning" and bringing it to its "intended goal," leading disciples to a deeper, more profound obedience that goes beyond superficial adherence to rules.

5. What is Jesus' interpretation of the Old Testament commandments regarding anger and murder, and lust and adultery?

Regarding anger and murder, Jesus teaches that the prohibition against murder "implicitly prohibits the anger and abusive speech that lead to murder." He elevates the standard, asserting that "Anger and angry words are tantamount to murder." Similarly, concerning lust and adultery, Jesus teaches that the prohibition of adultery "implicitly prohibits the lust which leads to adultery." He directly links lust to adultery, presenting a "more stringent standard of sexual ethics" by interpreting the seventh commandment ("Thou shalt not commit adultery") through the lens of the tenth commandment ("Thou shalt not covet anything, especially thy neighbor's wife"). Thus, for Jesus, "lust is tantamount to adultery."

6. How does Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage (Matthew 5:31-32) reflect his fulfillment of the Law?

Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage emphasizes that "marriage is a sacred union inviolable except when infidelity occurs." While the Old Testament did not condone divorce (e.g., Malachi 2:14-16), and some contemporaries of Jesus (like Hillel) may have condoned it more broadly, Jesus clarifies that "divorce and

remarriage, except in the case of infidelity, are tantamount to adultery." He views divorce as a "temporal concession to human sinfulness," asserting that "permanent marriage is the original model for humans." This demonstrates Jesus' fulfillment of the Law by revealing the deeper, original intent of God's design for marriage, transcending any lenient interpretations or allowances.

7. How does Jesus' teaching on oaths and retaliation (Matthew 5:33-42) reflect his approach to the Law?

Regarding oaths, Jesus teaches that the use of vows would be "unnecessary if disciples consistently took to heart the biblical admonitions to tell the truth." He "forbids what the letter of the law permits," but does so "to uphold the spirit of the law against the bearing of false witness," deeming "casuistry or manipulative use of vows is tantamount to bearing false witness." For retaliation, Jesus teaches that the law of "an eye for an eye" (lex talionis) was designed "primarily to limit conflict and only secondarily to endorse it." Instead of personal vengeance, disciples "should respond with grace," letting "God take care of that." Insistence on taking one's own vengeance, for Jesus, is "tantamount to denying that God will avenge his people." These teachings show Jesus transcending legalistic adherence to reveal the deeper ethical principles of truthfulness and reliance on God's justice.

8. What does it mean for disciples to "be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48) in light of Jesus' teachings?

The command to "be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect" is presented as a "tallest order" for disciples, but it is achievable through God's grace and the Holy Spirit. This perfection refers to God's "moral attributes" (communicable attributes) such as love, holiness, mercy, and grace, rather than His omnipotence (incommunicable attributes). Practically, it means embracing Jesus' transcendent teachings: abandoning anger and aggression that lead to murder, upholding integrity in speech by not manipulating vows, being faithful in marriage and avoiding adultery and divorce, and most notably, loving all humans, including enemies. This encompasses responding with grace instead of retaliation and demonstrating love for enemies as "preeminent evidence of one's filial relationship to the Heavenly Father," thereby avoiding actions "tantamount to paganism."

