

# JESUS FULFILLS LAW & PROPHETS

Mt 5:17-20; Mt 17:1-8; Heb 1:1-2

## I. AVOIDING EXTREMES re LAW

### A. Legalism

1. Pelagius thought Christians should keep all the commandments, perfection attainable—lasting legacy, persistent tendency
2. Monastic excesses, penitential practices, external emphases
3. New England Puritans (e.g. laws re Christmas)
4. Holiness churches' rules

### B. Antinomianism

1. Some of Luther's associates (Karlstadt & Muntzer) & Zwaikau "prophets" create chaos
2. Some Anabaptists (e.g. Munster rebellion)
3. Some of Calvin's followers—critiqued in Fletcher's *Checks to Antinomianism*
4. Some contemporary "evangelicals"—"cheap grace" & "all is forgiven"
5. Breaking, teaching such things endangers perpetrator

## II. FULFILLING the LAW (eternally true, valid)—N.B. TRANSFIGURATION (Mt 17:1-8)

### A. Transfiguration Truth

1. Moses & Elijah subject to HIM
2. Glory of God evident in HIM
3. God's Voice: "listen to him" resounds throughout centuries

### B. Making clear Law's essence/purpose: to enable human flourishing

1. Ten Commandments transcendently truthful re God & man
  - a. Outline goodness/rightness of Law
    1. Boundaries, limits, restrictions, essential (cf *The Liberating Law*)
    2. Self-discipline essential for good life
  - b. Eternal Law discernible in Natural Law, revealed in Divine Law, and authoritative/foundational in Positive Laws)
2. Encoding Wisdom
  - a. Dietary, sanitary laws make sense, rightly observed
  - b. Sabbatical injunctions rightly regulate work
  - c. Judicial principles enlightening, uplifting
3. Encouraging Virtues
  - a. Prudence: practical wisdom
  - b. Temperance: self-control
  - c. Courage: risking life for right reasons
  - d. Justice: giving to others what's due

### C. Pointing to its final flourishing through Christ & summed up by Jesus: love God & neighbor fulfills Law

## III. FULFILLING the PROPHETS—"exegesis of existence from a divine perspective" (Abraham Heschel)

### A. Prophets' insights into Law's application (i.e. Elijah re idolatry; Nathan re justice; Isaiah re judgment & hope; Jeremiah re sorrow & surrender; Amos re justice; Hosea re love; Joel re disaster & blessing)

### B. Jesus The Final Prophet, foretold by OT seers (i.e. Isaiah)—Hebrews 1:1-2

1. Ultimate Word, prophets' words preliminary
2. Forthtelling—making clear Father's message for mankind
3. Foretelling—providing intimations of what's to come (e.g. Resurrection, Second Coming)
4. Performing miracles, evidence of divine power

### C. Jesus' followers' prophetic commission, a gift of Spirit

1. Preachers—Savonarola in Florence
2. Laymen—Solzhenitsyn at Harvard

## IV. ATTAINING RIGHTEOUSNESS

### A. In and through Christ: redemption

### B. Bearing witness of redemption: sanctification