# **SOTM Pt 17 - Jesus fulfills the Law**

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Sermon on the Mount / Tanakh; Law in the OT; Fulfillment of Prophecy / Matthew 5:17–20

**Matthew 5:17–20 NKJV**

17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them,* he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Vs 17 [Matthew 5:17](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5.17) “17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

What does it mean to “Destroy”? Some Translations translate this word καταλύω (kataluō) [Kata-Lou-oh] as Destroy, Abolish as in to “do away with”

IF something is “Destroyed” it no longer has value: its value is lost. This is not what is meant by Jesus word usage here, and scripture confirms this idea:

[Romans 15:4](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ro15.4) “4 **For whatever things were written before were written for our learning**, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”

So then Jesus did not say that the value of the law was gone. Paul writes in [Galatians 3:24](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ga3.24) “24 Therefore **the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ**, that we might be justified by faith.”

I wonder if Jesus in the view of all people throughout all the ages did not write this first phrase for US? Do not think that I have come to Destroy, abolish, or do away with the law or the prophets because many have drawn a line to say we are not under the old covenant but rather under the new covenant in Christ there fore we do not need the Old any more.

**Earlier this year someone I know personally said “**If you're teaching or preaching the Old Testament your feeding the sheep left overs & they are suffering from malnutrition. We only need Jesus”

Back around 2018 a very prominent Pastor - one who in 2017 was listed one of the top 10 most influential Pastors in America in Christianity Today said this:

*"Christians need to “unhitch” the Old Testament from their understanding of the faith." Andy Stanley 2018*

*Jesus did not come to destroy the value of the Old Testament or even the Old Covenant, He came to Fulfill it!*

[Matthew 5:17](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5.17) “17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to **fulfill.**”

Matthew uses this word “Fulfill more in his Gospel than it is used anywhere else in Scripture:

[Matthew 1:22–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt1.22-23) “22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.””

[Matthew 8:17](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt8.17) “17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: “He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses.””

[Matthew 21:4–5](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt21.4-5) “4 All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: 5 “Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.’ ””

There are more these are just a few examples to help us understand what Jesus means by “Fulfill” it is the Greek word πληρόω (plēroō) [Play-ah-roh] and its simple meaning means “to make complete” Jesus has come to “Make Complete” all of that which is in the Old Covenant.

Another way of understanding this “Fulfill” πληρόω (plēroō) [Play-ah-roh] as Scholar D.A. Carson puts it is to say that it means “The Completion of that which the other pointed to” The Old Covenant “pointed” to Christ therefore In Christ it is fulfilled.

There are over 300 prophecies about the coming of Messiah. Jesus fulfilled ALL of them: πληρόω (plēroō) [Play-ah-roh] so another way of saying this is “The find their fulfillment IN Christ”

1. Christ would be born in Bethlehem ([Micah 5:2](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mic5.2)) we just discussed this one a few weeks ago in Sunday School

2. Christ would be preceded by a forerunner messenger ([Isaiah 40:3](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Is40.3) and [Malachi 3:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mal3.1)) (John the Baptist)

3. Christ to enter Jerusalem on a donkey ([Zechariah 9:9](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Zec9.9))

4. Christ is to be betrayed by a friend ([Psalm 41:9](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ps41.9) & [Psalm 55:12-14](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ps55.12-14)) (Judas)

5. Christ would be sold for 30 pieces of Silver ([Zechariah 11:12](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Zec11.12))

6. The money which Christ was sold for (30 pieces of Silver) would be thrown to the potter in God’s House ([Zechariah 11:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Zec11.13)) (it was used to by the potters field where Judas died) ([Matthew 27:3-10](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt27.3-10))

7. Christ would be silent before His Accusers ([Isaiah 53:7](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Is53.7))

8. Christ Would be crucified on a cross as the thieves ([Psalm 22:16](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ps22.16), [Zechariah 12:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Zec12.10), [Isaiah 53:5](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Is53.5))

These are just a few examples to help us see Christ as the fulfilment of ALL things pertaining to the Old Covenant

[Romans 10:4](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ro10.4) “4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

The Greek word here for End is τέλος (telos) [tell-os] and it can have two meanings, the first is to “cease” I dont think that is the view here, rather the second meaning is: purpose, intent or goal. Christ is the “Goal, or the Purpose” of the Law. It is another way of saying Christ fulfilled the law because Christ was the Goal of the law.

Law seen in three parts, from Thomas Aquinas (12 Century):

Moral, Civil and Ceremonial

Moral Law: Law that is binding on all human beings in all times and all places

Civil Law: Law that was given to the Israelites because they constituted a nation.

Ceremonial Law: This is the portion of the law that is in regards to the worship and sacrificial systems, priesthood and the levitical offices, the temple etc.

John Stott, great historic theologian and author in his work on the sermon on the mount called “Christian Counter Culture” equates what Jesus is referring to here is the “Moral Law”

I think it is more thorough that just the Moral LAw but rather I think it is the Whole of the law, Moral, Civil, Ceremonial and ALL the prophecies pertaining to the “New Covenant”

How did Christ Fulfill the Ceremonial Law? He is the culmination of all the sacrificial system, the Temple and the High Priest. Think “Passover Lamb” Jesus became our Passover Lamb. So all the symbolism of the feasts, the sacrifices, the offerings and the priesthood find their fulfillment In Christ “Christ is our Passover Lamb” [1 Corinthians 5:7](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.1Co5.7). He has become our High Priest [Hebrews 7:11-22](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Heb7.11-22) really the whole of chapters 7-10 but highlighted in [Hebrews 7:15–18](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Heb7.15-18) “15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. 17 For He testifies: “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.” 18 For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness,” and Verse 22 [Hebrews 7:22](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Heb7.22) “22 by so much more **Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant**.”

How did Christ fulfill the Civil Law? Christ is the King of Kings, He is the Lord of Lords [1 Timothy 6:15](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.1Ti6.15) “15 which He will manifest in His own time, **He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,**” [Revelation 17:14](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Re17.14) “14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, **for He is Lord of lords and King of kings;** and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”” [Revelation 19:16](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Re19.16) “16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**”

How did Christ fulfill the Moral law? By His perfect Sinless life whereby He made “complete” that which was contained in the Moral Law. He then did not do away with its Value He did away with its outcome of “Righteousness through the keeping of the Law” taking that which was **“externally imposed and making the law become inwardly motivated**”

[Matthew 5:20](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5.20) “20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

**This exceeding righteousness comes from inside us. It is a heart matter**. Six different times in [Matthew 5:21–48](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5.21-48) Jesus says, “You have heard that it was said … but I tell you …” The Pharisees had created all kinds of ingenious ways of working around the intentions of God’s Word. we are going to get into these in the weeks ahead.

### Planned Obsolescence

Today in our world much of what you buy and experience has built into it “planned obsolescence” for example, anyone have an iPhone? The iPhone is on version 14 now. My son and I were discussing this over the weekend how he has an iPhone 10 and it is no longer able to be updated to the versions of the operating system of the latest versions. He can go to the app store and see apps that say “not compatible with your version of the IOS. It is planned obsolescence, so you will go buy a new iPhone. Many things are made that way today.

[Hebrews 8:7–13](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Heb8.7-13) (NKJV)

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault with them, He says: “*Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—*9 *not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord*. 10 *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the* *Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and* *I will be their God, and they shall be My people*. 11 *None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the* *Lord,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them*. 12 *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness,* *and their sins* *and their lawless deeds I will remember no more*.”

13 In that He says, “*A new covenant*,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

The writer of Hebrews is quoting [Jeremiah 31](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Je31) describing the coming of a “New” Covenant. [Jeremiah 31:31-34](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Je31.31-34) is quoted several times in the New Testament (completely in [Hebrews 8:8-12](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Heb8.8-12); partially in [Romans 11:27](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ro11.27); [Hebrews 10:16-17](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Heb10.16-17); by way of allusion in [Matthew 26:28](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt26.28), [Mark 14:24](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mk14.24), and [John 6:45](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Jn6.45)),

It is what is pointed to in the Lords Supper which we celebrated last Sunday, the establishment of the New Covenant in Christ.

### Summary

Christ in every way fulfilled the Old Covenant and all that it points to, or saying it another way, everything that the Old Covenant points to is made complete in Christ. So then, Christ has taken that which was outwardly imposed and turned it inward and made the life of the believe and the Christian ethic a matter of the heart.