

“The Law”

How to Study the Bible

Various Scriptures

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Jeff: Okay, let’s pray, shall we? Our Father in heaven, we thank You and we rejoice in knowing that You are the King of heaven and earth, that You are the Creator of all things. And yet even after the Fall You graciously redeemed us from our sins. Father, we thank You that You sent Your only-Begotten into the world that we might have life through Him and through faith in Him. And yet that faith need not be of our own doing; it is a gift from You. And so, Father, we’re thankful that all that we have is a result of Your graciousness to us, Your kindness, Your condescension. And we bow before You, acknowledging You not only as Creator but also as Redeemer and King.

Father, as we come before You we ask that You will minister to our hearts and our minds, minister to our whole persons. And Lord, we ask that You’ll do this because we know that You love us and are kind and gracious to us and use us as instruments in the lives of others. And so we pray that You’ll do that.

Lord, we also ask that You will use our time of prayer. And we think today of our brothers Don and Charlie as they are apart from us. We ask that You’ll bless Charlie as he is struggling with perhaps pneumonia. We certainly pray that You’ll be with Don and especially his brother Gregg as he struggles with malnourishment and weakness, and is back in the hospital. We pray, Father, that You will minister to him. Also clam Don’s mind as he thinks about his brother. We pray, Father, that You’ll give the doctors wisdom.

Lord, we also ask that You’ll be with Pete. We certainly lift him up to you as well as Bruce and Becky. And Father, we ask that our brother Kevin would be blessed as well.

Lord, these people are Yours and belong to You, not only by creation but by gracious adoption, and so we’re thankful. And we ask, Lord, that You will bless them not only with physical healing if that be Your will, but also and more importantly with an eternal redemption that will include their bodies.

Father, as we bow before You today we acknowledge the condition of our country. And we know that it is from a lack of repentance and following after You. It is a lack of kissing the Son as Psalm 2 reminds us. And so we pray that You would bless us in the doing of that. And Lord, we ask that not only for us as individuals but for local governments on up to the federal. And we pray, Lord, that You will turn our country toward You and turn the hearts of this people toward Yourself, that we might find refreshment and forgiveness.

Father, we ask now that You’ll turn our attention toward Your word. We pray that You’ll bless us in the study of it. We ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Jeff: All right. Let’s turn to our second talk. And I’ll just give you a little bit of a reminder. Remember that I compared the different genres to the mail. I said that if you go out and get your mail you’re going to know immediately just upon sight what’s junk mail and bills and what’s a letter from your kids or a card from them. You’re going to know immediately what genres you have there.

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And the Bible oftentimes is the same way. As soon as you open it up you know that when Isaiah is there you now that’s prophecy. When you hit the Gospels you know that’s something like Greco-Roman biography. Turn to the letters of Paul and you know that those are letters or epistles. And so there’s a certain sense in which you just instinctively know what the books of the Bible are about and how they divide up into certain kinds of literature.

But when you think that way you also need to be reminded that each sort of literature, as we said, has its own rules of the game. You don’t kick a basketball. You don’t touch a soccer ball. If you do you violate the rules, and when you violate the rules the game stops; you have penalty shots and so on. And so there’s a certain sense in which there are rules to the game of interpreting.

And it’s funny because there’s no referee to blow the whistle and stop and say, “No, no, no; you can’t do that.” There’s a sense of what’s called private interpretation. And if anybody has been reading R. C. Sproul’s book along with the class you’ll know that he talks about private interpretation, and about how in Protestantism there is sort of a proliferation of private interpretations. This is what the Bible says to me. And I’ve tried to address that in the way we look at the Scriptures and how we should talk about the Scriptures when we come to them. So I won’t recap all that. But there are certain genres and there are certain rules that we need to apply when we look at certain genres and principles.

And so what I want us to do is to start through some different genres. Now when I start through the genre you immediately need to think to yourself that what we’re going to do when we look at a genre is look at a genre, but not necessarily look at a book.

We may look at a book, for instance a book that contains this sort of genre. There may be a book that contains two or three types of genres. So for instance, let’s say that we talk about the first five books of Moses. What is it typically called? It’s typically called the Law. But it’s not all law, right? It has narrative in there; it has historical narrative. There’s even a little bit of prophecy in there, isn’t there? And there is certainly a lot of law. But it’s not just all one genre. So we need to be careful of that.

So what I want us to do is to look at genres—not necessarily books—although some of the genres we look at will be books, and all of it be that type of book.

Okay. So let’s look first of all at the genre of law. Now I’m going to look at different types of law in just a second when we think about the law. But one of the things that I think is important for us to do when we look at law is to ask a basic question. And the basic question is why the law?

Now this is an important question for us as Christians. And you’ve heard me talk about this before. I said that here we start with the Garden, the Fall, and the gospel promise. And here in the end we come out with Jesus having fulfilled that promise which is offered in the Garden. But in the middle of all this we find the giving of the law. And so Paul asks in two different letters—Romans and Galatians—why the law?

So when we think hermeneutically, when we ask for instance, okay; what does this genre mean? And how does it fit into the overall scope and scheme of the plan of redemption? We’ve got to ask in one sense, well how does this genre fit? Why is it here? It seems to be out of sync with the other genre of gospel promise. Why this one? Why this law? Why is it introduced?

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And we know some things about the law. We can state some things about the law that we know. For instance the law helps us; it helps us to see. How does it help us to see? Well when we answer that question we immediately go back to our need: the Fall. So the gospel is given because of some sort of need within us. And we might say, well, what’s that need?

You’ve heard R. C. Sproul say this. We hear a lot of people talk about being saved. But the question is, saved from what? And the law answers that question. This is the what from which we are saved. In other words, when I hold my life up to the law the law tells me wherein I’m lacking and what gospel breaks will help with, right? So the law helps us to see ourselves. It’s like spectacles. Everything else is blurry. As soon as I put the law on I understand that I see myself very clearly; I am a sinner.

Now think about it. The law doesn’t really help all that well. The law only shows me who I am apart from grace. So think about it this way. The law says I’m a murderer. Oh, great; now I’m a murderer! Right?

For instance you can understand this, because you look at the Sermon on the Mount. And the Sermon on the Mount says that you’re all murderers, right?

And somebody says, “I’m not a murderer.” And you go, “No, no, no, no, no. Let’s think about this a second.” You participate in the same genus that murder comes from. “Have you ever been angry with your brother?”

“Of course I have. But I’ve never been—“

No, no, no. We’re not saying, “Have you taken a knife and have you driven it into your brother?” We’re asking, have you ever been angry?, which is the root of murder.

“Yes, I have.”

“Well then, Jesus says you’re a murderer.” That sort of thing, right? And so the law helps us come to see ourselves more clearly. We come to a realization that we’re sinners. And so the law helps me to see.

And it does that in a variety of ways. I said to you, “What about the Sermon on the Mount?” But we might start with the Sixth Commandment and ask, “How do I know I’m a murderer?” based on the Sixth Commandment.

And I want to show you something that goes back to something we talked about earlier. How do I know I’m a murderer? Well, we talked about the Sermon on the Mount. But what am I doing? I’m taking an implication. Remember this? I’m taking an implication. We can deduce or leave down from this commandment that we are all murderers. How so? By Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:21-26.

Transcriber’s Note: Matthew 5:21-26, NKJV. *“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.*

“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

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Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.”

Jeff: That’s what Jesus is doing. He’s taking the implication of the commandment and he’s leading us to the conclusion that we are all murderers in some ways, shape or form. And so it’s an implication; it’s an application of what we’ve been thinking about. So what’s the implication? The implication is that to be angry is to be guilty of the sin of murder.

And so that’s the way that we need to think about the law. It exposes our need and it teaches us in that sense to apply the idea of implication.

But I want us to think for a minute about the mechanics of law because I think you all know that first part. We all get it; we’ve talked about it at different times in the Bible study. I want us to think about a few types of law that are important for us when we think about the law. We think about apodictic law and we think about casuistic law.

Apodictic law means “to point away,” and casuistic means “case.” Now it’s easy to kind of think about in terms of how I understand this. Apodictic law basically means that you point away from yourself. You point away from a case-by-case basis and you point to a principle. Casuistic law is a case-by-case instance.

So for instance “You shall not murder” is an apodictic statement. You’re pointing away from yourself; you’re pointing to some greater principle, some greater law. What does that law say? It says, “No matter who you are, you shall not murder.” And then you have your case-by-case laws.

Now I want you to think about that for just a second. I want you to think about a case law. So the Ten Commandments say, “*You shall not murder.*” That’s apodictic. But then what do they say? In that same book, in the book of Exodus, what do you get? You get all of those qualifications. So for instance, if a man breaks into your house and it’s the middle of the night, and you strike him so as to kill him, then you’re not guilty. But if it’s daylight when the man comes into your house and you strike him, you’re guilty. These are those case-by-case incidents that are now applied—taking the principle and applying it. So this is casuistic law.

So for instance, any time somebody comes to you and says, “Let me explain my situation to you,” what they’re saying is, “Let me explain my case. Here’s my casuistic situation.” And what I’m going to do is, I’m going to take the apodictic and either explain why someone else is guilty of what he did to me, or why I am not guilty of what everyone thinks that I’m guilty of. (*Laughter*) You know, that’s kind of the idea.

So these are technical terms—apodictic meaning the principle; casuistic meaning case by case. These were actually more popular in the days of the Puritans. The Puritans used to actually write long books about casuistic law—case studies. And so in one of his books John Owen has a long case study with different scenarios. If this happens what about this?, and so on. It’s kind of interesting when you think about how they used to think and how they used to lead people through their material.

So again I want to talk to you about something that I think is really basic if that’s okay, because it’s important. The law shows us something else. It shows us that Christ was the penalty bearer for our sins. Remember I said to you that the law is sort of like glasses, and we see clearly that we’re sinners. How is it that we see ourselves as sinners? By breaking every law, as it were, and that is by way of implication. And that’s because

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casuistically we break laws that are apodictic, that stand apart from us. But Jesus is the penalty bearer for those who believe, not for those who obey. You don't earn anything by being obedient before God because you're a lawbreaker. And so if I belong to Christ He satisfied the penalty of death for me, the curse of the law, and now I am able to obey. And so that's the idea.

So the law as it were shows me how to behave now that I belong to Christ. It's a guide; it's not a way of salvation, but it's a guide.

Now coming to the end of this section, there are certain questions that you ask when you interpret the Scriptures. First of all you ask the question: what kind of law do I have. When I open up the Scriptures, what kind of law am I dealing with?

And this is not something that is just confined to the Old Testament. For instance, let me just take the New Testament here. Listen to this. This is in 1 Thessalonians 4 and verse 3. *“For this is the will of God: your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality, that each of you should know how to control his own body in holiness and honor—not in passionate lust like the Gentiles who do not know God. Let no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter,”* and so on.

Now let me ask you this. We can go further, but *“that you abstain from sexual immorality.”* Is that apodictic or casuistic?

Brave Man: Apodictic.

Jeff: Apodictic, very clearly. And if I were to turn to 1 Corinthians and I were to read to you in chapter 5 verse 1: *“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among the pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant!”*, and so on. And he deals with that. Now what's that?

Brave Man: Casuistic.

Jeff: Casuistic, yes. Here's a case where somebody in the church has his father's wife. What is it? It's casuistic. So what you have to ask yourself is, what kind of law am I dealing with in its most basic sense? Am I dealing with an apodictic section or am I dealing with a casuistic section?

What am I being led to see? Now when I say that you have to ask yourself this in a couple of different ways. For instance, if I have an apodictic section like 1 Thessalonians 4, what am I being led to see? I'm being led to see that here is a statement that is—and you have to think about this—that I stand outside of Christ. It is a statement that is a condemning statement, because I know that, for instance, when I look at the Seventh Commandment, *“Thou shalt not commit adultery,”* I know that by implication I'm being told to preserve purity and I'm being told to preserve marriage. You name it, right? I can just go down the list, right? So I know by implication that sexual immorality is included in that. There's a sexual ethic included in Commandment 7.

Now if I stand outside of Christ I know that statement of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4 is a condemning statement. It's meant to help me to see who I am standing before the cross; I'm a sinner in need of the cross, right?

Now if I stand in Christ it's meant to be a guide. So what am I being led to see? Or for instance, if I take the casuistic part of 1 Corinthians chapter 5, what there am I being led to see? In that situation I'm being led to see an historical account. I'm being led to see something that is happening in the life of that particular church. And I may draw implications from that teaching. But that's a particular problem that's happening in

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Corinth. There’s a casuistic case, a case situation. And Paul is going to apply the law to it. And we’re going to follow him as he does that and see what he says to a church about a sinning brother—what should they do, and so on and so forth.

Now again I might draw implications from that. But I don’t say, for instance, that I’m in that first-century church. Remember what we said earlier: What’s this to me? Well, that’s a question down the road. First of all we need to ask, what does he mean? What is he saying here? And in that case it would be casuistic, a case happening in Corinth.

And then what am I being told to do? Well, if it’s apodictic that’s pretty clear. I’m being told to obey this, especially if I’m in Christ. Here’s a principle that I need to obey. And if I’m outside of Christ I need to repent because I’ve likely disobeyed—you know, that sort of thing. But what am I being told to do? What kind of action should I take as a result?

Well, that’s going to depend on the way we interpret it. Let me just go back a minute to David and Bathsheba. So Nathan goes to David after he has committed adultery with Bathsheba. And he’s very particular to him about what’s happening. And he’s got some stories that he’s telling David.

And David’s going, “We’re going to take care of that guy!” And Nathan says, “The guy is you.” All of that is a taking of the apodictic and applying it casuistically. And we are bystanders, outsiders watching what’s happening.

So what am I being told to do? I’m really not being told to do anything in that particular story, right? So I don’t go to the Scriptures and say, “How am I here?”, right?

That’s a natural one. We do that, though, in other ones. But that’s a natural one where we say, okay. Here Nathan is taking apodictic law and applying it casuistically to the king. And so I’m standing apart from this and watching it as it happens. There are implications that I might draw, but nothing immediate. I’m watching something happen to David.

Well, that’s basic. But I think those things are important. What kinds of things would you like to talk about following this genre? I basically said three things to you. The genre helps us to see who we are, either inside of Christ or outside of Christ. There are mechanics—apodictic, casuistic. And then we need to think about the law in terms of Christ as a penalty bearer. And how to look at ourselves in light of that afterward is really important. Any questions or thoughts about that? Yes?

David Miller: In that example of David and Bathsheba, in that story it shows how people—all of us, I guess—how people tend to judge others harshly while we’re doing the same thing.

Jeff: Yeah. But do you know what? Let me throw this out, because that’s great. But Nathan is judging harshly and he’s in the right, you know? So who are you going to identify with his is making another implication. Everybody has the tendency to identify with those in the story that they identify with most, right? So if you’re in David’s situation you’re going to identify with David. And if you’re in Nathan’s situation you’re going to identify with Nathan, right? It’s really interesting when you think about the Scriptures; it’s like any other story.

I don’t know if you’ve ever read a novel and not liked somebody in the novel because you know somebody like him, right? You’re just reading along and you say, “I don’t like

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him.” And do you ever ask yourself why you don’t like him? And sometimes you say, “He’s like Uncle Joe; this character is like Uncle Joe”—that sort of thing.

So it’s funny. We identify with people in stories. And that’s not the best way to interpret a story. But it could well be an implication. Anything else? Yes?

Rich Clark: I like how you say that the law is our guide.

Jeff: Yeah.

Rich: Sometimes Christians will say, “We don’t live by the law; we don’t pay attention to it anymore.” But you do.

Jeff: Yes, you do. Here’s the difference as I look at it, and this is probably good for us to throw out there as well. I basically gave you a general understanding of the law. But the question is, what is the difference between actual law and legalism? This is just a good and easy shorthand way to think about it. The difference between the two is this. Law is what’s required in Scripture. Legalism is what’s required from someone else.

So for instance, let’s say that somebody tells you that you’ve got to keep your hair a certain length, or your dress a certain length, right? It has to be 24 inches from the top of your pelvic bone down, right? You know, that sort of thing; let’s make it really strict like that. Those kinds of things are legalistic. In other words, if I tell you that Christian maturity means wearing a dress 24 inches down from the top of your pelvic bone. And my next question is going to say, where is that in Scripture?

Brave Man: It isn’t.

Jeff: Well, it’s not. But what is it? It’s an implication of the teaching to be modest. Ah, okay. So I’m to be modest, or my wife is to be modest. (I don’t wear dresses; I just want to point that out.) *(Laughter)* But you see what they’re doing; it’s an implication of modesty.

Now here’s where implication is really important. You may say that something is implicated from the text. Well, modesty means something. You’re right; it means something. But at this point you need to say that it means this for me, or this group.

So, for instance, let’s say that this is a Wesleyan Methodist group, which is very famous for this kind of thing. If you’re a Wesleyan Methodist this is what it means for us as a community, as a people. This is an implication.

Now I don’t know if you remember this. If you go back to what I said earlier, do you remember when I talked about good and necessary consequence? I said that you can have an implication that’s good and not necessary. In other words, it’s consistent with Biblical teaching, but it’s not required by Biblical teaching.

So let’s put this in there: 24 inches from top of pelvis. We’re going to need to erase this before we die. *(Laughter)* Anyway, 24 inches from top of pelvis. You have to ask yourself. You know it’s an implication from the teaching to be modest. But you have to ask yourself this question. Is this a good consequence? You tell me.

Don Bishop: No.

Jeff: You’re saying that it’s not even a good consequence.

Don: No.

Jeff: Why?

Don: It’s legalistic. I would look around the room and my shirt’s out. And there would be teenagers with certain haircuts. That was a Christian.

Jeff: Yeah. But let me ask you a question. Go ahead.

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David: The implication of the legalism is that you’re establishing a righteousness through following these rules.

Jeff: Okay. Let’s just say this, though. Now let’s consider this. Let’s take it out of the realm of somebody trying to work for his salvation. Let’s just kind of argue it this way. We’re not arguing that the Wesleyan Methodists are trying to establish their own righteousness before God in order to be saved. Let’s say they’re trying to live out the guidance of the law. They’re trying to ask, what does the law mean for us as believers? So here’s the law: the apodictic of being modest. What are the casuistic? In other words, what’s the case-by-case? What do I tell my daughter when she asks me what it is to be modest? Because she’s going to ask that, especially when she gets older. I’m going to say, “You’re going to be modest!”

And she’s going to say, “Yeah, Dad. What does it mean?”

“Well, this is easy. In my house it means that from the top of your pelvic bone we’re going to have a dress that’s (*Unclear*)

And that’s okay. Let me just keep pushing this a little bit. Let’s say now that her friend comes over, and her friend has a dress that’s 18 inches. And her friend says to her, “Well mine is 18, and it’s still plenty lengthy. Why does your dad make you wear 24?”

And so the daughter goes to the dad and says, “Dad, why do you make me wear 24-inch length dresses when Susie wears 18 and it’s plenty long?”

“Well, this is my house and I’ll tell you what you’re going to wear!” That’s what we do, right? Or you may have a dad who says, “Well, I guess that works. All right, we’ll go up to 18. But no longer!”, right?—that sort of thing.

But do you see what he’s doing? He’s trying to work out what the apodictic law means. And there is a certain sense in which you’ve got to tell your kids something. But here’s what I would say to you. What I would say to you is that in a situation like this, which is a conversation you have with daughters, is that you’ve got to remember that what you’re doing oftentimes in taking the apodictic and applying it when the Bible doesn’t help you with lengths of dresses—it only helps you with lengths of togas, and they’re pretty long—I’m just telling you. But when the Bible doesn’t help you with lengths of dresses, what you have to do is, you have to resort to this in some way, shape or form, right?

Or it’s this. You eye her up and say, “That’s okay,” and then she comes in. And the next time she goes shopping, “That’s not okay.” And she remembers that she had a dress just like this a year ago, and you said it was okay. And she wants to know why this one is not okay when the other one was, right? And now you’re in a real pickle.

So it’s easy to go, “You’re not going to take part,” right? Why? Because it’s a standard. And that’s why people gravitate toward legalism, because it becomes a standard that’s easily managed.

And for instance, we need to keep in mind that modesty is not an easily managed standard. It’s a principle; it’s an apodictic principle given to us that we need to flesh out from culture to culture. And some of it just looks easy to us, right? Hold it up to everybody, you know? And then other people are like, (*Unclear*) And then other people look at it and go, “Oh, that’s really modest; that’s probably over the top”—you know, that sort of thing.

But you see how subjective that is, especially in the middle of a gray area.

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Brave Man: You have the example of mankind (*unclear*) Is that law, or is that—

Jeff: Okay, that’s a great question. So you have apodictic—don’t murder—and casuistic; here’s a case scenario. Okay, now that case scenario—if a man breaks into your house and you kill him in the middle of the night when he’s in your house,—there’s a sense in which the interpretation is both a good interpretation and an implication of the apodictic. And in some ways it’s a necessary interpretation of it; this is what God means.

Now here’s the interesting thing. Not only may that be a casuistic case of the apodictic, and to interpret that casuistic case because God said that it’s good and necessary. But here’s the thing. What if the guy decides that he’s not going to kill the guy in the middle of the night in his house? Has he broken the law? And there we have to say no, because that was casuistic of an apodictic. In other words, this is how you may handle this particular case as it falls out of the apodictic.

But someone may handle this case in a different way. In other words, to spare this man’s life he may get him killed later by the courts, right? Because if he’s found guilty back in Old Testament times and they find him guilty of being in the house, they may say, “What did you go there and do?” And they just may determine that he went there to take the man’s life. They say, “Well, we’re going to take your life.” Maybe he just loses his life later in a different way.

But that’s an interesting point, isn’t it, because here we’re talking about the casuistic from the apodictic. But here we’re talking about this good and necessary consequence. We’re talking about that in a particular application of the apodictic. This is what God says is the implication of the case. Is it good? Is it necessary? Yes. But then the application to me might be different altogether. Do you want to press back on that, or do you want to think through that a little bit?

Don: What if you have to kill him during the day?

Jeff: You mean in the guy’s house?

Don: Yes.

Jeff: Then you’re in trouble.

Don: I know.

Jeff: Yeah.

Don: But isn’t that legalistic? Because what if he comes after you at night?

Jeff: Well, if he comes after you in the night, you see what the Old Testament is doing. They are working from a framework. I mean, think about it. We say, “This is happening in broad daylight!” We’re surprised by that, right?

I mean, step back to thirty years ago, right? Thirty years ago things happened under the cover of darkness, not in broad daylight. Nowadays, you know, students throw teachers down the stairs in broad daylight on film while people are watching them, and we’re getting desensitized to that. Thirty years ago it was unfathomable. I think that’s something that you have to take with you when you read this. Why is he in your house after dark? But in the daylight why would you know about it, right?—that type of thing. I think there’s just a taking on board of that kind of common idea.

So he may come after you in the night. But I think you’d be able to justify that in the ancient courts. You know what I mean? I may be wrong, but I think you could. Do you want to put it back, Gary? You’re a lawyer.

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Gary: I’m not going to get into that because I mean, let’s face it. There’s an unreasonable fear that people have, and that’s done with a lot of things.

Jeff: Yeah.

Gary: They act on a lot of things they shouldn’t play into. It seems to me that with the cultural standards of that day that it’s going to shift from culture to culture.

Jeff: Sure, absolutely.

Gary: You know, you apply these with respect to the clothing. The airlines are even having problems with women because they’re not dressed appropriately now.

Jeff: Yeah. This just seems so incongruous. But yes, I know what you mean. Some of the raciest places I’ve ever been to are airports. Do you go with that? I feel that the raciest places I’ve ever gone to in my life are airports. And it’s crazy because it’s really racey. Anything else on this law thing?

Don: I’m thinking about the implications of this in terms of war. Conscientious objection says that I can’t take up a rifle because it says, “Do not murder.”

Jeff: But think about the way our country dealt with that. At one time it was a conscientious objection to this war. And then it became a conscientious objection to all wars, right? So they didn’t want you applying in theory just for any one particular war. There may be a determination as to whether that war was a war that was contrary to Scriptural principles. You had to be against war altogether.

Don: But the standard was that you would not even (*Unclear*)

Jeff: And then you take Leo Tolstoy. Leo Tolstoy said that the Sermon on the Mount basically teaches us that we ought to do away with all police and government, because if the Sermon on the Mount is correct, then we ought to give away our clothes and turn the other cheek. And it’s not just personal; it’s national. So the question then becomes the sphere, right? How wide do you go?

And you know, you have to think about these things. For instance, in today’s world you have to think about these things in terms of self-defense. It says, “Turn the other cheek,” right? And I’m more likely to turn the other cheek if somebody strikes me than I am to turn the other cheek if somebody is striking my wife beside me, right? And so I start hitting my wife. You have the tendency to turn the cheek of the wife, right?

(*Laughter*) Any other questions on the law before we move on? Yes?

David: I had several thoughts. One is that a lot of people believe that the law was given so we could find loopholes. (*Laughter*) I know a prisoner whose cellmate is a Jew. He has had discussions. I told him to go back and ask him why he doesn’t keep the law.

Jeff: Yeah.

David: The Jewish writings, of course, define all the loopholes to get you out of obeying the law as it was written. And then I thought about us, you know? We have a speed limit of 45 here. But everyone is going 55. So for me that’s a loophole.

Jeff: Yes. But the difficulty is, remember when they raised the speed limit to 70? And they said, “It will be the same as before. We’re going to give everybody five miles, and then over that we’ll start sanctions.” But that was like the keepers of the law providing a loophole. You get five miles over this, and it’s over. And in that sense the speed limit becomes more of a guide. (*Laughter*)

But what you’re saying is what Jesus said. Listen to this. I remember reading this to you, and then I’ll make just a couple comments. This is from the Sermon on the Mount:

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Matthew 5:17. *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”*

Now think about that. And then it goes on to say in a verse later, *“Whoever therefore relaxes one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do so,”* and so on.

Now we typically think about the Pharisees being super conscientious. Later on in chapter 23 Jesus is going to say, *“We can tithe on the mint. We tithe on the spices.”* And so we take this text and we take chapter 23; we bring it back to this text. And we say, *“If your righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, halt, or you’re in big trouble.”*

And we say, *“the righteousness of the Pharisees. How righteous were they?”* Well, they tithed from their mint. And so what do we do? We then turn this statement basically into works righteousness for Christians. We actually say it’s by grace. But let me tell you what this invites you into.

Now I’m not saying that it doesn’t invite us into righteous living. But the kind of presentation that I just made is one that indicates that the preacher is probably going to say something like this. Yes, you are saved by grace. But you know you are saved by grace if you have this kind of righteousness. And the immediate answer that pops into one’s head is, but what if I don’t? Are you saying that I don’t have the grace of salvation?

Now think about another way of interpreting this. And this is the word *luo*. *“Do not think that I have come to loosen the Law or the Prophets.”* *“I’ve not come to abolish or loosen them, but to fulfill them.”* And then look what He says in verse 18. *“Therefore whoever loosens the law.”* In other words, here were the Scribes and the Pharisees who were loosening the law, creating loopholes in the law and giving an appearance of having kept the law. And Jesus is saying, *“I didn’t come to do that. I didn’t come to loosen the law, to create loopholes to give the appearance that I’m keeping the law. I’ve come to actually fulfill the law.”*

And so what He’s basically pointing out about the Scribes and the Pharisees is that they have a looseness in law keeping. And that’s not going to do anybody any good. *“So you need to put your faith in Me, the Law Keeper, the Law Fulfiler in order to be saved.”* Don’t be like the Pharisees; that’s the idea. All right. Anything else? No? All right.

Let’s start in poetry. I’ll just take a couple of minutes to be in poetry. We think of poetry oftentimes like this:

Roses are red, and violets are blue.

That sort of thing. But that’s no so in the Bible’s poetry. In the Bible there is no rhyme and rhythm. I mean, when you read the poetry of the Bible it doesn’t read like poetry.

However, I want you to know something. Unless it rhymes I’ve never been able to get poetry. It’s like the old Greek and Roman poetry; I just can’t get it. Where’s the rhyme? I gotta have a rhyme or it’s not poetry to me.

But when you look at the Bible it’s not like that. For instance, there are constructions in poetry in the Scriptures. And one of them is *synonymous parallelism*. And I want you to know that you will find these things not just in poetry. You will find these kinds of poetic features in other genres.

For instance, this kind of technique is all over the place in prophecy as well. But it’s a poetic feature. So for instance in Psalm 40 verse 13, there is synonymous parallelism. *“Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me; O LORD, make haste to help me.”*

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Synonymous parallelism is when one line says something, and then the second line restates what the first line says. The second line restates it in a different way. So you see that here. *“Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me.”* And then he restates it. *“O LORD, make haste to help me.”* So that’s synonymous parallelism.

So when you read something like that—and you’ll read something like that in the Psalms or in the Prophets, and so on—some people will say, “Look, he says this here, and this is what he means here. But then he says this; it’s very similar, but it means something totally different.” You’re not on the wrong track when you start to think that way, because the author’s intent is synonymous parallelism, which means that he’s trying to say one thing twice. That’s synonymous parallelism. So there’s one idea expressed in two different ways.

And then there’s what’s called *antithetical parallelism*. Now when you have antithetical parallelism you have two things that are antithetical or different from one another. Antithetical parallelism in verse 10:

*“The young lions suffer want and hunger,
But those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.”*

So young lions lack; those who seek the Lord do not lack. There’s an antithesis; how am I going to express the opposites?—that kind of thing—the antithesis of one thing to another. And you find that not only in the Psalms, but you find that in prophecy.

So the idea is to locate the disparity, and you then find the meaning of it. Spiritually speaking, if I don’t have the Lord I lack like the lions. But if I have the Lord then I have every good thing; that’s the idea.

And then there’s what’s called *step parallelism*. And that is just like it sounds. Psalm 90 verse 6:

*“In the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
In the evening it fades and withers.”*

There’s a step there. Now in this case the step is in a negative direction. But it’s taking you from morning to evening.

I’ve said that you can find these things in prophecy. But some of these things (not often), you actually find in the New Testament as well. In the letters or the Gospels they sometimes make an appearance. For instance in Matthew 10:40 He says, *“Whoever receives you receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”* That’s step parallelism. *“Whoever receives You receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives the One who sent Me.”* There’s a parallelism that’s being employed in a narrative-type way.

And then there is a *chiastic parallelism*. And remember, a chiasm is when you have an a.-b. pattern, and then that’s inverted. So you have a b.-a. A.-b., b.-a.

And you see this same kind of thing, for instance, in Isaiah 22. This is an example of these parallelisms being in prophetic genres. Isaiah 22:22: *“And I will place on His shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open and none shall shut; and He shall shut and none shall open.”*

Okay; there it is. *“He shall open and none will shut.”* Open is a., none shut is b. And He shall shut—be., and none shall open; there’s a.

And you find that same thing, for instance, in something like Mark’s Gospel, in 10:31. *“But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”* A.-b., b.-a. We have some

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questions to close this out next time just like we did earlier. So I'll pick those up the next time that we're together.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for the day that You've given and the time that we've had to be together to think about the interpretation of Your word. We ask, Lord, that You'll bless us and strengthen us as we find ourselves in Your word daily. And Lord, as we do we pray that it would be like a leaven in our lives, and that it would be a blessing not only to us but to others that we come into contact with. And we ask for this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.