
a *Grace Notes* course

Life of Christ 200

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Lesson 205

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Contents

The Law in the Kingdom of Christ.....1

Oaths9

Judicial Punishment12

The Law in the Kingdom of Christ

Matthew 5:21-48

Introduction.

The bulk of this passage has to do with laws of divine establishment. Christ's spiritual code is the beatitudes; He now announces His establishment code.

The foundation for this entire passage lies with the four preceding verses.

In other words, whatever Christ says about the Law in verses 21-48, it is not about breaking a jot or tittle of it. This discourse is not about changes to the substantial truth of the Law.

There will be no change to the definitions of sin. Not in any way. There could not be if God is immutable.

There will be no change to the punishment for violations of establishment laws. The punishment for murder is still a life for a life, with no exception.

Therefore, Christ's discourse here does not introduce a new morality. He does not invent a new category of sin which is the mental attitude sin. He does not!

2 Samuel 11:1-5, "Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, 'is this not Bathsheba, the daughter Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite:' And David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house. And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, and said, 'I am pregnant'."

The time is one year after the death of David's father, Nahash, king of the Ammonites. David became incensed at the rejection of his consolation

by the recognized sons of Nahash, and so he made war against them (2 Samuel 10).

Remember that Joab is David's nephew, and actually a grandson of Nahash by Zeruah, David's sister by birth.

"Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle..." Although David had commanded his army to many victories, and was still a relatively young man, he refused to personally lead his army against the Ammonites. The reason is simple: he knew his revenge motivation against this nation was wrong, and that to destroy them from a personal vendetta was even worse.

David lacked the courage of his convictions, and worse, he sent a man to make war against his own grandfather.

This in itself points to the appropriate nature of Absalom's revolt.

God's discipline is always perfectly appropriate: because of David's sin here, Absalom his own son revolted against him.

Having sent to destroy by warfare his own biological family, and having done so from illicit motives, David paces his roof nervously and there sees a beautiful woman in the act of bathing.

What better way to pass the time than a conquest of his own?

When David discovers that this woman is the Jewish wife of a Gentile warrior, his revenge motivation becomes greater and greater. David does not want this woman because of her beauty, but because she represents everything that David ever hated, including his own mother.

So David chooses to sin the identical sin of his biological father so as to satisfy the lust for revenge in his soul. While his troops fight the war at the front, David fights the war at home, exacting something appropriate in his mind.

The woman conceives, and tells David of the problem.

David has the perfect solution: he plans to hide his sin by bringing her husband back home. Any soldier knows that this will result in an amorous reunion (vv.6-8)!

But Uriah is a true leader of men, and will not take time with his wife while his men are still fighting in the field (vv.9-13).

So David has to silence the man, so that he can perpetrate his lie and cover his adulterous affair.

David arranges for Uriah's death in battle, and Uriah is indeed killed by the Ammonites (vv.14-25).

David has a visit by Nathan the prophet, who predicts the death of his child, and the coming revolt from his own royal family.

David then produces the fifty first Psalm, a Psalm of confession he confession his sin with Bathsheba, and worships God.

However, 2 Samuel 12:21-23 reveals David's disingenuous nature at this time, "Then his servants said to him, 'What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food.' And he said, 'While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me, that the child may live. But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.'"

This is wrong. First, David disbelieved the prophet Nathan, who revealed the unchanging Word of God to him. That David should hope against the divine decree and reject the authority of God's appointed prophet shows that he has yet to recover.

Second, David puts on the outward form of repentance in order to get something from God, and when it does not work, he abandons it. This is utter hypocrisy, and reveals that David still remains in the cosmic system.

David then marries Bathsheba after her period of mourning, and the child is born and then dies. David's discipline has only begun.

Joab finally wins victory in the siege of Rabbah, the capital of Ammon, and holds off until David can arrive to apply the coup de grace and thus take credit for the victory. David brings with him all the people of Israel. All the people.

David dashes to Rabbah and does the deed like the evil man he has become. 2 Samuel 12:29-30 is

worth our time, "So David gathered all the people and went to Rabbah, fought against it, and captured it. Then he took the crown of their king from his head; and its weight was a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone; and it was place on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city in great amounts."

David ends his revenge by enslaving the captives of Rabbah, which is recorded in verse 31, "He also brought out the people who were in it, and set them to labor at saws, iron picks, and iron axes, and made them pass by the brick mold. And thus he did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem."

Note: the NASB version tries to indicate that David had the Ammonites tortured and killed; this is incorrect by the original Hebrew, which can be confusing.

The key to the original Hebrew is the word MALBEN, which is erroneously translated 'brick kilns'. It should be brick mold...

Now if this does not illustrate the existence of mental attitude sin before the Sermon on the Mount, then nothing does. However, there are many other passages that function in this way.

Genesis 6:5, "...his heart was evil continually."

Psalm 14:1, "The fool has said in his heart 'There is no God'."

Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?"

The first section, verses 21-26, "21 You heard that it was said to the ancients, 'You will not commit murder': and, 'whoever murders, will be guilty before the court.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'Raka' will be guilty before the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, 'Fool' will be guilty unto the Gehenna of the Fire. 23 Therefore if you are presenting your gift upon the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go first to be reconciled with your brother, and then after coming back present your gift. 25 Come to be like-minded with your adversary at law quickly, during what time you are with him on the way, so that the

adversary might never give you over to the judge, and the judge to the bailiff, and you might be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I say to you, you will definitely not come out of there, until you have paid the last penny."

The outline:

The ancient Law of Moses concerning murder and its penalty, v.21.

The extension of the penalty of murder for mental and verbal sins, v.22.

The application to the realm of priorities, vv.23-24.

The hopelessness of fighting the court of Christ, vv.25-26.

The ancient Law of Moses concerning murder and its penalty, v.21, "You heard that it was said to the ancients, 'You will not commit murder': and, 'whoever murders, will be guilty before the court.'"

Christ quotes from one passage, and then compiles a couple of concepts from several sources.

Christ quotes from the ten commandments, out of Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17.

Then He puts together some other things:

The Lex Talionis, Leviticus 24:17-20, "And if a man takes the life of any human being, he shall surely be put to death. And the one who takes the life of an animal shall make it good, life for life. And if a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it shall be done to him: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him."

The need for jurisprudence through the courts, Deuteronomy 16:18, "You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the Lord your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment."

Christ has a point. First that not one jot nor one tittle will not pass from the Law; and second, that the Law has certain provisions concerning the act of murder, namely, the provision of capital punishment after the conduct of proper jurisprudence.

The extension of the penalty for murder to mental and verbal sins, verse 22, "But I say to you that

everyone who is angry with his brother will be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'Raka' will be guilty before the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, 'Fool' will be guilty unto the Gehenna of the Fire."

The key word of the entire verse is ENOCHOS, which means liable to a penalty of the Law, or guilty.

There are three tiers to the verse with regard to the courts:

The court is the regular court of law, or the local court, from the Greek word KRISIS; the equivalent would be the city or county court.

The SANHEDRIN is equal to the supreme court of any nation. It was the most powerful court of the Jews, and Christ's hearers would identify it as the highest legal authority in Judaea.

There is of course the highest court of all, and that is the court of the Gehenna of the Fire.

The locality of Gehenna was in Jerusalem, and Jeremiah 19:5-6 identifies this place as the final place for the administration of the fifth cycle of discipline on the nation, "They have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as offerings to Baal - something I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind. So beware, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when the people will no longer call this place Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter."

It was the place of child sacrifice, and the fire is the identification with the burning fires of sacrifice to Baal.

It would become the place where the Jews were slaughtered for their sins by the final attack of the Babylonian armies.

Therefore this represents the administration of the fifth cycle of discipline when the supreme court of heaven steps in and rules because of the failure of the nation to take hold of the delegated authority through the laws of divine establishment and punish their own criminal offenders.

At each tier, there is a crime that is liable for the penalty for murder.

At the local court level, there will be trials for those who are angry with their brothers.

1. The Greek present participle is ORGIZOMENOS, which denotes a present state of judgmental wrath.

Mental attitude judgmental wrath is the seed from which all murder grows. When one man murders another it is the ultimate and final expression of judgment.

In the millennium, with the world under the rule of Jesus Christ, and the devil incarcerated in Hades, the mental attitude sin of ultimate judgment will result in capital punishment!

The reason for this is simple: there is no overt sin of murder that is not preceded by the mental attitude sin of murder.

Capital punishment is truly a preventative for any sin for which it is a penalty.

Therefore, if capital punishment is extended back to the mental attitude sin part of murder, many more, in fact the vast, vast majority of murders will be prevented. All overt sins start in the soul. If they are stopped there, then far fewer will come to fruit.

This is one of the conditions for the fantastic, ideal conditions of the millennium.

In the millennium, there will be thought police.

The reason that there can be no establishment punishment for mental attitude and verbal sins before the millennium is the inevitable distortion and abuse of jurisprudence that would come about due to the cosmic deceptions of the devil's world.

10. With a ruler who knows the thoughts and intents of the heart perfectly, with a perfect judge, there is no distortion of jurisprudence.

11. John the apostle understood this clearly (see 1 John 3:11-15 addenda).

At the human supreme court level, the one who says 'Raka' to his brother will be guilty unto capital punishment; guilty as for murder.

RAKA comes from an Aramaic word, REQA, which means 'empty-headed fool'. This is a pretty vindictive and vitriolic version of verbal sin.

This is a verbalization of judgment from one person to another; it is the verbal expression of the mental attitude judgment. It leads to a murder conviction in a higher court.

This verbalization of judgment is construed to the crime of murder; it is the verbal equivalent of ORGIZOMENOS.

The verbalization of any mental attitude sin is quite an advance in severity. It is a sin which will be liable to the appeal courts, and of course the courts of Christ's kingdom are perfectly efficient. If you are guilty, you will be found guilty.

At the level of the supreme court of heaven, whoever says 'fool' will be guilty unto the Gehenna of the Fire.

The first thing to notice is the exclusion of a target for the epithet. Christ leaves it out for the sake of brevity, but it is intended to be 'brother'.

The word MORE easily translates into the English 'moron'. It is the Greek equivalent of RAKA.

The preposition EIS controls the phrase 'the Gehenna of the Fire'. This simply shows that this is the limit for all judgment; that the Gehenna of the Fire is the final court.

Summary of this verse.

See SLANDER addendum.

Mental attitude or verbal judgment, especially blanket judgment, will be liable to the harshest of penalties in the millennium.

This harsh penalty of capital punishment will be one of the primary reasons for the ideal conditions of the millennium. With a strict limit on mental attitude and verbal sin, that vast majority of strife that characterizes planet earth under Satan will be gone.

Fear not! With Satan and the fallen angels bound, there will be very little temptation from the world. Perfect environment reduces temptation! There will be no such thing as peer pressure at this time!

The combination of the rule of Christ and the incarceration of the devil will keep temptation to an absolute minimum; there will be few instances of capital punishment.

The application to the realm of priorities, vv.23-24, "Therefore if you are presenting your gift upon the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go first to be reconciled with

your brother, and then after coming back present your gift."

Now this verse does not regard the subject as sinful; on the contrary, the brother is the one who is sinful, and the subject is the one who has a responsibility to save him.

When you have a wrathful mental attitude, you have something against someone; when you say RAKA to someone, you have something against that person; even when you just say MORON, there is judgment against another.

Now if you are worshipping God, and you remember not that you have mentally or verbally judged someone else, but rather that someone else might have a reason to mentally or verbally judge you, it is time to temporarily interrupt your worship.

Being reconciled with your brother means that you must resolve the case he might have against you. If you have done something wrong to your brother, if he might be tempted to judge you, you must resolve the matter.

The grave consequences of such things in the millennium is enough so that you would want to interrupt your worship to take care of things.

The application during the church age is less so than during the millennium, but James 5:16 still applies: "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."

The hopelessness of fighting the court, vv.25-26: "25 Come to be like-minded with your adversary at law quickly, during what time you are with him on the way, so that the adversary might never give you over to the judge, and the judge to the bailiff, and you might be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I say to you, you will definitely not come out of there, until you have paid the last penny."

These verses remain specific to the subject. That is, they are not general statements about the conduct of lawsuits, but specific to inevitability of justice in the millennium.

In other words, they are spoken by Christ with a gleam in His eye.

The adversary is none other than Christ Himself, and the time you are with Him on the way is the time that you have while you are on planet earth.

Since the context takes the process of the court all the way to the Supreme Court of Heaven, the ultimate judge and lawgiver is present in this passage.

Since the subject of the passage is the crowd, and Christ has made the crowd into suspects, the adversary is Christ Himself.

Christ urges his listeners to get to know their adversary at Law on the way to the courts.

The courts here are the courts of eternity.

The Judgment Seat of Christ, the evaluation of all Church Age believers.

The baptism of fire, which is the judgment of all unbelievers of the tribulation, both Jew and Gentile, Mt 25:31-46; Ezek 20:33-48.

The evaluation of all tribulational believers, both Jew and Gentile, Mt 25:31-46; Dan 12:2-3.

At the great white throne, there are three categories of judgments.

The judgment of believers.

All believers who lived before the incarnation, both Jew and Gentile, are judged at this time.

All Millennial believers are judged at this time.

The judgment of unbelievers. All unbelievers in history, except those of the tribulation, are judged at this time. Mt 25:31-46, Ezek 20:32-38, Rev 20:7-10.

The judgment of all fallen angels at the end of the Millennium. Their sentence was passed before time began, but its execution is not carried out until the end of human history.

Christ commands us to become like minded with Him on the way to our eternal judgment. The Greek participle is EUNOON, which describes mental compatibility, comradeship, and even friendship.

Coming to a like-minded state with Christ can only be accomplished through the faith perception of the truth.

The Bible is the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). It is through our study of God's word that we become like-minded with the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

It is easy to see the wisdom in the fulfillment of this command.

Since Christ is our final judge, the final judge of all mankind, it is imperative to become like-minded with Him on the way to our final judgment.

If you are like-minded with your final judge, your final judgment is certain to go well.

The command to become like-minded with the adversary at Law is especially pertinent because judgment from the Supreme Court of Heaven will be characterized by perfect justice, and by its finality.

Being thrown into jail is the equivalent of eternal condemnation, and no one will escape there until they have paid the last penny. Unfortunately, there is no money in hell, and no way to obtain any.

Christ finishes the discourse with the principle of the inescapability of hell.

The second section, verses 27-30: "27 You heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery'. 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman to desire her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 Now if your right eye causes you to stumble, snatch it out and throw it from you.

For it is better for you that one of your members be destroyed and not your whole body be cast unto Gehenna. 30 And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you. For it is better for you that one of your members be destroyed and not your whole body be thrown out into Gehenna."

Again Christ begins with a statement from the ten commandments, this one from Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5:18.

And again, His intent is not to destroy the Law, for nothing is to pass from the Law until the very end of human history.

But once again, Christ is going to extend the penalty into the realm of the mental attitude. He does so with some harsh standards.

He uses the phrase, 'everyone who looks at a woman to desire her.'

The use of PROS plus the infinitive mood indicates purpose. Here it is PROS plus the

infinitive mood of EPITHUMEO, which means 'to desire' something.

EPITHUMEO goes beyond a simple acknowledgement of attractiveness.

It describes a legitimate desire to enjoy the charms of the thing or person admired.

So in Christ's kingdom, you can look at another woman, but you cannot do so with the intent of desire.

If the purpose in your heart is desire, then you have already committed adultery in your heart.

It is easy and appropriate to apply some of the principles from the preceding passage.

If mental attitude murder caused one to be guilty before the courts, and incurred the appropriate penalty, then so also would mental attitude adultery.

So it does. And the penalty for adultery from the establishment code is clear:

Leviticus 20:10, "If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."

Deuteronomy 22:23-24, "If there is a girl who is a virgin engaged to a man, and another man finds her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and you shall stone them to death; the girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he has violated his neighbor's wife."

So what Christ does here is extend the penalty for adultery into the mental attitude realm. It is important to note that although Christ does not mention guilt before the courts, it is clear that He intends it so.

Also the principle of the stumbling block applies to adultery.

No man or woman should do what might encourage adulterous thoughts in the other.

This includes what is spoken, or what is worn (or what is not worn).

Of course, exercise common sense; it is not necessary for women to wear a beer barrel or a

tent, and our society is now so degenerate that even moderate prudence in clothing is enough.

Christ also adds something here that is appropriate to the battle against mental attitude sin during the millennium: "29 Now if your right eye causes you to stumble, snatch it out and throw it from you. For it is better for you that one of your members be destroyed and not your whole body be cast unto Gehenna. 30 And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you. For it is better for you that one of your members be destroyed and not your whole body be thrown out into Gehenna."

Christ depicts a swift and violent act in the snatching out of the eye and throwing it from you; He preaches immediate action.

This is not recommended action for the church age; there is some application here, but not the same kind of violence is required.

The casting of the body unto Gehenna is the casting of the human body, not the resurrection body. The use of the word SOMA here restricts the interpretation of GEHENNA to a receptacle for the human body.

See the doctrine of burial and cremation.

When a body was cast into Gehenna, it was a clear indication that capital punishment had taken place.

Therefore, during Christ's millennial rule, capital punishment will extend to the mental realm for the sin of adultery.

Although there is no straight application to the plucking out of an eye or the cutting off of a hand, there is a common sense application to life in the church age.

If there is something that is a source of temptation to sin of any kind, especially if your willpower has been weakened by cosmic involvement, then you must be separated from that thing.

The epistles confirm this principle.

1 Corinthians 6:18, "Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body."

1 Corinthians 10:14, "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry."

2 Timothy 2:22, "Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

Titus 3:3, "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."

1 Peter 2:11, "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul."

1 Peter 4:1-3, "Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries."

Furthermore, there is the principle of degenerating susceptibility: the more you give in to sin, the more susceptible to sin that you become.

The greater sins breed the lesser sins.

The lesser sins increase the chance that a greater sin might be committed. And a greater sin may include something that is truly a capital crime even in our society!

Romans 1:18-32 contains the doctrine of degeneracy and the principle of degenerating susceptibility. Three times in this passage Paul employs the phrase "God gave them over".

Rom 1:18-19, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, { 19 } since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

This is the statement of the subject matter of the following passage.

The wrath of God is the expression of His justice in Divine discipline.

The revelation of God's wrath is not mentioned - perhaps it could be the AIDS virus in ancient times.

The reason for the wrath of God is plain - people have suppressed the truth of God in their own souls through their involvement in the cosmic system.

{20} For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

{21} For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became a vacuum and their foolish hearts were darkened.

This is a clear reference to bitterness, rejection of the truth, the acceptance of the cosmic counterfeits and lies, and spiritual blindness.

These people are believers.

{22} Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools {23} and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. {24} Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

These verses clearly refer to the lust pattern and addiction cycle, with emphasis on the category of stimulation lust.

In verse 24, the word paradidomi indicates that God gives these people over for the purpose of discipline.

The discipline is built in to their acts: atimazo indicates that people in this category of lust mistreat and degrade the bodies of those with whom they engage in their activities. This becomes mutual and inescapable.

"{25} They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.

{26} Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. {27} In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust

for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion."

These verses serve as a summary for what has gone before, except with regard to homosexual activity.

Again, there is built-in Divine discipline for this kind of activity.

However, homosexuality brings on another category of degeneracy altogether.

{28} Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done, {29} having become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, depravity, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit malice, are gossips, {30} slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant, boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; {31} they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

A depraved mind is a built-in category of Divine discipline. It is called adokimon, and it means that the mind no longer has an conscience related to establishment truth.

A mind without an establishment conscience is a very dangerous thing - look again at all of the anti-establishment activities.

This long list of sins - all destructive to society, are seen as the result of the homosexual lust pattern.

Homosexuality is certainly a very strong sin against what is most obviously natural. It is one of the highest ways to elevate self above society and family and worst of all God.

The verb paradidomi describes the giving over of these homosexuals to every kind of sin. a. God produces the action of the verb; the homosexuals receive it.

This verb means literally 'to hand over a criminal to the custody of the law'.

Here, God hands them over to the custody of their flunked-out minds. adokimon means to fail the grade, or to be so stupid as to be untestable.

So this is a picture of God leaving homosexual lust pattern idiots to their own conscience, which is just about gone.

The result of the list is varied:

Some things are worse than homosexuality, like murder. In this case homosexuality is a step that makes it easier to murder.

Some things are not worse, but still sins, like envy, strife, etc. Once a really bad thing is done, it is then quite easy to do the less bad. Homosexuality makes it easier to sin the lesser sins.

Verse 32: "who, full-knowing beforehand the righteous decree of God that they who currently practice things like this are deserving of capital punishment, they not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them."

These homosexuals fully know the righteous decree of God. Righteous decree comes from the Greek word for a commandment that is intrinsically righteous - that stands on its own merit, and is just in the eyes of all.

This verse refers back to the homosexuals last named in verse 28.

The relative pronoun *hoitines* always seeks the nearest antecedent for its identification, and this would be lust-pattern homosexuals who produce the long list of sins.

This is because it must either refer to just the last sin in the list, or the producer of all the sins of 29-31. It is the latter.

It is the aorist participle of *epiginosko*, to fully know something. The aorist participle denotes that the knowledge was acquired before the action - that they knew what the penalty was before they did what they did.

This applies to those who currently practice such things.

This comes from the present participle of *prasson*. It means that the overt act of homosexuality is currently practiced.

'Such things' is the articular pronoun *toiauta*. It should be translated, 'things like this'. What things? This whole long list? Some of the things on the list? Or the sin which makes one susceptible to them?

Let's put this on hold for a moment...

They who practice things like this are deserving of capital punishment. Now here is something that is clear: *axioi thanatou* always means deserving of capital punishment.

Many secular writers of ancient Greek employed this phrase, and always it was capital punishment.

In Matthew 26:66 and Mark 14:64, the crowd calls for the capital punishment of Christ, by saying that he deserves death.

In Luke 23:15,22 Pontius Pilate claims that Christ does not deserve capital punishment.

In Matthew 15:4 and Mark 7:10, Christ brings forward an Old Testament death penalty, and treats it as valid for the time. That penalty was death for recalcitrant children, Exodus 21:17.

Matthew 10:21 and Mark 13:12 Christ uses another phrase to show capital punishment when it is undeserved.

In Acts 23:29, Claudius Lysias says that Paul is not *axios thanatou*.

In 25:11,25 Paul himself claims the same thing.

Oaths

Matthew 5:33-37, "33 Again you heard that it was said by the ancients, You will not make false oaths, and, You will make your oaths to the Lord. 34 But I say to you, make no oath at all, neither by heaven, because it is the throne of God, 35 nor by earth, because it is the footstool of His feet, nor into Jerusalem, because it is the city of the Great King, 36 nor will you make an oath by your head, because you are not able to make one hair white or black. 37 But let your word be yes, yes, no, no; and what is beyond these is from the evil one."

Outline.

The old Mosaic Establishment Code principles.

The principle of making false oaths.

The principle of making oaths to the Lord.

The new Millennial Establishment Code principles.

The prohibition against any oath.

The list of the most common oaths, and the reason for each prohibition.

Heaven.

Earth.

Into Jerusalem.

Your head.

The new command: just say it.

The Explanation.

The context for this passage comes from several Mosaic passages:

Numbers 30:2, "If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth."

This verse includes two concepts: making a vow to the Lord, and making an oath on a binding contract with another human being.

This is an issue where the character of man must imitate the character of God. God always keeps His word, and for normal function between men, there must also be the keeping of one's word.

Making an oath in a human contract, includes making that oath to God, in imitation of His character. It was rather like taking the oath on the witness stand in our own culture.

This was the consumer protection clause of the Mosaic Law, and as long as the people of Israel loved God, they took this seriously.

Deuteronomy 21:21-23, "When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the Lord your God will surely require it of you. However, if you refrain from vowing, it would not be sin in you. You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, just as you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God, what you have promised."

Taking a vow to the Lord was a practice whereby someone would swear by some popular formula to do something for God.

Genesis 28:20-22 contains the oath of Jacob: "Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I return to my father's house in safety, then the Lord will be my God. And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's

house; and of all that Thou dost give me I will surely give a tenth to Thee.'"

The vow gave an individual an opportunity to imitate God by keeping his own word.

Leviticus 19:12, "And you shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the Lord."

This context has a number of miscellaneous commands. This one is in the midst of them.

It is a simple repetition of the others, but gives a little bit more in the way of explanation.

Breaking a vow profanes the name of God. It makes God seem common to unbelievers, because it gives the appearance of a powerless God.

You swear by God's name and do not keep the oath. So you swear and God does not give you the power to keep the oath? Such a weak God.

Bible Oaths Include:

Those of judicial procedure, i.e., the oath in the function of law to determine what is hearsay versus what is evidence.

The oath of allegiance to a sovereign or a superior.

An agreement or stipulation for the performance of an act, Gen 14:22, 24:2.

A vow made in the form of an oath.

A form of oath used frequently in the Bible is "as the Lord lives," found in 1 Sam 14:39, 19:6; 2 Sam 15:21; 1 Kg 18:10.

God's Oath.

Heb 6:16, "For men take an oath by the greater, and to them the oath is given for a confirmation, and that is the end of all dispute."

In other words, in resolving anything, from allegiance to jurisprudence, an oath was used.

To the Jews in Jerusalem in A.D. 67, taking an oath in the name of God was a well known custom for settling a dispute, to confirm a promise, or to resolve some problem in court.

Heb 6:17, "By which solemn oath, God, even more willing to demonstrate to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His decrees, pledged Himself as a guarantee by an oath."

God took an oath as a confirmation or guarantee of His promises, of the validity of Abraham's escrow

blessing. He took an oath that the blessings were there on deposit. But being God, He couldn't take an oath by anyone greater; therefore, He took the oath by Himself.

The first immutable thing is God Himself. The second immutable thing is God's promise.

So when God gives a promise, the fact that HE gives it means that promise carries its own immutability.

The second immutable thing, God's promise in time, is the revelation of what God did for you in eternity past.

Again, there are only two immutable things: what God is, and what God says. God and doctrine are the two immutable things.

God demonstrates to us through doctrine what He did for us in eternity past. There is no way in our minds and in our thinking that we could ever come close to penetrating eternity past. Only God knows what He did, because only He was there. Yet He is willing to demonstrate this to us with something else that is immutable: He reveals it in His Word.

The person of God the Father as the grantor designed our escrow blessings. The revelation about God in the Bible is the means of conveying our escrow blessings to us in time. Why must we have this information? Because without doctrine, we're like a ship without a rudder. We have no true motivation nor any real understanding of how we glorify God.

God is not only immutable, but He is fair. Therefore, He has revealed to us these things pertaining to His plan.

God has a perfect, immutable plan for you. To harness your life to the Immutable is where the blessing and meaning of life begins.

The removal of all oaths for the millennium.

The millennium is a perfect environment, including consumer protection. There is no need for any oath during the millennium.

Christ names all of the popular oaths: heaven, earth, 'into Jerusalem', and 'by my head'.

In each case, He notes why the oath does nothing.

Heaven is the throne of God - there is no oath needed there!

Earth is the footstool for Christ's feet, a clear reference to the millennium. There is no need for oaths during the millennium!

To Jerusalem was an oath sworn during the festal ascent to the Holy City. Jerusalem is the city of the Great King... no need for an oath there.

By my head was another popular oath, but Christ really comes down hard on this one. He makes a statement of grace orientation: swearing by your own head has no power at all!

In the millennium, there will be only 'yes' or 'no' in every dealing.

Anything beyond this is from the evil one.

ADDENDUM: James 5:12, "But before all these, my brothers, do not swear, neither by heaven nor the earth nor any other oath; but let your yes be yes and no, no, in order that you might not fall under judgment."

James considers this very important, because he places it at the top of his list, even though it is much later in his letter. He says *pro pantwn de*, or 'before all these things'.

He then goes on to paraphrase the sermon on the mount, but he gives a different conclusion.

This different conclusion means that there is a different reason for restraining from oaths during the church age.

The reason for the absence of oaths during the millennium has to do with the ideal conditions of that dispensation. What reason could there be for one if there is no cosmic system? No active demons?

James' conclusion is this: *i(/na mh(u(po kri/sin pe/shte*.

The *i(/na* is there to denote that this is a purpose clause. The reason for the prohibition against oaths is about to follow. It is translated 'in order that'.

pe/shte communicates the idea of a figurative fall; a fall from grace if you will.

u(po kri/sin denotes judgment. Let's think this one through. It can be one of two categories of judgments: either God's judgment, or man's.

If this is God's judgment, then swearing an oath during the church age could cause you to lose your reward. Very unlikely.

However, if this is man's judgment, then it certainly makes sense. The judgment of the state can be harsh indeed, especially in the area of real estate (boundary agreements) and business contracts.

Since the church age emphasizes the separation of church and state, any oath that combines church and state is a dangerous one indeed.

If you swear an oath before God to keep a business contract, and then the devil's world happens, you are bound to that oath regardless, and it could wind you up in some very hot water with the state.

James' prohibition extends to any matter of the state; any matter where the state could cause you come under its judgment.

Because of this u(po kri/sin, there is a limit to the prohibition. If you want to swear an oath in another matter, then do not worry about it.

This prohibition does not extend to oaths about telling the truth in the courtroom, or to the military oath. Neither one of those can cause you to go to jail if you are an honest person.

Judicial Punishment

Introduction.

The Establishment Code of the Mosaic Law contains a system of judicial punishment for crimes and misdemeanors.

This system is God's prescription for degenerate man. Perfect God took into account the shortcomings of man under the sin nature and in the cosmic system.

God decided to delegate the system to man. That is, to make man responsible for policing himself.

Whenever God delegates responsibility to man, it is so that man might gain an appreciation of God.

God does not feel sorry for himself; he does not need our empathy.

However, our empathy helps us to know God, and we are the infinite gainers.

Furthermore, God allowed Satan control of this world, so that God cannot adjudicate the troubles of man by Himself. He must wait until the millennium to do so.

Although God does not administrate justice Himself, He has given man the responsibility, so that human freedom might be maintained.

Human freedom is the highest priority in the angelic conflict. God provides for its preservation by means of delegated authority.

When delegated authority fails to punish, God is authorized to step in and do the job.

God is just to every human being on an individual basis.

God also punishes nations which fail to be responsible in their appointment to justice.

There is a direct correlation between the nation's pivot of mature believers and how well the nation administers justice.

As the pivot shrinks, so does the administration of justice. Therefore, God steps in to administrate justice, and preserve freedom through the cycles of discipline.

The cycles of discipline are designed to wake the nation up to its failure to please God.

The cycles of discipline also serve in part to administrate justice in place of the failed justice of the nation.

There are two parts to the Establishment Code related to the administration of justice:

The corporate administration of justice.

The personal administration of justice.

The Law includes provisions for Israel as a client nation unto God. Any matter of punishment for spiritual impropriety was specifically because of Israel's corporate testimony during that dispensation.

Since there is now separation of church and state, the punishments for spiritual impropriety are no longer a part of the establishment code.

These punishments are included in this doctrine only for the sake of completeness and historical heritage. Their inclusion is not to imply their implementation for this dispensation.

In conclusion, the Mosaic Law provides the model for the administration of justice in the devil's world. Any nation may employ it with confidence that it will bear the fruits of domestic peace and

prosperity. Leviticus 26:3-6, "If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land."

The acceptability of the Mosaic Establishment Code correlates directly to the pivot.

The greater the pivot, the more acceptable this code will be, and vice versa.

Relationship with God makes this covenant of laws a good thing to the people.

Employment of this set of laws causes a national testimony, Leviticus 26:11-12, "[If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out...] ...I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people."

Obedience does not bring relationship with God, but relationship with God brings obedience.

Obedience does result in testimony, and obedience on a national scale does bring international impact.

However, this is not the dispensation of corporate testimony, so that this function is limited.

The Corporate Administration of Justice.

The rules of jurisprudence.

For ANY sin to be considered true, there must be at least two eyewitnesses to the act, and usually the Bible prefers three - Deuteronomy 17:6: "On the oral testimony of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the oral testimony of one witness."

If you are the only eyewitness to an act, you cannot come to the conclusion that what you saw is true; the requirement for two witnesses testifies to the untrustable nature of your senses, and to the sin nature in man.

Again, you are not allowed to conclude that a sin has transpired.

The Bible does not make much room for the use of physical or circumstantial evidence; eyewitnesses are required. This is the key to a speedy trial.

Therefore, if there is insufficient evidence, you must leave the matter to the supreme court of heaven.

Guilty pleas require no eyewitnesses.

False witness is the submission of evidence or testimony in a court of law, which is known by the witness to be false at the time that he gives it.

The evidence or testimony may be of any make-up - oral, written, or even physical. Exodus 20:16; Deuteronomy 5:20: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

The penalty for false witness is commensurate with the accusation; it goes all the way to capital punishment - Deuteronomy 19:15-21: "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the oral testimony of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed. If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing, then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who will be in office in those days. And the judges shall investigate thoroughly; and if the witness is a false witness and he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. And the rest will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such an evil thing among you. Thus you shall not show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."

Similar to false witness is the refusal to testify.

The refusal to testify is a serious matter in the legal context of Israel. If a witness knows the truth, but refuses to speak under oath, he has done something tantamount to false witness.

The one who refused to testify was considered an accessory to the crime, and was punishable as such.

Prov 29:24: "He who is a partner with a thief hates his own life; He hears the oath but tells nothing."

Lev 5:1: "Now if a person sins, after he hears a public adjuration to testify, when he is a witness, whether he has seen or otherwise known, if he does not tell it, then he will bear his guilt."

The punishments.

Offenses requiring capital punishment:

Striking or cursing a parent, Exodus 21:15,17. The strike must be with intent to cause violent harm, which is the meaning of NAKAH. The curse is a severe verbal reviling.

Blasphemy, which is cursing the name of God - the verbal expression of extreme bitterness, Leviticus 24:14,16,23; 1 Kings 21:13. This is not simply taking the Lord's name in vain.

Interestingly, this was the charge brought against Christ for which He was crucified.

Profaning the Sabbath, Exodus 31:14f; 35:2; Numbers 15:32-36.

'Profane' comes from the Hebrew verb HALAL. HALAL means to violate in a sexual sense. It is also employed to denote someone who is impure because they have touched the dead.

The Sabbath was Holy because it was the appointed time to spend with God. All concentration on the Sabbath day was to be directed toward Him.

Doing something on the Sabbath that was a distraction from learning about and worshipping God was tantamount to blasphemy, and considered a capital offense.

Witchcraft and False Prophecy, Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 20:27; Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:20; 1 Samuel 28:3,9.

Adultery, Leviticus 20:10-12; Deuteronomy 22:22.

Unchastity. This is the area of sexual intercourse apart from the involvement of a married person.

Pre-marital sex, Deuteronomy 22:13-21. If a woman is proved to not be a virgin on her wedding night, then her husband may prove the charge, and have her put to death. Pre-marital sex is still intercourse with someone else's partner in life, even though that has not been revealed by God.

Sex with a betrothed, or engaged person, Deuteronomy 22:23-24.

3. Pre-marital sex with a priest's daughter, Leviticus 21:9.

Rape, Deuteronomy 22:25.

Incest, homosexuality, and bestiality, Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 20:11-17.

Abducting people for slavery, Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 24:7.

Idolatry, Leviticus 20:1-5; Deuteronomy 13:2-19; 17:2-7.

False witnessing in capital cases, Deuteronomy 19:16,19.

Murder, Exodus 21:12; Leviticus 24:17; Numbers 35:16-21.

The penalty of being 'cut off from the people'.

This is a simple synonym for capital punishment.

The crimes listed under this synonym are as follows:

Defiance of authority, Numbers 15:30-31.

Incest, Leviticus 18:6-23,29.

Uncircumcision, Genesis 17:14.

Neglect of the Passover, Numbers 19:13; eating leavened bread on the Passover, Exodus 12:15,19.

Sabbath breaking, Exodus 31:14.

Improper observance of the Day of Atonement, Leviticus 23:26-30.

The practice of child sacrifice, Leviticus 20:3.

Witchcraft, Leviticus 20:6.

Violating the sacrifices by eating the fat, Leviticus 7:25, or eating the blood, Leviticus 7:27; 17:14, eating when the eater is unclean, Leviticus 7:20, 22:3-6, eating a sacrifice late, Leviticus 19:5-8.

10. General neglect of purification, Numbers 19:13,20 and other improper procedures, Leviticus 17:3f; 17:8f.

Methods of capital punishment.

Stoning was the most common mode of execution. By including many people in the execution, there was a strong impression of corporate culpability in the crime. God designed this to be a tool for the creation of positive peer pressure.

In some cases, the bodies of the victims were incinerated, so as to obliterate their memory from the people, Leviticus 20:4; Leviticus 21:9.

In later times, execution was done by means of beheading, 2 Samuel 16:9; 2 Kings 6:31f.

Other penalties, not requiring death.

Flogging, for the loser in a civil dispute, Deuteronomy 25:1-3.

Monetary restitution for any breaking of a Holy thing, Leviticus 5:15-16. But no other fines are a part of the Mosaic Law.

Imprisonment was never a part of the Law, except for detention before and during a trial. Although it is mentioned often in the Bible, it is never commanded!

Imprisonment does not reform criminals; it makes them better at what they do.

Imprisonment does not make restitution; it gives security to those who are imprisoned.

Imprisonment is a paradox. It is not required in a society that is virtuous enough to execute true menaces to society. It only seems a necessity when virtue is breached.

Imprisonment is one of the greatest wastes of money in our country.

Mutilation was authorized for one crime only, Deuteronomy 25:11, "If two men, a man and his countryman, are struggling together, and the wife of one comes near to deliver her husband from the hand of the one who is tricking him, and puts out her hand and seizes his genitals, then you shall cut off her hand; you shall not show pity."

Restitution for theft, Exodus 22:1-4,9.

The Mosaic Law reaches a pinnacle of common sense genius here.

When a theft occurs, there is a system whereby the convicted thief must pay his victim more than what was originally stolen.

The system:

If the thief has not sold or slaughtered or destroyed what was stolen, he is to pay double.

If the thief has sold or slaughtered or destroyed what was stolen, then:

For an ox, he must pay five oxen.

For a sheep, he must pay four sheep.

If anyone is caught with stolen property, he will pay double.

Furthermore, killing a thief while he is in the process of his crimes is completely authorized.

Restitution for carelessness, Exodus 22:5-6.

Payment in kind is required when carelessness causes someone's property to be destroyed.

Payment in kind is a fair method for liability.

The Law Regarding Self-Defense. Exodus 21:23-25; Leviticus 24:19-22; Deuteronomy 19:21; Matthew 5:38-42.

It is natural that law enforcement officials cannot be on the scene of every crime.

The Mosaic Law fairly delegates authority to citizens regarding self-defense, so that criminals might be caught and stopped in the act of their crimes.

The three citations of the lex talionis have to do with personal restitution. It is clear from each that this is so.

The lex talionis is set up this way so as to provide satisfaction in the case of personal injury.

The satisfaction keeps the Hatfields and McCoys from occurring. If there is justice and satisfaction, then there is no need for an ongoing feud.

But Christ puts a new twist on the Lex Talionis when He interprets it.

"38 You heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and, a tooth for a tooth. 39 But I myself say to you do not stand against evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him also the left; 40 And while someone wishes to sue you and to take your shirt, give to him also your coat; 41 and whoever presses you into service for one mile, go with him two; 42 give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away the one who wishes to borrow from you."

This interpretation concentrates not on restitution, but self-defense.

First comes the quotation of the Lex Talionis, usually taken on the corporate side of defense against crime.

The corporate side is the side where proper jurisprudence must take place; where the rules for evidence must be obeyed; and where properly convicted criminals are given their just due.

But the personal side of the Lex Talionis has to do with the exigencies of the situation.

The general rule is that you are allowed to defend yourself with force equal to the threat against you.

This general rule applies only if the threat cannot be stopped in a timely manner by corporate measures, i.e., the police officer, or others from the general populace.

Both of these systems of protection against crime are sides to the same coin. The citizen is authorized to act for the state when the state cannot act in time.

The state is considered to be preferred for the prevention of crime.

Although the Roman Law was good, and although there was much restraint on crime in Israel during the time of Christ, there were still times when the criminal element took advantage of innocent victims.

Because of this, it would be natural for Christ's audience to balk at what He was suggesting: that they refrain even from self-defense.

However, since the system of justice will be so swift and sure during His millennial reign, there will be no need for the self-defense provisions of the Mosaic Law.

Now the first crime mentioned is violence. If someone strikes you, you are not to reply in kind. In fact, Christ will handle things.

The second has to do with a frivolous lawsuit. If someone tries to redistribute your wealth, you would normally fight them tooth and nail in the courtroom.

But, in the millennium, there is no need for that. Christ is the perfect judge, and in His kingdom He judges with perfect fairness and immediacy. Your money and property is safe in the millennium.

Being pressed into service was a problem with Rome. *aggareu/sei* is literally press into service.

It is well-documented that the Romans took advantage of their occupation of Jewish land.

They had much power because of their military domination of the region, and the Roman soldier was not above abusing that power.

Therefore, it was common for Jewish citizens to be pressed into service, both when the Roman military had a legitimate need, and when it did not.

In the millennium, being pressed into service will always come about because of legitimate need, and therefore Christ calls for enthusiastic volunteer service.

Finally, there is the idea of legitimate need. In the millennium, when your neighbor needs something, he legitimately needs it.

There will be no lending business during the millennium. What is legitimately needed will be freely given.

And, the lender need have no worry about the payback, because Christ is on the throne.

Today, we have a system whereby interest is charged on loans, so that the borrower will be encouraged to pay back the money. No need for that when Christ rules.

Let me be clear: there is no compulsion for you to lend money to anyone during the church age. It is a choice that you make based on your wisdom.

Our twisted system: a review.

We fail in the area of jurisprudence.

Trials are much too long.

There is way too much poor evidence allowed in the courtroom.

Too many criminals are released on technicalities.

We fail in the area of judicial punishment.

The prison system is an utter failure. The Bible points out that the only need for prison is to hold suspected criminals for a very short time, until they are tried.

The failure to apply capital punishment where it is deserved is an utter disgrace.

Church Age Distinctions.

The nation is independent from the church during this dispensation.

As such, what the nation chooses for its establishment doctrines is not a function of the church. The system of judicial punishment,

military draft and training, taxation, and anything else that comes under the umbrella of divine establishment is left to the nation to decide.

In no way is the church to function as the nation, or usurp national function, during this dispensation.

The church has a limited function in the area of banishment for the protection of its flock.

Both pastors and laymen alike may be banished if it is in the best interest of the local assembly to do so.

In any area where a member or associate of the church has committed a crime that comes under the function of the state, the church is to cooperate in any way possible.

The Mosaic Law defines the best way for any state in any time to be run. Any nation may confidently incorporate any part of the establishment code expecting the best possible results.

Believers in Jesus Christ who are given a say in how their government will be formed or run should always support the side of the establishment code.

Believers in Jesus Christ are always morally responsible in spite of the looseness of their national laws.
