Turris Fortis



Jesus's Restatement of the Law

Moses, David, and the Prophets,
restated from the recorded words of Jesus

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Reporter

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Matthew 5:17 (KJV)

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Michael C. Kelley, Esq., Reporter
Turris Fortis · November 2026

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Turris fortis mihi Deus · Prov. 18:10

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A Note Before You Read

"Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised."

Romans 4:20-21 (NIV)

This is saving trust, faith in GOD. This is what GOD is looking for. Jesus unlocks the way to it. He IS the Way. The only way. [John 14:6]

Why do we focus so much on material needs and wants and desires? We approach GOD like He is Santa Claus, a cosmic vending machine. We've got it all wrong. He does not conform to our plans and desires. We need to conform to His. [Matt. 6:31-33] We first need to know what GOD has said. From there, we need to have faith that He can do what He said. Somehow, somewhere along the line, we started to think it was all about what "I" said, what I want, what I think is right, instead of what He said. [Luke 6:46]

Then, we trust (ie, have faith in) GOD that He will empower us to do what He said. We make Christianity about not sinning — of course we shouldn't sin! — instead of about how GOD, through the power of His Spirit, because of the Son (making the path open to us, redeeming us, etc.), will accomplish what He has said in and through us. [John 15:5] We just have to believe, like Abraham and David and others, that He will do what He said, and that by His power we can do what He said. [John 6:28-29] This should be our focus. Not simply, "Go and sin no more," [John 8:11] yes, of course that, but more: "Go and do what GOD has said." Go and do the works of the Father. [John 9:4; John 14:12] This is not a salvation by works Gospel. It is a salvation so that you may do His works mandate.[1]

MCK

[1] Eph. 2:10.



Introductory Note

Purpose. This Restatement sets out the Law of Moses, the kingship of David, and the message of the Prophets as Jesus himself restated them, so that they may be understood, applied, and done. It proceeds on his own stated principle: he came not to abolish the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them, and until heaven and earth pass away not one letter or stroke passes from the Law until all is accomplished (Matt 5:17–18). Its thesis is his: the Scriptures bear witness to him (John 5:39), Moses wrote of him (John 5:46), and everything written about him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled (Luke 24:44).

Sources. Every rule is based on the recorded words of Jesus in the four Gospels. Sayings of the risen Christ in Acts 1 and Revelation 1–3 are used sparingly and flagged. No other speaker, Old Testament or New, supplies a rule. Where a parenthetical names Moses, David, or a prophet, it identifies the text Jesus was restating; where a note cites another New Testament writer, it only explains what Jesus said. John 7:53–8:11, the account of the woman caught in adultery, is absent from the earliest manuscripts of John; it is cited here (§ 31A; General Note) as the church has long received it, and no rule rests on it alone.

Form. Each section states a rule in black letter, followed by Comment (lettered), Illustrations (numbered, drawn from Jesus's own cases and parables), and a Reporter's Note collecting the sayings relied on. Chapter 1 restates Moses: general principles, particular commandments, and the priesthood. Chapter 2 restates David: the King and his kingdom. Chapter 3 restates the Prophets. A General Note closes on the question the whole Restatement serves: what we were saved for. Two sections added after the first draft are numbered 24A and 31A, in the manner of the Restatements, so that every other section keeps its number.

Rule of reading. A rule in this Restatement is never a repeal. Where Jesus appears to narrow, broaden, or reorder a command, the Comment shows the command he was construing and the construction he gave it. The reader who finds a provision easier than Moses has misread it; the reader who finds it impossible without God has read it rightly (§ 8).



Chapter 1

The Law of Moses

Topic 1

General Principles

Introductory Note. This Topic states the rules by which Jesus reads every commandment. They are not new commandments. They are canons of construction, and they govern Topics 2 and 3.

§ 1. Continuing Force of the Law

> **The Law and the Prophets remain in force. No part of the Law, however small, passes away until heaven and earth pass away and all is accomplished. One who relaxes the least commandment and teaches others to do so is least in the Kingdom of Heaven; and one who does them and teaches others to do them is great in it.**

Comment:

a. *"Fulfill."* Jesus contrasts fulfilling the Law with abolishing it, not with keeping it. His own usage makes it clear: at his baptism he submits to a rite in order to "fulfill all righteousness" (Matt 3:15). To fulfill a law is to fill it to the full by doing it completely, not to discharge it so that it ceases to be binding.

b. *"Least" and "great."* The rule grades teachers by their treatment of the smallest commandment. The one who relaxes it is not expelled, so to speak; he is ranked least in the

Kingdom of Heaven. The Law's minor provisions therefore remain applicable for obedience and instruction.

Illustration:

1. A teacher instructs that the command against false witness binds, but the command against coveting does not, since no act has occurred. In this, such a teacher has relaxed one of the least of the commandments and such a teaching would be in conflict with Jesus.

Reporter's Note. Matt 5:17–19; Luke 16:17 ("easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void"). Compare Luke 16:16 ("the Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the kingdom is preached"), which marks a change of era, not a repeal of a statute; and v. 17 follows.

§ 2. Governing Rule of Construction: Love of God and Neighbor

> **Every commandment of the Law and every word of the Prophets depends on two commandments: to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and to love your neighbor as yourself. A commandment is to be construed so that it serves these; a construction that defeats them is not a construction of the Law.**

Comment:

a. *Source.* Jesus restates Deut 6:4–5 and Lev 19:18 and ranks them first and second. He does not invent the pair; he declares that "all the Law and the Prophets hang on" them.

b. *Not a substitute.* The two commandments are the hinge, not the replacement. A door that hangs on hinges does not consist of hinges. The lawyer who recites them is told, "Do this, and you will live" (Luke 10:28), which sends him back to doing what is commended. See John 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10; see also 1 John 5:3.

c. *"Neighbor."* The term is construed by conduct, not by category. The question "Who is my neighbor?" is answered by the question "Who proved to be a neighbor?" See Luke 10:29, 36–37.

Illustrations:

1. A priest and a Levite pass a wounded man. A Samaritan binds his wounds. The Samaritan, not the officers of the Law, performed the Law. Luke 10:30–37.
2. A scribe agrees that love of God and neighbor is "much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus answers that he is "not far from the kingdom." Mark 12:32–34. The scribe has stated § 2 correctly.

Reporter's Note. Matt 22:35–40; Mark 12:28–34; Luke 10:25–37; see also Matt 7:12 ("this is the Law and the Prophets").

§ 3. Construction Reaches Intent, Motive, and the Heart

> **A commandment prohibiting an act prohibits the disposition from which the act proceeds. Anger is construed under the prohibition of murder; lust under the prohibition of adultery. What defiles a person is what comes out of the heart.**

Comment:

a. *"You have heard . . . but I say."* The formula does not cancel what was heard, what was previously instructed. In each case the command stands and its reach is declared. The prohibition of murder was never satisfied by the absence of a corpse.

b. *Catalogue.* Jesus lists what proceeds from the heart: evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander (Matt 15:19). The list tracks the second table of the Decalogue. The heart is thus placed under the same commandments as the hand.

Illustrations:

1. A man does not strike his brother but calls him a fool in contempt. He is liable under the prohibition of murder. Matt 5:22.
2. A man does not touch a woman but looks at her to desire her. He has committed adultery in his heart. Matt 5:28.
3. A man washes his hands with great care and then defrauds his parents of support. The washing does not cleanse what the fraud has defiled. Mark 7:1–23.

Reporter's Note. Matt 5:21–30; 15:10–20; Mark 7:14–23; Luke 6:45.

§ 4. Weightier Matters; Order of Precedence Among Commandments

> **Commandments are not of equal weight. Justice, mercy, and faithfulness are the weightier matters of the Law. Where commandments cannot both be performed, the lesser yields to the greater; the lesser is not thereby abolished and must be performed when it can be.**

Comment:

a. *"Without neglecting the others."* The rule of precedence carries its own limit. The tithe of mint, dill, and cumin "ought" to be done. What is condemned is doing the small while omitting the great.

b. *Mercy over sacrifice.* Jesus twice applies the prophet's rule, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Hos 6:6), once to table fellowship with sinners and once to plucking grain on the Sabbath. In both, the ritual command is subordinated, not struck.

c. *The Law's own precedence.* Jesus draws the rule from within the Law: priests "profane the Sabbath" in the temple and are guiltless; a child is circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses is not broken (John 7:23). The Law already ranks its own commands.

Illustrations:

1. An ox falls into a well on the Sabbath. Its owner pulls it out. He has kept the Sabbath. Luke 14:5.
2. A woman bound eighteen years is loosed on the Sabbath. The ruler of the synagogue objects. Jesus: a man will water his ox on the Sabbath; ought not this daughter of Abraham be loosed? Luke 13:10–17.

Reporter's Note. Matt 23:23; Luke 11:42; Matt 9:13; 12:1–8, 11–12; Mark 2:23–28; Luke 6:1–11; 13:10–17; 14:1–6; John 7:21–24.

§ 5. Human Tradition Cannot Amend the Law

> **A tradition of men that permits what the Law forbids, or excuses what the Law requires, is void. Teaching such a tradition as doctrine is vain worship.**

Comment:

a. *Corban.* A son declares his property "Corban" (given to God) and so withholds support from his parents. The vow is treated as a device that "makes void the word of God." The commandment to honor father and mother is enforced against the vow.

b. *Scope.* The rule is not hostility to tradition as such; it is a rule of priority. Tradition is subordinate legislation. When it conflicts with the Law, the Law controls.

Reporter's Note. Mark 7:6–13; Matt 15:1–9 (quoting Isa 29:13).

§ 6. The Law Serves Man; Rule of Mercy and Necessity

> **The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. It is lawful to do good and to save life on the Sabbath. A commandment is not to be construed so as to forbid the preservation of life or the doing of good.**

Comment:

a. *Lord of the Sabbath.* Jesus claims authority over the Sabbath. He exercises it by declaring what the Sabbath is for, not by suspending it. He keeps it; he attends synagogue on it; he instructs that flight from Jerusalem should be prayed not to fall on it (Matt 24:20).

b. *David and the showbread.* Jesus cites David's eating of the priests' bread (1 Sam 21) as precedent that necessity governs. The precedent is from the King's own conduct (Chapter 2).

Reporter's Note. Mark 2:27–28; Matt 12:3–8, 12; Luke 6:9; Matt 24:20.

§ 7. Doing, Not Hearing, Is the Measure

> **One who hears the words of Jesus and does them is like a man who built his house on rock. One who hears and does not do is like a man who built on sand. Calling him "Lord" without doing what he says is of no effect.**

Comment:

a. *The two sons.* The son who said "I will not" and then went did the father's will; the son who said "I go, sir" and did not go did not. Matt 21:28–31. Performance, not profession, is the test.

b. *Blessing attached to doing.* "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them." John 13:17. "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it." Luke 11:28.

c. *Lawlessness is the ground of exclusion.* On the last day some will say "Lord, Lord" and recite works done in his name; he will answer, "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness" (Matt 7:23). The word is *anomia*, "without law." Compare § 31.

Reporter's Note. Matt 7:21–27; Luke 6:46–49; 8:21; 11:28; John 13:17; 14:21, 23; 15:14.

§ 8. Performance Is Enabled by God, Not Self-Generated

> **Apart from the Son, no one can do anything. The Father gives the Spirit to those who ask. One who abides in the Son bears much fruit; the fruit is required, and the power to bear it is given. What is impossible with man is possible with God.**

Comment:

a. *Relation to § 7.* Section 7 states the duty; this section states its supply. Neither cancels the other. The branch is commanded to bear fruit and is told it cannot do so by itself; the answer to both is to abide.

b. *New birth.* Entry into the kingdom requires birth "of water and the Spirit." Flesh produces flesh. The requirement of doing (§ 7) presupposes a doer God has remade.

c. *The easy yoke.* The yoke is still a yoke; it is easy because he carries it with the one who takes it. Matt 11:28–30.

d. *Drawing.* "No one can come to me unless the Father draws him." John 6:44, 65. The initiative is God's; the coming is still the person's.

e. *Indwelling, not assistance.* The power of this section is not help given to a person who then keeps the Law alone. "In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you" (John 14:20). "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (14:23). "Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" (6:56). The commandments are kept by a person in whom God has made his home, as the Son kept them: "the Father who dwells in me does his works" (14:10); "if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love" (15:10). Jesus's own figure for the union is the bridegroom and the wedding (Mark 2:19–20; Matt 22:2; 25:1–13). (Compare Hos 2:16, "you will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Baal'": the prophet's picture of a law kept in union rather than under a master.)

f. *The swept house.* The warning that makes indwelling necessary rather than optional is Jesus's own. An unclean spirit goes out of a man; the house is found "empty, swept, and put in order"; the spirit returns with seven others, "and the last state of that person is worse than the first" (Matt 12:43–45; Luke 11:24–26). A life cleared of sin and left unoccupied is not a kept Law. It is the condition this section exists to prevent.

Illustration:

1. A rich man is told to sell what he has and follow. He goes away sorrowful. The disciples ask who then can be saved. Jesus: with man this is impossible, but not with God. Matt 19:16–26. The command is not withdrawn; the power to obey it is located in God.

Reporter's Note. John 15:1–8; 14:15–17, 26; 16:13; Luke 11:13; 24:49; John 3:3–8; 6:44, 65; Matt 11:28–30; 19:26; Mark 10:27; John 14:10, 20, 23; 6:56; 15:10; 17:21–23; Mark 2:19–20; Matt 12:43–45; Luke 11:24–26.

§ 9. Standard of Performance

> **The standard of performance is the character of the Father: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"; "Be merciful, as your Father is merciful." A righteousness that does not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees does not enter the kingdom.**

Comment:

a. *"Exceed."* The scribes' righteousness is not condemned for strictness. It is condemned as insufficient: outward, selective, and without the weightier matters (§ 4). The standard runs higher, not lower.

b. *Fruit as evidence.* A tree is known by its fruit; a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Fruit is the evidence by which performance is judged, in teachers and in disciples.

Reporter's Note. Matt 5:20, 48; Luke 6:36; Matt 7:16–20; 12:33; Luke 6:43–45; John 15:8.

Topic 2

Particular Commandments Restated

Introductory Note. This Topic restates the commandments Jesus addressed by name. Where he did not speak to a commandment, this Restatement is silent; silence is not repeal (§ 1).

§ 10. The First Table: God Alone

> **"Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one." You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve. No one can serve two masters. The Father's name is to be hallowed.**

Comment:

a. *Restated texts.* Deut 6:4–5 (Mark 12:29); Deut 6:13 (Matt 4:10). Jesus answers the tempter with the first commandment and nothing else.

b. *Money as rival master.* Jesus names the competing master: "You cannot serve God and money." The first commandment is thus applied to wealth (§ 16). Idolatry is defined by service, not by statues.

c. *The first restatement.* Tempted in the wilderness, Jesus answers three times, each time from Moses and from the chapters surrounding the Shema: "Man shall not live by bread alone" (Deut 8:3); "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test" (Deut 6:16); "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve" (Deut 6:13). The three temptations, bread, spectacle, and the kingdoms of the world with "the glory of them" (Matt 4:8 KJV), are three rival masters, and the first commandment answers each. Before Jesus taught the Law to anyone, he kept it under pressure by restating it.

Reporter's Note. Mark 12:29–30; Matt 4:10; Luke 4:8; Matt 6:24; Luke 16:13; Matt 6:9; Matt 4:1–10; Luke 4:1–12.

§ 11. The Second Table

> **You shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and mother; love your neighbor as yourself.**

Comment:

a. *Jesus's own recital.* Asked what to do to inherit eternal life, Jesus recites these commandments (Matt 19:17–19; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20). He does not recite a creed. "Do not defraud" (Mark) extends "do not steal" to sharp dealing.

b. *Honor of parents.* Enforced against the Corban device (§ 5) and quoted with its penalty: "Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die" (Matt 15:4). Jesus does not soften the commandment's gravity.

c. *Coveting.* Not recited in the list but restated in substance: "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness" (Luke 12:15), followed by the parable of the rich fool.

Reporter's Note. Matt 19:17–19; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Matt 15:4; Luke 12:15–21.

§ 12. Marriage and Divorce

> **From the beginning the Creator made them male and female, and the two become one flesh. What God has joined, man shall not separate. Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.**

Comment:

a. *Rule of construction applied.* Asked about Deut 24:1 (the certificate of divorce), Jesus goes behind it to Gen 1:27 and 2:24. The later, narrower provision is construed as a concession "because of your hardness of heart"; the earlier, broader provision states the rule. This is the clearest instance of Jesus reading Moses against Moses to recover Moses's own intent.

b. *The exception.* Matthew records an exception for *porneia*; Mark and Luke record none. This Restatement states the rule with the exception because it is Jesus's recorded word; the exception is to be read narrowly, as all exceptions to a creation rule are.

c. *Celibacy.* Some are eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom; "let the one who is able to receive this receive it." The rule neither requires nor forbids marriage.

Reporter's Note. Matt 19:3–12; Mark 10:2–12; Matt 5:31–32; Luke 16:18.

§ 13. Oaths and Truthfulness

> **Do not swear at all, by heaven, by earth, by Jerusalem, or by your head. Let what you say be simply "Yes" or "No." An oath by the temple or the altar binds as fully as an oath by the gold or the gift, for the greater sanctifies the lesser.**

Comment:

a. *Restated text.* "You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn" (Lev 19:12; Num 30:2). Jesus restates the duty of truthfulness so completely that oaths become unnecessary: a person whose word is reliable has nothing to add by swearing.

b. *Evasive oaths.* The scribes graded oaths so that some could be broken. Jesus holds every oath binding and traces each to God. The rule against casuistry is therefore two-sided: do not swear, and if you have sworn, you are bound.

Reporter's Note. Matt 5:33–37; 23:16–22.

§ 14. Retaliation and Enemies

> **Do not resist one who is evil. Turn the other cheek; give the cloak with the coat; go the second mile; give to the one who begs. Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.**

Comment:

a. *Restated text.* "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth" (Ex 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21) was a limit on judicial penalty: no more than an eye for an eye. Jesus restates its purpose for the private person: do not take even that. The judicial limit stands; the private person is told not to take even what it allows.

b. *"As your Father."* The reason given is imitation of God, who sends sun and rain on the just and unjust. The commandment to love the neighbor (§ 2) is thereby extended to the enemy, who is construed as a neighbor.

Illustrations:

1. A soldier compels a man to carry his pack one mile. The man carries it two. Matt 5:41.
2. Disciples propose fire from heaven on a Samaritan village that refused Jesus. He rebukes them. Luke 9:54–55.

Reporter's Note. Matt 5:38–48; Luke 6:27–36; 23:34.

§ 15. Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting

> **Give alms, pray, and fast; do not do so to be seen by others. Give in secret; pray in secret; fast without display. The Father who sees in secret will reward.**

Comment:

a. *Practices preserved.* "When you give," "when you pray," "when you fast": the practices are assumed, not instituted and not abolished. What is restated is the motive and the audience.

b. *The Lord's Prayer.* Jesus supplies the form: the Father's name, kingdom, and will first; bread, forgiveness, and deliverance after. Forgiveness is asked on the condition that it is given (§ 24).

Reporter's Note. Matt 6:1–18; Luke 11:1–4; Mark 11:25.

§ 16. Wealth, Anxiety, and Stewardship

> **Do not lay up treasures on earth. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Do not be anxious about food or clothing. Be faithful in unrighteous wealth and in what is another's. Sell possessions and give to the needy where he commands it.**

Comment:

a. *Degrees.* Jesus commands the rich ruler to sell all; he accepts Zacchaeus's half with fourfold restitution (Luke 19:8–9); he commends the widow's two coins (Mark 12:43). The rule is not a fixed percentage. It is undivided service (§ 10) proved by what one does with money.

b. *"How difficult it is."* A rich person enters the kingdom with difficulty; the difficulty is real and is resolved only by God (§ 8).

Illustration:

1. A woman breaks an alabaster flask of pure nard, worth a year's wages, and pours it over his head. Some present say, "Why this waste?" Jesus: "Leave her alone. . . . She has done a beautiful thing to me. . . . Wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." Mark 14:3–9; Matt 26:6–13; John 12:3–8. The King ruled that pouring out is not waste.

Reporter's Note. Matt 6:19–34; Luke 12:13–34; 16:1–13; 18:22–27; 19:8–9; Mark 10:21–27; 12:41–44; 14:3–9.

§ 17. Tithes, Offerings, and Ritual Obligations

Tithes are to be paid. Gifts are to be brought to the altar, but not before reconciliation with a brother. A cleansed leper shall show himself to the priest and offer what Moses commanded. The temple tax is to be paid rather than give offense.

Comment:

a. *Direct enforcement of Levitical procedure.* Jesus three times sends the healed to the priests for the rites of Lev 13–14 (Matt 8:4; Mark 1:44; Luke 17:14). He does not treat the priesthood as abolished.

b. *Reconciliation first.* The gift is interrupted, not excused. "First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." The ritual command is subordinated to the weightier matter (§ 4) and then performed.

c. *Temple tax.* The sons are free, yet the tax is paid "not to give offense." Liberty is exercised in favor of the institution.

Reporter's Note. Matt 23:23; 5:23–24; 8:4; Mark 1:44; Luke 17:14; Matt 17:24–27.

§ 18. Purity

> **Nothing outside a person that enters him can defile him. What comes out of a person, from the heart, defiles him. Clean first the inside of the cup, that the outside also may be clean.**

Comment:

a. *Scope of the saying.* The occasion was handwashing under human tradition (§ 5), not the Levitical diet. Jesus relocates the source of defilement to the heart. Mark adds a narrator's note ("thus he declared all foods clean," Mark 7:19) that is the evangelist's inference, not Jesus's words, and is so flagged here.

b. *Priority, not abolition.* The rule follows § 3: inner purity is the thing the outer rule exists to produce. A clean outside with a foul inside is the condition condemned.

Reporter's Note. Mark 7:14–23; Matt 15:10–20; 23:25–28; Luke 11:39–41.

§ 19. Correction, Witnesses, and Forgiveness Among Brothers

> **If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he does not listen, take one or two others, that every charge may be established by two or three witnesses. If he refuses the church, treat him as a Gentile and tax collector. If he repents, forgive him, seven times in a day. First take the log out of your own eye; then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's.**

Comment:

a. *Restated text.* The two-or-three-witness rule is Deut 19:15. Jesus adopts the Mosaic evidentiary standard for the community's discipline.

b. *"Judge not."* Matt 7:1 forbids condemning judgment that one would not bear oneself; it does not forbid the procedure of Matt 18, which Jesus commands. "Judge with right judgment" (John 7:24).

Reporter's Note. Matt 18:15–20; Luke 17:3–4; Matt 7:1–5; John 7:24.

Topic 3

The Priesthood, the Temple, and Atonement

Introductory Note. Moses established a priesthood, a sanctuary, and a system of sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. This Topic restates what Jesus said about each. The pattern is consistent: he honors the office, enforces its procedure, and then declares that its function is accomplished in himself.

§ 20. Honor Due to the Office and the House

> **The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses's seat; do and observe what they tell you, but not what they do. The temple is the Father's house and a house of prayer for all nations; it is not to be made a market or a den of robbers. One who swears by the temple swears by him who dwells in it.**

Comment:

a. *Moses's seat.* The authority of the office is affirmed in the same breath as the conduct of its holders is condemned. The rule distinguishes the teaching chair from the man in it.

b. *Restated texts.* "My house shall be called a house of prayer" (Isa 56:7); "a den of robbers" (Jer 7:11). Jesus cleanses the temple by enforcing the prophets' description of it (Chapter 3).

c. *God dwells there.* Matt 23:21 speaks of God's dwelling in the temple as a present fact, not a past one.

Reporter's Note. Matt 23:2–3, 16–22; 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–17; John 2:16.

§ 21. Something Greater Than the Temple

> **Something greater than the temple is here. The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. Destroy this temple, and in three days he will raise it up.**

Comment:

a. *The claim.* Jesus does not say the temple is nothing; he says something greater is present. The comparison presupposes the temple's greatness.

b. *Forgiveness pronounced directly.* To the paralytic and to the sinful woman Jesus pronounces forgiveness without altar or priest (Mark 2:5–11; Luke 7:48). He thereby exercises, in person, the function the sacrificial system served.

c. *The body as temple.* John 2:19–21 identifies the temple to be raised as his body. The sanctuary's purpose, God dwelling with his people, is restated as fulfilled in him.

Reporter's Note. Matt 12:6; Mark 2:5–11; Luke 7:47–50; John 2:19–21.

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§ 22. The Son's Self-Offering as the Sacrifice of the Covenant

> **The Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many. His blood is the blood of the covenant, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. He lays down his life of his own accord; no one takes it from him. He consecrates himself for his disciples' sake.**

Comment:

a. *Restated text.* "The blood of the covenant" (Ex 24:8) is Moses's phrase at Sinai. Jesus applies it to his own blood at the Passover table. The Passover lamb, the Sinai covenant, and the sin offering are gathered into one act.

b. *Voluntariness.* "I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:18). The sacrifice is self-offered; it is not imposed on an unwilling victim. This is the priestly act of Chapter 1 performed by the priest on himself.

c. *"Consecrate."* "For their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth" (John 17:19). The verb is the verb of priestly dedication. The purpose clause is the disciples' sanctification, that is, their being made able to do (§ 8).

d. *Bread and flesh.* "Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" (John 6:54). The manna and the Passover are both restated in the Son.

e. *Consecration is received.* The disciples do not consecrate themselves. "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me" (John 13:8). "Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you" (15:3). The priest consecrates the people; the people do not consecrate themselves, and in Jesus's words they never attempt to do so.

Reporter's Note. Mark 10:45; Matt 20:28; 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; John 10:11, 17–18; 6:51–58; 17:19; 13:8–10; 15:3.

§ 23. Worship in Spirit and Truth

> **The hour comes, and now is, when true worshipers will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, but in spirit and truth; for the Father seeks such people to worship him, and God is spirit.**

Comment:

a. *What changes and what does not.* Place ceases to govern; worship does not cease to be owed. "Salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22) is said in the same conversation: the Mosaic order is affirmed as the source from which the wider worship flows.

Reporter's Note. John 4:20–24.

§ 24. Forgiveness Received Is Conditioned on Forgiveness Given

> **If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. A servant forgiven a great debt who refuses to forgive a small one is delivered to the jailers.**

Comment:

a. *Priestly grant with a duty attached.* The forgiveness of § 22 is not unconditional in its continuance. The one forgiven must forgive. The rule is stated in the Lord's Prayer, in its commentary (Matt 6:14–15), at the altar (Mark 11:25), and in parable (Matt 18:23–35).

b. *Measure.* "Seventy-seven times" (Matt 18:22): the duty has no numerical limit.

Reporter's Note. Matt 6:12, 14–15; 18:21–35; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:37; 17:3–4.

§ 24A. The Priestly Office Continued: Intercession as Pleading

> **Pray always and do not lose heart. Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened. Whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. Pray for those who persecute you.**

Comment:

a. *Pleading before a judge.* Jesus's two parables on persistence are both set before a court or a door: a widow who keeps coming to a judge, saying "Give me justice against my adversary" (Luke 18:1–8), and a friend knocking at midnight (Luke 11:5–8). The widow's word is *antidikos*, the opposing party at law. Jesus's own description of prayer is the description of a litigant pressing a claim before a tribunal, with one difference: the Judge is the Father, who will "give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night."

b. *The office continued in the disciples.* The Son intercedes: "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:32); "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word" (John 17:20); "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34). He then commands the same work of his disciples: ask in his name (John 14:13–14; 16:23–24) and pray for enemies (Matt 5:44). The sacrifice of § 22 is finished; the standing work of intercession is handed on.

c. *Enemies first.* The command to pray for persecutors is the priestly act most directly laid on every disciple. It is also this Restatement's safeguard: the person who is praying for an enemy cannot at the same time be seizing a place above him (§ 30).

Reporter's Note. Luke 18:1–8; 11:5–13; Matt 7:7–11; 18:19–20; John 14:13–14; 16:23–24; 17:9, 20; Luke 22:32; 23:34; Matt 5:44; 21:13 ("a house of prayer").



Chapter 2

The King (David)

Introductory Note. God promised David a son whose throne would be established forever (2 Sam 7:12–16). This Chapter restates that kingship as Jesus claimed and described it: the kingdom's jurisdiction, its King, its law, the terms of entry, rank within it, its judgment, and its standing order. The Law of Chapter 1 is the law of this kingdom; the King does not keep a separate code.

§ 25. The Kingdom as Governing Jurisdiction

> **The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the good news. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. The kingdom is in the midst of you.**

Comment:

a. *First proclamation.* Jesus's opening public word is a proclamation of jurisdiction. Everything that follows is the law of that jurisdiction.

b. *"Righteousness."* The kingdom is sought together with its righteousness. Entry (§ 28) and conduct (Chapter 1) are not separable.

Reporter's Note. Mark 1:15; Matt 4:17; 6:33; Luke 17:20–21; 4:43.

§ 26. The Son as Davidic King

> **The Christ is David's son and David's Lord. He is a king, born and come into the world to bear witness to the truth; his kingdom is not from this world. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him. He assigns a kingdom to his disciples as the Father assigned one to him.**

Comment:

a. *Restated text.* "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand" (Ps 110:1). Jesus poses the riddle himself: if David calls him Lord, how is he his son? The answer, which he leaves his hearers to draw, is that the son of David is greater than David.

b. *"Not from this world."* The kingdom's origin, not its reach, is denied to be worldly. Its servants do not fight for it with swords (John 18:36); its King nonetheless claims all authority (Matt 28:18).

c. *The King's self-reference.* In the judgment scene Jesus names himself "the King" (Matt 25:34, 40). The title is used, not merely accepted.

Reporter's Note. Matt 22:41–46; Mark 12:35–37; John 18:36–37; Matt 28:18; Luke 22:29–30; Matt 25:34, 40; Luke 19:38–40 (he refuses to silence the acclamation).

§ 27. The King's Law Is the Father's Will

> **The Son does nothing of his own accord; he speaks what the Father has taught him and commanded him to say. The Father's commandment is eternal life. Not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" enters the kingdom, but the one who does the will of the Father.**

Comment:

a. *No separate code.* The King's commandments are the Father's. The Law of Chapter 1 is what the King enforces, read by the rules of Topic 1. It is not an external code either: the Son keeps it as one in whom the Father dwells (John 14:10), and his disciples keep it the same way (§ 8, Comment e).

b. *Relation to Moses.* Moses received the law from God and delivered it. Jesus says the same of himself (John 12:49–50) with one difference: he and the Father are one (John 10:30), so the delivery is also the source.

Reporter's Note. John 5:19, 30; 7:16–17; 8:28; 12:49–50; 14:10, 24; Matt 7:21; 12:50.

§ 28. Terms of Entry

> **Unless one is born again, of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom. Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter it. Whoever would come after the King must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow. Whoever does not renounce all that he has cannot be his disciple. Count the cost.**

Comment:

a. *The Beatitudes as charter.* The poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, those who hunger for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted: these are the kingdom's citizens as the King describes them. Each describes a disposition that the Law of Chapter 1 presupposes.

b. *Two conditions, one entry.* New birth (§ 8) is God's act; turning like a child and taking up the cross are the person's. Jesus states both without reconciling them further.

c. *Cost.* The tower-builder and the king going to war (Luke 14:28–32) are told to reckon before they start. Entry is not offered as cheap.

d. *Received, not seized.* The kingdom is received "like a child" (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17), inherited (Matt 25:34; 5:5, "the meek shall inherit the earth"), and given: "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). Jesus declines every attempt to take it. He withdraws when the crowd would make him king by force (John 6:15). He refuses the sons of Zebedee the seats they ask for, because they are "for those for whom it has been prepared" (Mark 10:35–40). He will not be made arbiter of an inheritance (Luke 12:14). The line between seizing and receiving runs through every section of this Chapter.

Illustration:

1. Tenants of a vineyard withhold the owner's fruit, beat his servants, and kill his son, saying, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance." The owner puts them out and lets the vineyard to others who will give him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus: "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits." Matt 21:33–43; Mark 12:1–9. The tenants treated a lease as a title.

Reporter's Note. John 3:3–8; Matt 18:3; Mark 10:15; Matt 5:3–12; Luke 6:20–26; 9:23–26; 14:25–33; Mark 8:34–38; 10:35–40; Luke 12:14, 32; 18:17; John 6:15; Matt 21:33–43; Mark 12:1–9.

§ 29. Allegiance Where Authority Is Divided

> **Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. A ruler has no authority except what is given him from above. The sons of the kingdom are free, yet pay the tax so as not to give offense.**

Comment:

a. *Order of the two clauses.* Caesar's coin bears Caesar's image; the person bears God's. What is God's is the whole person; what is Caesar's is the coin. The second clause governs the first.

Reporter's Note. Matt 22:15–22; Mark 12:13–17; John 19:11; Matt 17:24–27.

§ 30. Rank Within the Kingdom

> **Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first must be slave of all; for the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. The greatest is the one who serves.**

Comment:

a. *Contrast with the nations.* "The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them . . . it shall not be so among you." The kingdom's rank is the inverse of the world's.

b. *Enacted.* The King washes his servants' feet and commands them to do likewise (John 13:14–15). The rule is modeled before it is stated.

c. *What is exalted.* "What is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). The word is *hypsēlon*, the Greek Old Testament's word for the high places (*bamot*) the prophets condemned. Jesus names human exaltation itself as a high place. The rank of this section is therefore not humility as one virtue among others; it is the refusal to build what God calls an abomination. Compare Matt 12:29: the strong man's house is entered only after the strong man is bound.

Reporter's Note. Matt 20:25–28; 23:11–12; Mark 9:35; 10:42–45; Luke 22:24–27; John 13:12–17; Luke 16:15; Matt 12:29.

§ 31. The King's Judgment

> **When the Son of Man comes in his glory, he will sit on his throne and separate the nations as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will repay each according to what he has done. Those who did mercy to the least of his brothers did it to him and inherit the kingdom; those who did not depart into eternal fire. Workers of lawlessness are cast out, though they prophesied and did mighty works in his name. Every careless word will be accounted for.**

Comment:

a. *Standard of judgment.* The King judges by deeds. The deeds named are the works of mercy the Law and the Prophets require (Chapter 1 § 4; Chapter 3 § 36). Profession in his name is expressly held insufficient (Matt 7:22–23).

b. *"Lawlessness."* The ground of exclusion in Matt 7:23 and 13:41 is *anomia*. The King's court is a court of law; the law is the Father's (§ 27).

c. *Relation to forgiveness.* The judgment does not displace § 22. The forgiven are expected to have become doers (§ 24; General Note). The parable of the talents (Matt 25:14–30) immediately precedes the sheep and goats: what was entrusted is to be used.

d. *Known by the Judge.* The sentence on the workers of lawlessness is "I never knew you" (Matt 7:23). The deeds are the evidence; the question under them is whether the Judge knows the one who stands before him. "I know my own and my own know me" (John 10:14). "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (10:27). "This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (17:3). The one who hears and believes "does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (5:24). Nor is the judgment only future: "Now is the judgment of this world" (12:31). The record is being made now.

Reporter's Note. Matt 25:31–46; 16:27; 7:21–23; 13:41–43; 12:36–37; John 5:22–29; Luke 19:11–27; John 10:14, 27; 17:3; 12:31.

§ 31A. The Accuser and the Advocate

> **The Father has given all judgment to the Son. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. Satan has demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you. The Helper, the Spirit of truth, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.**

Comment:

a. *Parties to the case.* In Jesus's own description the court of § 31 has parties. There is an accuser: Moses, whose law the defendant has broken (John 5:45), and Satan, who demands custody (Luke 22:31). There is a defendant. And there is an advocate: the Greek word for the Spirit, *paraklētos*, is the one called alongside to plead; the Son is the first such, and the Spirit is "another" (John 14:16).

b. *"Where are your accusers?"* When the accusers of the woman caught in adultery withdraw, Jesus asks, "Has no one condemned you?" and dismisses the charge with a command: "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more" (John 8:10–11). The dismissal and the command are one sentence of the court.

c. *Conviction by the Advocate.* The Spirit who pleads for the disciple also convicts the world (John 16:8–11). The same counsel who defends is the one who presses the charge against sin; the two offices are not in tension in Jesus's description.

d. *Judgment entered against the accuser.* "Now will the ruler of this world be cast out" (John 12:31); "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18). The accuser's standing is what the cross determines.

Reporter's Note. John 5:22, 45; Luke 22:31–32; John 14:16; 16:8–11; 8:10–11; 12:31; Luke 10:18. On John 7:53–8:11, see the Introductory Note.

§ 32. The New Commandment and the Commission

> **A new commandment: love one another as I have loved you. By this all will know you are my disciples. You are my friends if you do what I command you. Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.**

Comment:

a. *What is new.* Love of neighbor is Lev 19:18 (§ 2). What is new is the measure: "as I have loved you," said on the night he laid down his life (§ 22). The commandment is Moses's; the standard of comparison is the King's own conduct.

b. *Friendship conditioned on obedience.* John 15:14 states the condition in terms a court would recognize: friends are those who do what he commands.

c. *The commission teaches observance.* The disciples are sent to teach nations "to observe all that I have commanded." The content of the commission is the content of this Restatement.

Reporter's Note. John 13:34–35; 15:12–17; Matt 28:18–20; Luke 24:47.



Chapter 3

The Prophets

Introductory Note. The Prophets called Israel back to the Law, indicted its hypocrisy, demanded repentance, announced judgment, and promised a new covenant, a Spirit-given heart, the ingathering of the nations, and the Day of the Lord. This Chapter restates each as Jesus took it up. He did not merely quote the Prophets; he spoke as the one they spoke of, and he applied their indictment to his own generation.

§ 33. The Prophets Must Be Fulfilled

> **All the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. Everything written about the Son of Man in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. All this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.**

Comment:

a. *The prophets as witnesses.* Jesus reads the prophets as testimony to himself and faults his hearers for not believing them (John 5:39, 46–47; Luke 24:25–27). The Emmaus exposition, "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets," is the model for this Chapter.

b. *Isaiah 61 claimed.* In the Nazareth synagogue he reads the prophet's commission (good news to the poor, liberty to captives, sight to the blind, the year of the Lord's favor) and says it is fulfilled that day. The prophetic office is assumed, not described.

c. *"Until John."* Luke 16:16 marks John as the hinge between the era of prophecy and the era of the kingdom's preaching; v. 17 immediately affirms that the Law stands (§ 1).

Reporter's Note. Matt 11:10–14; Luke 16:16–17; 24:25–27, 44–46; 4:16–21; John 5:39–47; Matt 26:53–56.

§ 34. The Prophetic Indictment Renewed

> **This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. You tithe mint and dill and have neglected the weightier matters: justice, mercy, faithfulness. You build the tombs of the prophets and are the sons of those who killed them. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.**

Comment:

a. *Restated texts.* Isa 29:13 (lips and heart); Hos 6:6 (mercy not sacrifice); Jer 7:11 (den of robbers); the "woe" form of Isaiah 5 and Habakkuk 2. Jesus speaks in the prophets' genre and with their charges.

b. *Hypocrisy defined.* The indictment is not against religion but against the gap between appearance and conduct: whitewashed tombs, clean cups, long prayers over devoured houses. The remedy is § 3 and § 7, not less religion.

c. *Addressed inward.* The seven woes are spoken to the religious, not the pagan. The prophets' complaint was always with the covenant people, and so is his.

Reporter's Note. Matt 15:7–9; Mark 7:6–7; Matt 23:1–36; Luke 11:37–52; Matt 9:13; 12:7; 21:13.

§ 35. Repentance as the Standing Demand

> **Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. The Son of Man came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance. There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.**

Comment:

a. *Content of repentance.* Jesus describes it by result: the tax collector goes home justified after confessing (Luke 18:13–14); Zacchaeus restores fourfold and Jesus says salvation has come to his house (Luke 19:8–9). Repentance includes restitution where restitution is due (compare Ex 22:1; Lev 6:1–5, restated in Zacchaeus's act).

b. *Woe to the unrepentant cities.* Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum are compared unfavorably with Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom. Greater light, greater accountability.

c. *Three lost things.* The sheep, the coin, and the son are found; heaven rejoices. The father's running to the son is the prophets' picture of God's eagerness to restore (Hos 11; Jer 31:20) told as a story.

Reporter's Note. Matt 4:17; Luke 13:1–5; 5:32; 15:1–32; 18:9–14; 19:1–10; Matt 11:20–24.

§ 36. Justice, Mercy, and Faithfulness

> **Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you? Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.**

Comment:

a. *Restated text.* "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Mic 6:8). Jesus's "weightier matters" track the prophet's three.

b. *Mercy as a duty owed.* Mercy is not optional generosity; the unmerciful servant is condemned for withholding it (§ 24). The merciful are promised mercy; the implication for the unmerciful is drawn by the King's court (§ 31).

Reporter's Note. Matt 5:7; 18:32–35; 9:13; 12:7; 23:23; Luke 6:36.

§ 37. The Poor, the Captive, and the Oppressed

> **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor, liberty to the captives, sight to the blind, freedom for the oppressed. Blessed are you who are poor; woe to you who are rich. When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind. Whatever you did to the least of these, you did to me.**

Comment:

a. *The prophets' constituency.* Widow, orphan, stranger, poor: the Law's protected classes (Ex 22:21–24; Deut 24:17–22) are the Prophets' constant concern (Isa 1:17; Amos 5; Zech 7:9–10). Jesus adopts them as his own and makes treatment of them the test of the last judgment (§ 31).

b. *Luke's woes.* The blessings on the poor carry corresponding woes on the rich, the full, the laughing, the well-spoken-of. The structure is the prophets' blessing-and-curse.

Reporter's Note. Luke 4:18–19; 6:20–26; 14:12–14; Matt 11:5; 25:35–40.

§ 38. The Nations

> **Many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom. I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. The gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations. Make disciples of all nations.**

Comment:

a. *Restated texts.* Isa 2:2–3 and 49:6 (nations coming to Zion; a light to the nations); Isa 56:7 ("a house of prayer for all the nations," as Jesus quotes it in the temple, Mark 11:17).

b. *Elijah and Elisha.* In Nazareth Jesus cites Elijah's widow of Zarephath and Elisha's Naaman the Syrian as precedent that God's favor reaches Gentiles. His hearers try to kill him for it (Luke 4:25–29). The precedent is from the prophets' own ministries.

c. *Sequence.* Jesus's own mission was "only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 15:24); the nations are reached through Israel and after his death (§ 32). The prophets' order, Israel first and then the nations, is kept.

Reporter's Note. Matt 8:11–12; Luke 13:28–30; John 10:16; Matt 24:14; 28:19; Luke 4:24–27; 24:47; Matt 21:43.

§ 39. The New Covenant and the Spirit

> **This cup is the new covenant in my blood. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever: the Spirit of truth, who will teach you all things and guide you into all the truth. Stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high. Out of the believer's heart will flow rivers of living water.**

Comment:

a. *Restated texts.* "I will make a new covenant . . . I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts" (Jer 31:31–33); "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to

walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules" (Ezek 36:26–27). The prophets promised a Spirit whose work is obedience. Jesus promises that Spirit.

b. *The enabling clause of the whole Restatement.* Chapter 1 § 8 states that performance is enabled by God. This section identifies the means: the Spirit the prophets foretold, sent by the Son. The new covenant does not lower the law's demand; it supplies the heart that keeps it.

c. *"Power."* Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8 (the risen Christ's words) describe the Spirit as power for witness. Witness is the prophets' office (§ 33) continued in the disciples.

Reporter's Note. Luke 22:20; John 14:16–17, 26; 15:26; 16:7–15; 7:37–39; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8 (flagged, risen Christ).

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§ 40. The Day of the Lord: Judgment and Restoration

> **Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Not one stone of the temple will be left on another. The Son of Man will come on the clouds with power and great glory and gather his elect from the four winds. In the new world, the Twelve will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. You will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."**

Comment:

a. *Restated texts.* Dan 7:13–14 (Son of Man on the clouds); Dan 9:27 and 11:31 (abomination of desolation, which Jesus names as "spoken of by the prophet Daniel"); Isa 13:10 and 34:4 (sun darkened, stars falling); Zech 12:10 (tribes mourning); Ps 118:26 (blessed is he who comes).

b. *Judgment and restoration together.* The temple's destruction and the Son of Man's coming are foretold in one discourse. The twelve tribes are judged by the Twelve: Israel is not written out of the restoration.

c. *Watchfulness.* The practical command is to stay awake and be found doing (Matt 24:45–46). The prophetic future is a reason for present obedience.

Reporter's Note. Matt 24–25; Mark 13; Luke 21; Matt 19:28; 23:37–39; Luke 13:34–35; 17:22–37.

§ 41. True and False Prophets; the Prophet Like Moses

> **Beware of false prophets who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown. It cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.**

Comment:

a. *Test by fruit.* The Law's test for a prophet was whether his word came true and whether he led toward or away from the Lord (Deut 13:1–5; 18:21–22). Jesus restates the test as fruit: conduct, not signs. He adds that signs alone prove nothing, since false christs will perform them (Matt 24:24).

b. *Jesus as prophet.* He calls himself a prophet (Luke 13:33; Mark 6:4) and speaks what he is commanded (John 12:49), which is the description of the prophet like Moses (Deut 18:18). He is the prophet the prophets awaited and the standard by which prophets are judged.

Reporter's Note. Matt 7:15–20; 24:4–5, 11, 23–26; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24; 13:33; John 12:49–50.



Reporter's General Note

Saved in Order to Do

The question this Restatement serves is what the Son saved his people *for*. His own words answer it, and the answer is not freedom from the Law but freedom to keep it.

1. Freedom from sin, not freedom to sin. "Everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. . . . If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:34–36). The slavery named is slavery *to sin*; the freedom granted is freedom *from* it. To the woman caught in adultery: "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more" (John 8:11). To the healed man: "Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you" (John 5:14). Forgiveness is pronounced and a command follows it in the same breath. The pardon is the beginning of obedience, not its substitute.

2. Appointed to bear fruit. "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide" (John 15:16). The election is for fruit. "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples" (15:8). A branch that bears no fruit is taken away (15:2). The evidence of belonging is doing (§ 7, § 9).

3. Love is proved by keeping. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me" (14:21). "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word" (14:23). "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (15:14). Four times in two chapters the test of love is stated, and each time it is keeping God's law.

4. The power is his. The same discourse that four times demands keeping also supplies the means. "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper" (14:16). "Apart from me you can do nothing" (15:5). "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt 19:26). The demand and the supply are stated together so that neither is heard alone. A reader who hears only the demand will despair; a reader who hears only the supply

will presume. Jesus allows neither. The yoke is his and it is easy (Matt 11:30), but it is a yoke, and it is to be taken up.

5. The standard is not lowered. "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48) is not withdrawn after the cross. The new commandment raises the measure of love to "as I have loved you" (John 13:34). The commission sends disciples to teach the nations "to observe all that I have commanded" (Matt 28:20). The judgment is according to deeds (Matt 16:27; 25:31–46), and the ground of exclusion is lawlessness (7:23; 13:41). (Compare the risen Christ to the churches: "I know your works," Rev 2:2, 19; 3:1, 8, 15; "do the works you did at first," Rev 2:5.)

6. Sanctified in truth. "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. . . . For their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth" (John 17:17, 19). The Son's self-offering (§ 22) has a stated purpose clause: that his people be made holy. Holiness, in Moses, is the summary of the Law ("You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy," Lev 19:2, the chapter whose eighteenth verse Jesus made the second great commandment). The purpose of the atonement, in Jesus's own words, is that the Law's summary be fulfilled in his people.

7. Struggle rightly directed. The disciple's struggle, then, is not whether to keep the Law and the Prophets but how: in the Way of the Son (John 14:6, "I am the way"), by the rules of construction he gave (Chapter 1, Topic 1), under the King whose law it is (Chapter 2), toward the end the Prophets foresaw (Chapter 3), and in the power of the Spirit he sent (§ 39). "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matt 5:6).

8. Witnesses. "You also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:27). "That they may all be one . . . so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21). "You are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:48). The people who keep the Law in the Son's Way and by the Spirit's power are not only obedient; they are evidence. Their keeping testifies to who God is and to what he made them for. The Law was not given to be kept unaided. It was given to be kept in him, and the keeping is the witness.

Note on other writers. The reader will recognize that the New Testament epistles state the same conclusion in their own terms (for example, Eph 2:10, "created in Christ Jesus for good works"; Titus 2:14, "to purify for himself a people . . . zealous for good works"; 1 John 2:3–6, "we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments"). They are cited here only to show that the apostles understood him as this Restatement does. The rules above rest on his words alone.



Turris fortis mihi Deus.

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