

Did Jesus warn His disciples that Scripture was CORRUPTED?

Pushback: *Didn't Jesus repudiate a ton of stuff in the "Antitheses"?*

The so-called 'antitheses' are 6 pronouncements Jesus' makes in the Sermon on the Mount. Historically, some have claimed that these were annulments of the Mosaic Law and the OTHER VOICE literally states that Jesus said that Satan was the author of at least the Oath-related passages in the Hebrew bible.

Let's take a brief look at the passage to see if that claim can be supported by Jesus' words.

THE FIRST DISCOURSE: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (5:1–7:29)

Introduction (5.1 -5.16)

- The Foundation of Righteous Living: The Beatitudes (5:3–12)
- The Essence of Discipleship: Salt and Light (5:13–16)

The Main Body of the Sermon (5:17–7:12)

- The Relation between the Old and the New Righteousness (5:17–48)
 - Continuity with the Old (5:17–20)
 - The Surpassing of the Old: The Six Antitheses (5:21–48)
- Outward vs. Inward Righteousness (6:1–18)
- Dependence upon God (6:19–34)
- Various Teachings and the Golden Rule (7:1–12)

Conclusion (7:13–27)

The Astonishment of the Crowds (7:28–29)

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Jesus begins with an over-arching declaration of **Continuity with the Law**.

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□ **General relationship (5:17-20)**

- Prohibition: **Do not think that Jesus has come to abolish the law** (5:17a).
- Antithetical clarification: **Jesus has come not to abolish but to fulfill** (5:17b).
- Explanation 1: **Even the smallest parts of the law are permanently valid** (5:18).
- Implication: **Spiritual status is measured by conformity to the law** (5:19).
- Explanation 2: **Righteousness greater than that of the religious leaders is required to enter the kingdom** (5:20).

And begins to declare that compliance with the Law requires (1) 'going deeper' into its spirit, principles, and intention, and then (2) adjusting one's behavior and attitudes to live in obedience to those. Kingdom righteousness requires surpassing some 'minimum requirement' or 'letter-of-the-law' actions.

□ **Specific ethical application: 6 examples (5:21-48)**

- Anger and abusive speech (5:21-26)
- Adultery and lust (5:27-30)
- Divorce and adultery (5:31-32)
- Vows (5:33-37)
- Retaliation (5:38-42)
- Loving one's enemies (5:43-48)

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Scholars all know that Jesus was not repudiating anything in the Law, but rather the weakening of the benefits of the law via inaccurate interpretation by the religious leaders (A):

"Matthew presents Jesus as coming **not to abolish but to accomplish** the purpose of the law and the prophets (5:17). Thus **one would expect the contrasting teaching of Jesus to transcend the Bible in a manner that does not formally violate its ethical authority**. Yet at the same time, Jesus warns his disciples that their righteousness must exceed that of the religious teachers (5:20), and so one would **expect his teaching to expose the inadequacies and mistakes of those teachers** as he expounds Moses in an ultimate manner. In other texts (e.g., 9:10–13; 15:1–9; 19:1–9) Jesus explicitly rebukes the religious leaders for their mistaken views of the law and the prophets, and so one should not be surprised to find similar confrontations occurring implicitly here.

"The transcendent teaching of Jesus **contrasts not with that** of Moses **but with that** of the traditional legal experts because it **restores the original divine intention of the law** (...).

David L. Turner, Matthew (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament)

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"Jesus' understanding of keeping the law meant a great deal more than making sure that the letter of the law was not infringed. For him it was important that the **deeper implications** of what God had commanded be understood and put into practice. He brings this out with reference to specific commands that the Pharisees had no difficulty in keeping in the literal sense. **He shows that in each case a principle is involved.** When this is understood, keeping the commands is far from the simple thing the Pharisees understood. He is **not abrogating the law** but **exposing the limitations of the way some provisions in it had been understood.** ... **Jesus is protesting against a strictly literal interpretation of the commands, an interpretation that** indicates an apparent willingness to obey what God has said, but which imposes a strict limit on obedience and leaves scope for a good deal of ungodly behavior. He is laying down authoritatively how these commands of God should be understood. "

Leon Morris, The Gospel according to Matthew

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Scholars all know that Jesus was not repudiating anything in the Law, but rather the weakening of the benefits of the law via inaccurate interpretation by the religious leaders (C):

"Matthew's Jesus is the ultimate goal of the law and the prophets, the one to whom they point. His mission of kingdom word and deed fulfills the ethical standards and eschatological promises of the law and the prophets. Thus **he becomes the sole authoritative teacher** of the law, and **his interpretations take on the character of new law for his disciples**. His teachings are **not brand new in the sense of having no root in the Hebrew Bible** but new in the sense of **transcending the traditional understanding of the law promulgated by the religious leaders**. It is not Moses, much less the religious leaders, who authoritatively teach Jesus's disciples. Jesus alone fills that role. **The six examples in 5:21–48 do not amount to Jesus's merely confirming Moses or bluntly contradicting Moses but to Jesus's unfolding the implications that were in Moses all along, although undetected by the current religious leaders of Israel.**"

David L. Turner, Matthew (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 158.

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When we drill down into the 'antitheses', we should note that the term is misleading:

"Antitheses or Contrasts? Although it is common for interpreters to speak of the six examples in 5:21–48 as antitheses, this is certainly a mistake. An antithesis is not merely a contrasting statement, it is a contradictory statement. If Jesus had intended to teach antithetically to the law and the prophets, he **would** have come to abolish the law and the prophets. If Jesus had been speaking antithetically, he would have said the unthinkable: "You have heard that it has been said, 'You shall not murder,' but I say unto you, 'You shall murder.' " [Turner]

And an 'antithesis' of the Oath example:

'You **shall not** swear falsely, but shall **perform** to the Lord what you have sworn.'

Would be something like this:

'You **SHALL** swear falsely, and shall **NOT perform** to the Lord what you have sworn.'

We are dealing more with 'contrasting interpretations' or 'contrasting implementations' of the OT text **and** its undergirding principle of requiring truthfulness and reliability.

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So, rather than denigrating or repudiating the Law, Jesus stated clearly that He was:

- holding it up as authoritative (and 'eternal');
- was espousing its true substance; and
- was rebuking false interpretations and implementations of that divine Law.