

## **Study Guide: Matthew Lesson 70: Our Attitude Behind Our Actions**

**Sunday AM-June 7, 2026**

This study guide explores the teachings of Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, specifically focusing on Matthew 5:21. It examines the historical and linguistic context of the Jewish people during the time of Jesus Christ and how He reclaimed the true meaning of God's Law from man-made traditions.

### **Introduction to Matthew 5:21**

In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ addresses the traditional teachings that the people had heard for generations. The phrase "You have heard that it was said to those of old" appears multiple times. The document explains that this does not refer to the Law of Moses or the Old Testament scriptures. Instead, Jesus Christ is addressing the oral traditions and interpretations added by the rabbis, often called the "fathers of antiquity" or "the ancient ones."

By saying "But I say unto you," Jesus Christ establishes Himself as the ultimate authority. He is not contradicting God's Word but is instead stripping away the "garbage" and "embellishments" added by religious leaders that had obscured the truth.

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### **Student Quiz: Short Answer**

*Instruction: Answer the following questions in 2 to 3 sentences based on the text provided.*

1. What is the significance of the phrase "You have heard that it was said to those of old" in the context of Jesus Christ's teaching?
2. Why is it unlikely that Jesus Christ was contradicting the Law of Moses when He spoke these words?
3. Who were the "men of long ago," and why did the author use this term?
4. How did the Babylonian captivity affect the language spoken by the Jewish people?
5. Why were the Jewish people in the time of Jesus Christ unable to verify the Hebrew scriptures for themselves?
6. How does the author compare the condition of the Jews in the first century to the people living before the Protestant Reformation?
7. What role did the Latin language play in the religious life of people before the Reformation?
8. According to the text, what was the most important achievement of the Protestant Reformation?
9. How did the teaching style of the rabbis differ from the teaching style of Jesus Christ?
10. How did the people in the synagogue typically react to the authority of the Old Testament scrolls?

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### Answer Key

1. This phrase highlights the traditional oral teachings of the rabbis that the people had been following for centuries. Jesus Christ used this to contrast those human traditions with the actual intent of God's Law.
2. In Matthew 5:17, Jesus Christ explicitly stated that He did not come to set aside the Law or the prophets. If He were contradicting Moses, He would be contradicting God's own revelation, which would be impossible.
3. This was a common term used to describe the rabbis of antiquity. Jesus Christ was referring to the oral interpretations these men added to the Old Testament rather than the scriptures themselves.
4. During their seventy years in Babylon, the Jewish people mostly lost the ability to speak Hebrew. They adopted Aramaic as their primary language, which was the language Jesus Christ likely used for His teaching.
5. Because the people spoke Aramaic and the scriptures were written in Hebrew, they could not understand the original text. They had to rely entirely on the rabbis to translate and interpret the Word of God for them.
6. In both time periods, the common people were kept in ignorance because the scriptures were in a language they did not understand. This allowed religious leaders to create systems of tradition that the people could not challenge.
7. Until the Reformation, the Catholic Mass was conducted entirely in Latin, a language the average person did not know. Because they could not read or understand the text, they simply accepted whatever the priests told them.
8. The Reformation put the Bible back into the hands of the people in their own language. This allowed them to see false teachings for themselves and understand the truth of the gospel.
9. Rabbis would always quote other authorities by saying, "There is a teaching that says." Jesus Christ, however, spoke with His own authority as the Son of God, saying, "But I say unto you."
10. The people held the Law in such high regard that they would sit in silence while a man carried the scrolls around the synagogue. This deep reverence for the written Law is why they were so shocked when Jesus Christ claimed His own words had equal authority.

## Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the "oral tradition" of the rabbis with the "written Word of God." How did one eventually come to conceal the other?
2. Discuss the importance of having the Bible translated into the common language of the people. Use examples from the Jewish return from Babylon and the Protestant Reformation.
3. Explain why the religious establishment of the first century found the teaching of Jesus Christ to be "devastating" or "shattering."
4. Describe the historical progression of Bible versions mentioned in the text, from the Geneva Bible to the King James Bible, and their impact on the "Dark Ages."
5. Analyze the statement by William Barclay: "Either Jesus is mad, or unique. Either He is a megalomaniac, or else He is the Son of God." How does this relate to the way Jesus Christ taught the Sermon on the Mount?

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## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Aramaic:** The common language spoken by the Jewish people in the time of Jesus Christ, adopted during the Babylonian captivity.
- **Authorized Version:** Another name for the King James Bible, which the author notes is a proper rendering of the phrase "by them of old."
- **Babylonian Captivity:** A seventy-year period where Israel was held captive in Babylon, during which they lost much of their knowledge of the Hebrew language.
- **Geneva Bible:** An early English translation of the Bible used by famous writers like William Shakespeare and John Milton before it was banned in 1611.
- **Hebrew:** The original language of the Old Testament scriptures, which most Jewish people in Jesus Christ's time could no longer speak or understand.
- **Latin:** The language used by the Roman Catholic Church for the Mass and scriptures prior to the Reformation, which was not understood by the common people.
- **Mishnah:** A collection or codification of Jewish oral law and traditions.
- **Protestant Reformation:** A religious movement beginning in 1517 that emphasized the authority of the Bible over the authority of the pope and tradition.
- **Rabbis:** Religious teachers in Israel often referred to as "fathers of antiquity" or "the ancient ones."
- **Scribes:** Professional record-keepers and scholars of the Law who taught based on tradition rather than personal authority.

- **Talmud:** A central text of rabbinic Judaism consisting of various traditions and interpretations of the Law.
- **Westminster Chapel:** A famous church in London where Martyn Lloyd-Jones served as minister for nearly 30 years.