

# Why Christians Should Keep the Law (Part 2)—Not to Destroy, but to Fulfill

December 26, 2023

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.cornerfringe.com/media/q49skn2/pt-2-why-christians-should-keep-the-law>

**\*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterate, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

I will open up today with one of the most important and significant passages in the Bible regarding our topic of why Christians should keep the Law. This particular passage is embedded in, what I would call, one of the most iconic and memorable passages in all of Scripture. It's the Sermon on the Mount. Within the Sermon on the Mount, do you know what Jesus talked about? He talked about the Law in the most profound way. What better way to build this series than upon the words of Jesus. This will be instrumental. We will basically build upon what we covered last week and lay a solid foundation.

Matthew 5:17—<sup>17</sup> **Do not think—*mē nomisēte*—that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.**

This is a loaded statement. There is a lot here to take in and digest. First, I want to bring to your attention that this statement in its historical context doesn't make any sense, whatsoever. It couldn't be more out in left field or more bizarre. Why do I say that? I say that because in the first century, the Jewish people were looking for a Messiah that would not break or destroy the Law. They were looking for a Messiah to uphold the Law and, furthermore, teach it which, ironically, is what Jesus did. Their expectation was for the Messiah to do just what Jesus did in Matthew 5. Incredible.

You can read the Prophets. The prophets talk about how **“He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the Law—the *Torah*—and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem** (Isaiah 2:3, Micah 4:2).

The Prophets specifically collaborate the term **“the Law”** with **“He will teach them His ways.”** They specifically identify the ways of the Lord with the Law. Do you understand they expected the Messiah that was to come to teach the Law, the *Torah*? So, in Matthew 5:17, when Jesus talked to His disciples, who believed He was the Messiah, they would never have expected Him to destroy the Law. So, why, pray tell, did Jesus say to them, **“Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets?”**

I will tell you exactly why He said this. This is a prophetic warning. Jesus knew exactly what men would do to His Law in His name. If there is any question as to the validity and necessity of this prophetic warning, look at the church today. Look at what is happening. Look at the belief and the ideology of professing Christians regarding the Law of God, and consider, God help us, that the enemy has breached

the walls of the church. If any generation ever needed to heed these words, it is this generation we are living in.

Jesus said, **"I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."** In the Greek, "fulfill" is *pléroó*, or the inflected is *plērōsai*. He came to fulfill. Jesus started off by saying, **"Do not think,"** *mē nomisēte*, which means "don't you dare think for a moment; don't even ponder; don't even contemplate the idea that My mission was to come and destroy the Law."

You are to understand that He came to fulfill, *pléroó*. In Jesus's own context in His teaching, "fulfill" is a direct contradiction to that of destruction, which leads us to the question: what did He mean when He said "fulfill"? We can safely say, with no reservation, we are talking about Messianic prophecy. The term "fulfill" is used specifically in the New Testament in that context over and over again. Jesus came to fulfill many prophecies in the Law and the Prophets, including Genesis 22, Psalm 22, Zechariah 12, Isaiah 53, etc., and not just that but also the prophetic typologies.

There is a saying in traditional Judaism: the deeds of the fathers are a sign for the children, *Ma'eseh avot si'man le'banim*. The things that happened before will happen again and ultimately with the Messiah. Just as Israel ended up going to Egypt, what happened to the Messiah Jesus? When the Word, Jesus, became flesh, He was taken into Egypt. We could give more examples, but we are not going to do that today. This was just to show us what is being referred to as "fulfill."

But that's not all; there's more He came to fulfill. For the first time in human history, we saw what it looked like for a human being to fulfill the law and do it perfectly without infraction and without sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21—<sup>21</sup> **For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

Hebrews 4:15—<sup>15</sup> **For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.**

1 Peter 1:18-19—<sup>18</sup> **knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like . . . <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot.**

So, it's not simply a statement that He came and fulfilled Messianic prophecies. Those prophecies would have never been fulfilled if He had not fulfilled righteousness and been a spotless lamb without blemish.

I'm really emphasizing the point of what it means to fulfill because today there are many Christians who interpret this aspect to fulfill, *pléroó*, as "Wait a second. Jesus fulfilled it, so it's done away with." You see how insane that is, right? We are not even talking about two different passages in two different books; we are talking about the same verse. This verse begins with, "Don't even think that my mission was to come and destroy the Law." What's absolutely astonishing is by the time you get to the end of the verse, and people read that Jesus came and fulfilled the Law, they come to the conclusion that Jesus said, "You don't need to do it." They think because He fulfilled it, we don't have to because now the Law is done away with.

Oh, my goodness! This is how we know there are demonic spirits, principalities, powers, and spiritual hosts of wickedness involved in attacking the gospel, specifically Jesus's own teachings. They are so convincing and sophisticated that they can turn the same verse up on its head, remove the entire

meaning, and redefine what it means for Christ to fulfill. That is an incredible thing. For the rest of my life, I will not stop being stupefied that this is able to happen.

That said, I want to push forward. Let's get a little more context. Jesus doubled down on the statement He just made: "Don't you dare think My mission is to destroy the law. That's not why I came. I came to do the contrary. I came to fulfill, *pléroó*, it, to walk it out."

That's all we have time for today. I look forward to seeing you in the next episode. Lord bless you.