

Matthew 5:13-20^v

Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp-stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

^v About the Gospel: Matthew 5:13-20

Matthew follows the Beatitudes with two sayings, one on salt and one on light. Salt was used as a purifier of sacrifices (Ezekiel 43:24). The images of both salt and light also described the law. Light also referred to God and to the restored Israel after the exile.

Verses 17-20 explain Jesus' relationship to the law. Because of the destruction of the temple, the central authority for Judaism during this period was the law, and Jesus was to be evaluated in relationship to it.

Matthew asserts that a great reversal has taken place: The law is no longer to be the center about which everything revolves. Jesus is the new center, and the law and the prophets must be evaluated in relation to him. That relationship is one not of abolition, but of fulfillment. Matthew sees the law and prophecy as fulfilled in Jesus (11:13). The law pointed forward to, and now finds its meaning in, Jesus.