

Study Guide: Matthew Lesson 74

Sunday AM-July 12, 2026

Introduction

This study guide explores Jesus Christ's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount regarding the true nature of sin. In Matthew 5:22, Jesus addresses the scribes and Pharisees, challenging their belief that righteousness is simply about following outward laws. He reveals that the heart's internal state—specifically anger, contempt, and slander—is just as serious as the act of murder. By examining three specific illustrations, the lesson shows that God's standard of judgment focuses on who we are and what we feel, not just what we do.

Quiz: Understanding Matthew 5:22

1. Why did Jesus Christ speak so strongly to the scribes and Pharisees regarding their personal righteousness?
2. According to the lesson, what is the difference between "righteous indignation" and the anger Jesus condemns?
3. How does the severity of God's judgment for anger compare to the civil penalties for murder mentioned in the text?
4. What specific type of anger is described by the Greek term *orgizesthē* [1]?
5. What does the term *Raca* [2] signify, and why is it difficult for scholars to translate?
6. How does the story of Rabbi Simon Ben Eleazar and the "ugly man" illustrate the sin of contempt?
7. In what way does the word *moros* [3] relate to the Hebrew root *marah* [4]?
8. Under what circumstances did Jesus Christ use the word "fools," and why was it not considered a sin when He said it?
9. Describe the historical transition of the Valley of Hinnom from a place of worship to a garbage dump.
10. Why is the imagery of *Gehenna* [5] a fitting illustration for the biblical concept of hell?

Answer Key

1. Jesus Christ wanted to show the scribes and Pharisees that even those who seem like the "best of men" are actually the "worst of men" when their internal thoughts are revealed. He taught that avoiding physical crimes does not make a person righteous if their heart is filled with hatred.
2. Righteous indignation is a holy anger against sin and evil that does not result in sin itself, as seen in Ephesians 4:26. In contrast, the anger Jesus condemns is selfish, brooding, and nursed bitterness held against another person.
3. While a civil court would only give the death penalty for the physical act of murder, God's verdict is that the one who is angry is just as guilty as the one who kills. Jesus Christ suggests that capital punishment is deserved for the sin of anger just as much as for the crime of murder.
4. *Orgizesthē* [1] refers to a long-lived, smoldering anger that a person refuses to let go. It is a brooding type of resentment that is "nursed" over time rather than a temporary flash of temper.
5. *Raca* [2] is an untranslated epithet of derision that acts as a verbal expression of slander against a person's character or looks. It implies the person is a "brainless idiot" or a "worthless fellow," expressing malicious and arrogant contempt.
6. The Rabbi insulted a man's appearance, and the man responded by telling the Rabbi to complain to the "Maker" who created him. This shows that when we show contempt for a person, we are actually insulting God, the Creator of that person.
7. The word *moros* [3] likely comes from the Hebrew root *marah* [4], which means "to rebel." In the biblical context, a "fool" is not just someone who lacks intelligence, but someone who has rebelled against God and lives a life of self-will.
8. Jesus Christ called the Pharisees and the disciples on the road to Emmaus "fools" because it was a true statement regarding their rebellion or lack of belief. It is only a sin when the word is used as a tool of hatred or malice to destroy another person's value.
9. The Valley of Hinnom was once used for the fire worship of the heathen god Molech, which involved burning children. After King Josiah stopped this evil practice, the valley was declared accursed and turned into a place for dumping and burning garbage.
10. *Gehenna* [5] was an accursed place with a fire that never went out and a "worm that dies not." Jesus Christ used this as a vivid illustration of hell to describe an eternal, never-ending fire where the wicked are consumed.

Essay Questions

1. How does Jesus Christ's interpretation of the Commandment "Thou shalt not murder" change the way a person must examine their own heart?
2. Explain the significance of the Valley of Hinnom's history and why it was the most effective cultural reference for Jesus Christ to use when describing hell.
3. Compare and contrast "righteous indignation" with "selfish anger," providing examples of when each might be present in a modern context.
4. Why is the use of verbal "epithets" or "derision" considered a form of "murder in the heart" according to this lesson?
5. Discuss the theological purpose of Jesus Christ's "devastating" statements in Matthew 5:22 regarding the Jewish system of self-righteousness.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Accursed:** Devoted to destruction or under a curse; considered loathsome or detestable.
- **Capital Punishment:** The legally authorized killing of someone as punishment for a crime; the death penalty.
- **Civil Court:** A court of law that deals with disputes between individuals or organizations rather than criminal cases, though used here to refer to human legal systems.
- **Contempt:** The feeling that a person or a thing is beneath consideration, worthless, or deserving of scorn.
- **Derision:** Contemptuous ridicule or mockery.
- **Epithet:** An adjective or descriptive phrase expressing a quality characteristic of the person or thing mentioned; often used here as a term of abuse.
- **Indignation:** Anger or annoyance provoked by what is perceived as unfair treatment or wickedness.
- **Malicious:** Characterized by malice; intending or intended to do harm.
- **Pharisees:** A member of an ancient Jewish sect distinguished by strict observance of the traditional and written law.
- **Scribes:** Ancient Jewish record-keepers and copyists who were learned in the Law of Moses and served as teachers.
- **Self-righteousness:** A feeling or display of (usually smug) belief that one is totally correct and morally superior to others.

- **Slander:** The action or crime of making a false spoken statement damaging to a person's reputation.

Linguistic Pronunciation Guide

Term	Pronunciation	Definition
<i>orgizesthē</i> [1]	(or-gheed-zes-thay)	A Greek word for anger that describes a brooding, long-lived, and nursed resentment.
<i>Raca</i> [2]	(rah-kah)	An untranslated term of derision or arrogant contempt meaning "worthless fellow" or "empty head."
<i>moros</i> [3]	(mo-ros)	The Greek word for "fool," implying a person is a rebel against God; the root of the English word "moron."
<i>marah</i> [4]	(mah-rah)	A Hebrew root word meaning "to rebel," which serves as the basis for the biblical definition of a fool.
<i>Gehenna</i> [5]	(geh-hen-nah)	The Greek name for the Valley of Hinnom, used by Jesus Christ as a vivid illustration of the eternal fires of hell.

Scripture References (NKJV)

- **Matthew 5:22:** "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."
- **Ephesians 4:26:** "'Be angry, and do not sin': do not let the sun go down on your wrath."
- **2 Chronicles 28:3:** "He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel."
- **Matthew 27:29:** "When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'"
- **Psalms 140:3:** "They sharpen their tongues like a serpent; The poison of asps is under their lips."