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An Exegetical Investigation of Jesus' Teachings Concerning **νόμος**

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AN EXEGETICAL INVESTIGATION
OF JESUS' TEACHINGS
CONCERNING
Vómos

by
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submitted in partial fulfillment
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study has been to explore the content of Jesus' teaching related to His use of the word *νόμος*. By studying the contexts in which Jesus has mentioned *νόμος*, theological lines of relationship come into focus and information becomes available for understanding the function of *νόμος* within the broader context of Christian theology. The scope of the study has been limited. Limiting the study to those passages in which Jesus himself mentions *νόμος* has necessarily imposed restrictions from a topical viewpoint. The intention for imposing this limit has been to provide for comprehensiveness within a workable parameter. A more inclusive study would require studying all the occurrences of *νόμος* in the Bible in addition to all related synonyms. Even though the present study is limited, it does provide important information for understanding the function of *νόμος* in Christian theology.

The passages selected for study have been identified with the aid of Moulton and Geden's Concordance to the Greek Testament.¹ Following the listing for *νόμος*, each occurrence of the word within the Gospels has been examined to isolate the instances in which Jesus mentioned the word. Having done this, the next step involved selecting the context of each occurrence that would serve as the focus for exegetical study. A major guideline for this process involved following the paragraph divisions of the Greek text. In all cases, the primary concern was with identifying the surrounding verses which would yield

content to the theological relationships of *νόμος*. Thirteen passages were identified for study out of this process. Five of those passages occur in a context providing a limited amount of information regarding either the content or the relationships of *νόμος*. Chapter two contains the findings for those brief studies. The remaining eight passages have been studied more extensively. The passages studied are as follows:

<u>Brief Study</u>	<u>Extended Study</u>
Matthew 11:13	Matthew 5:17-20
Luke 24:44	Matthew 7:12
John 15:25	Matthew 12:1-8
John 8:17	Matthew 22:34-40
John 10:34	Matthew 23:23-24
	Luke 10:25-37
	Luke 16:14-18
	John 7:14-24

The United Bible Societies third edition of The Greek New Testament has served as the basis for the study of each text.² All Greek quotations have been taken from this edition. Where Jesus has quoted from an Old Testament passage, the Hebrew text Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia has been consulted in order to understand both the original context of the quote and the Hebraic language connotations of the quote.³ Hebrew words appearing in the study are from this text. The aim in studying each passage has been to deal with the text inductively and exegetically. Because of this, the primary tools for research have been the standard tools for biblical language exegesis. However, some of the major commentaries have been consulted and their contributions to the

study have been noted. As much as possible, each passage has been treated as an independent study. Correlation and integration between passages has generally been reserved until the final chapter. The conclusions of each chapter are based upon exegesis of the particular text being studied in that chapter.

Chapter 2

νόμος AS SCRIPTURE AND PROPHECY

νόμος as Scripture

John 8:17

καὶ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ δὲ τῷ ὑμετέρῳ γέγραπται
ὅτι δύο ἀνθρώπων ἡ μαρτυρία ἀληθὴς ἐστίν.

Note: καὶ ...δέ form a unit which can be translated "and also" or "but also."¹ The perfect tense of γέγραπται points to Scripture. δύο ἀνθρώπων ἡ μαρτυρία is emphasized by its position.²

The Pharisees had questioned the validity of Jesus' teaching concerning himself (8:13). Because He bore witness (vs. 13, μαρτυρεῖς) of himself, they claimed His witness was not true. It must not be assumed that this implies His witness was false. As Leon Morris points out, truth from a legal perspective required the substantiation of two witnesses.³ Jesus noted this legal requirement and in verse 17 He calls the attention of the Pharisees to the truth which is established by the witness of two men according to νόμος (cf. Dt. 17:6; 19:5). The two witnesses He refers to are himself and the Father (vs. 18). In combination they form a witness of greater integrity than the witness of men. However, the Pharisees were so prejudiced that they refused to see or accept that witness (vs. 19). Jesus argued His defense on their ground by appealing to νόμος. It was their νόμος (τῷ νόμῳ τῷ ὑμετέρῳ) from which He drew support for His position. νόμος as

γέγραπται refers to sacred Hebrew Scripture. In John 5:39 Jesus describes those opposing Him as searching the Scriptures for eternal life. But in the same verse Jesus identifies Scripture as also bearing witness to himself as the Messiah. However, they were unwilling to accept the witness of Scripture as verifying the message of Jesus. A narrow crystalized view of Scripture led them to refuse to see Jesus as the fulfillment of Scripture. This is indicated by the reference to "your law" in verse 17. Prejudice had limited *νόμος* to perform only a legalistic function in their style of religion. Jesus stated a truth from *νόμος* which they could agree with, but so self-blinded were the Pharisees that even argument on their own level failed to open their eyes. Having established their position, nothing was capable of convincing them otherwise. Rather than a divine message, *νόμος* had become for the Pharisees a personal *νόμος* limited to human interpretation and application.

John 10:34

ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς,
 Οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένον ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὑμῶν ὅτι
 Ἐγὼ εἶπα, θεοί ἐστε;

Note: The expected answer is yes (*οὐκ* with the indicative).⁴

The perfect tense (*γεγραμμένον*) with *νόμῳ* indicates Hebrew Scripture. Psalm 82:6 is the apparent location of the quote.

Jesus is charged with blasphemy by the Jews and they are ready to kill Him (10:31-33). The reason for this is that they recognized Him only as a man, but He made the claim to be God. Jesus defended himself

by calling their attention to a passage from νόμος. Psalm 82:6 is the most likely source of quotation.⁵ To include the Psalms, νόμος must refer in this instance to the whole of Hebrew Scripture. In describing νόμος, Jesus refers to it as "your Law" (τῷ νόμῳ ὑμῶν). Stressing the human ownership of νόμος is a significant point. This compares with similar uses in John 8:17 and John 15:25. The Jews held Scripture to be authoritative and unchangeable. Jesus reminded them of this fact in verse 35 after He had quoted to them a passage from Scripture in which men were referred to as gods. In Psalm 82:6 men are called אֱלֹהִים . The context of the verse indicates that the Psalmist is identifying the rulers and judges of the nation as gods. The Brown, Driver, Briggs lexicon supports the use of human designation in the use of אֱלֹהִים .⁶ Following Jesus' argument, if men are called gods in "your Scripture," which you accept as authoritative, why cannot I be called the "Son of God" (vs. 36). The argument was on their level from their νόμος. From a legalistic perspective (the perspective of the Jews), Jesus stood vindicated. However, from the perspective of Jesus' divinity no justification was needed. But, the Jews having closed minds to the truth would not accept even argumentation from their own legalistic approach as adequate vindication. They were not deterred from continuing to seek Jesus' death (vs. 39). Their concept of νόμος was limited by the inability to interpret Jesus as the promised Messiah.

νόμος as Prophecy

John 15:25

ἀλλ' εἶνα πληρωθῇ ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ αὐτῶν
γεγραμμένος ὅτι
Ἐμίσησάν με ὡρεάν.

Note: *ἀλλά* is a strong adversative conjunction linking to the thought of verses 22-24. In translating, something like "they did this"⁷ should be inserted before *εἶνα* in order to provide a main verb which will summarize the action upon which the result clause is dependent.⁸ *ὁ... γε-γραμμένος* is an attributive participial phrase modifying *ὁ λόγος*. *ὅτι* introduces a quote from Scripture. The quoted line occurs in both Psalm 35:19 and 69:4.⁹ Psalm 69:4 is more descriptive of Jesus' situation.

In this passage *νόμος* is identified with written scripture (*ὁ... γεγραμμένος*) and fulfillment of prophecy (*πληρωθῆναι*). *νόμος* is described as belonging to those who hate Jesus (*τῷ νόμῳ αὐτῶν*; see vs. 24). Their hatred for Jesus results in a prophetic fulfillment (*πληρωθῆναι*) of scripture. However, the structure of the sentence (vs. 25) reveals more than a simple statement regarding prophetic fulfillment. Fulfillment brought with it self-incrimination for those who rejected Jesus. Beginning with verse 22 Jesus discusses the inexcusable nature of the hatred directed toward himself. Jesus identified their rejection of His teaching (vs. 22) and their rejection of the testimony of His works (vs. 24) as amounting to sin. Because they had both heard and seen, they had no excuse for their sin. By hating Jesus without cause, they had fulfilled the prophecy of their own Scripture (vs. 25). The degree of inexcusability rested not only upon rejection of Jesus' words and miracles, but also upon a prophetic fulfillment of that which they accepted, their Law. *νόμος* in this context is identified from the perspective of human ownership. Rather than referring to the Pentateuch, *νόμος* refers to the whole of Hebrew Scripture with a

special emphasis on the aspect of fulfillment of prophecy.

Matthew 11:13

πάντες γὰρ οἱ προφῆται καὶ ὁ νόμος
ἕως Ἰωάννου ἐπροφήτευσαν.

Note: ἐπροφήτευσαν is aorist and indicates a punctiliar perspective. προφῆται and νόμος are the subjects of the verb.

This passage bears strong resemblance to Luke 16:16.¹⁰ The primary emphasis of νόμος in Matthew 11:13 involves its function as prophecy. In this function it is joined by οἱ προφῆται. The content of the prophecy involves Christ (11:3), the kingdom of heaven (11:12), and John the Baptist (11:14). Jesus views νόμος as prophecy contained in the words of Scripture.

Luke 24:44

Εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς,
Οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι μου οὓς ἐλάλησα πρὸς ὑμᾶς
ἔτι ὡν σὺν ὑμῖν,
ὅτι δεῖ πληρωθῆναι πάντα
τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωϋσέως καὶ
τοῖς προφήταις καὶ
ψαλμοῖς
περὶ ἐμοῦ.

Note: γεγραμμένα as a perfect tense refers to completed Scripture. ἐν has three objects. πληρωθῆναι is aorist.

In Luke 24:44 Jesus identifies the three divisions of the Hebrew

Old Testament. (*ψαλμοῖς* is not a division but is the major book in the "Writings.")¹¹ In calling to mind all that He had taught (*λόγος*) the disciples, Jesus indicated that fulfillment (*πληρωθῆναι*) characterized the relationship between the Scripture (vs. 45, *γραφή*) and the events and teachings of His mission. All that had been written about Jesus (*περὶ ἐμοῦ*) in *νόμῳ*, *προφῆταις*, and *ψαλμοῖς* will end in fulfillment. *νόμος* shares the prophetic function of Scripture with the writings of the Prophets and the Psalms. Prophecy is the primary emphasis in Jesus' use of *νόμος* in Luke 24:44.

Chapter 3

EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW 5:17-20

Contextual Considerations

Immediate Context

The immediate context of Matthew 5:17-20 is Jesus' discourse commonly known as the "Sermon on the Mount." Matthew's record of the sermon encompasses nearly all of the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters. Verses 5:1-2 and 7:28-29 identify the audience as disciples and multitudes (ὄχλος). The actual sermon begins at 5:3 and concludes with 7:27.

In the sermon Jesus addresses a number of different topics. He commences His discourse by identifying the recipients of blessing (5:3-12). Following this Jesus addresses the function and value of "good works" displayed before men (5:13-16). Next comes the section comprising the major focus of consideration for exegesis (5:17-20). The transitional link between 5:17-20 and what has been said up to that point is partially obscure. However, transition can be deduced between verses 16 and 17 if one interpolates from the broader context of Scripture. Ground for interpolation is provided by the prohibition *μὴ νομίσητε* of verse 17. Inherent in the prohibition is the possibility that some might misconstrue Jesus' mission as being destructive to the validity of νόμος or προφῆται. Other scriptures show that indeed some did draw this conclusion (e.g., Jn. 5:16f.). By performing works/miracles on the Sabbath, Jesus incited the accusation from the Pharisees that He was breaking the law regarding the keeping of the Sabbath (e.g., Mt. 12:10f.). From Jesus'

Extended Context

Matthew's record of Jesus' sermon (Mt. 5:3-7:27) shows a remarkable degree of similarity to Luke's "Sermon on the Plain" (Lk. 6:17-49). Manson identifies eight parallel passages contained in both sermons.⁴ Along with the many similarities between the two sermons are a number of dissimilarities in expression.⁵ The Matthew passage of 5:17-20 does not have a corresponding parallel in Luke's sermon. However, a similarity of thought related to *νόμος* in Matthew 5:18 is found in Luke 16:17. The Lukan passage is treated as a separate study elsewhere.⁶

From the perspective of theological emphasis, expressed in the vocabulary of Matthew, two concepts are particularly pertinent to the study of Matthew 5:17-20. One of the expressions which characterize the Gospel is the phrase "kingdom of heaven" (*βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν*). The gospel which Jesus proclaims concerns the kingdom (Mt. 4:17, 23). Parables illustrate the nature of the kingdom (e.g., Mt. 20:1ff.). Matthew is the only Gospel in which the kingdom is described as the "kingdom of heaven."⁷ The term used in the other Gospels is "kingdom of God," but both represent the same concept. Matthew 5:17-20 contains two occurrences of the phrase. A second theological term characteristic of the Gospel and evident in the passage of study is the concept of fulfillment. Matthew shows special interest in identifying the relationship between the "old" and the "new." This is expressed by a number of citations of Old Testament prophecies to which he indicates how they are fulfilled (e.g., Mt. 1:22ff.; 2:15, 18). In Matthew 5:17-20 Jesus expresses His relationship to *νόμος* and *προφῆται* as fulfillment (vs. 17, *πληρῶσαι*). The author's interest in the concept is supported by Jesus' use of the term. Matthew weaves together the "old and the new." *νόμος* is

representative of the old order while Jesus inaugurates the new.

Textual Observations

- 17a Μὴ νομίζετε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι
τὸν νόμον ἢ
τοὺς προφῆτας·

Note: μὴ with the aorist subjunctive νομίζετε prohibits with the sense of stop before beginning.⁸ ἦλθον is an "ingressive aorist."⁹ καταλῦσαι with respect to νόμος is "culminative."¹⁰

- 17b οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι.

Note: οὐκ as a strong negative is "objective and final."¹¹

The same notes attached to ἦλθον and καταλῦσαι in 17a apply here as well. ἀλλά is a strong adversative. πληρῶσαι is an "ingressive aorist."¹²

- 18 ἀμήν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν,
ἕως ἂν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ,
ὧτα ἐν ἧ μία κεραία
οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου
ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται.

Note: ἀμήν adds emphasis. ἕως ἂν occurs twice and introduces preconditions. παρέλθῃ as an aorist subjunctive points to the contingency of a future culminative action.¹³ The same applies to γένηται. οὐ μὴ is a very emphatic negation.¹⁴

- 19a ὅς ἐάν οὖν λύσῃ μίαν τῶν ἐντολῶν τούτων
τῶν ἐλαχίστων καὶ διδάξῃ οὕτως τοὺς ἀνθρώπους,

ἐλάχιστος κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Note: ὅς ἐάν introduces the protasis of a conditional clause.¹⁵

λύση identifies a less serious action than καταλύσαι in verse 17.¹⁶ λύση is "culminative" while διδάξη is "ingressive."¹⁷ ἐλάχιστος receives emphasis by being first in the clause. κληθήσεται is future tense.

19b ὅς δ' ἂν ποιήσῃ καὶ διδάξῃ,
οὗτος μέγας κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν

Note: ὅς δ' ἂν begins another slightly adverse conditional clause. λύση... διδάξη (vs. 19a) and ποιήσῃ... διδάξῃ are balanced pairs. μέγας is opposite ἐλάχιστος (vs. 19a). κληθήσεται is repeated.

20a λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι
ἐὰν μὴ περισσεύσῃ ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη
πλεῖον τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων,

Note: ἐὰν μὴ is translatable "unless,"¹⁸ and begins the protasis of a conditional clause. πλεῖον is comparative, "more than."¹⁹

20b οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Note: οὐ μὴ is an emphatic negative which also occurs in verse 18. εἰσέλθητε is an "ingressive aorist," but being in the apodosis it represents a future condition.²⁰

Exegetical Discourse

νόμος and Ἰησοῦς

What is the relationship between νόμος and Ἰησοῦς? Jesus expected His audience of disciples and multitudes (5:1, 7:28) to ask that

question. In fact, the tense and mood of "μὴ νομίσῃτε" (vs. 17, aorist, subjunctive) expresses a prohibition with regard to one possible conclusion to such inquiry. To some it might have appeared that Jesus was on a collision course with νόμος. Before they could come to that conclusion, Jesus expressed a prohibition exhorting them not to consider it. Jesus wanted them mentally to eliminate any consideration that He came to "do away with, abolish, annul, or make invalid"²¹ (ἦλθον καταλῦσαι) the Law or the Prophets. The basis for the prohibition is stated in 17b as an objective fact (i.e., with the indicative mood). He came not to do away with (οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι) but to fulfill (ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι).

Both καταλῦσαι and πληρῶσαι are aorist infinitives. The first expresses more of a culminative act, and the second should be considered ingressive. The culminative aspect of καταλῦσαι is evident in the validity and stability which Jesus attached to the smallest elements of the Law (vs. 18, ὧτα and κεραία). The whole of νόμος was valid, and one did not destroy it a piece at a time. Attack on the least significant was attack on the whole. The ingressive character of πληρῶσαι involves the mission of Jesus. The fact that Jesus came was an act of fulfillment, but the completed process was still in progress. Only the beginning of fulfillment was accomplished in Jesus' coming.

Jesus anticipated only two conclusions which others might conceive regarding His relationship to νόμος, one negative and the other positive. The negative view saw Jesus as destructive to νόμος. Jesus negates this deduction at the start. Eliminating the possibility of a negative relationship between himself and νόμος, Jesus describes the

positive potential as fulfillment (*πληρῶσαι*). Arndt and Gingrich identify three possible interpretations for *πληρῶσαι* in this context: (1) fulfill in the sense of "do, carry out," or (2) "bring to full expression, show it forth in its true meaning," or (3) in the sense of "fill up, complete."²² Applying the first definition to the text, Jesus is saying that He did not come as a law-breaker but as a law-doer. The evidence of Jesus' compliance with the requirements of the Law is indicated in the extent of the opposition aimed at Him by the Pharisees. Their accusations were few and represented more differences of interpretation rather than disregard for the Law (e.g., Mt. 12:1-14). Applying the second definition to the context, Jesus fulfilled the Law by interpreting its meaning beyond the legalism of the day. Examples of this expanded interpretation follow in Matthew 5:21-48. In each case, Jesus begins by stating a legal requirement (5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) to which He then adds an interpretation intended to bring out the true intention of the legal principle. Fulfillment is achieved by Jesus in interpreting the spirit of the Law. Applying the third definition of *πληρῶσαι* to the text, the idea of completion is conveyed. In the examples noted above from Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus by virtue of His divine authority not only interpreted but expanded the demand for fulfilling the divine will, expressed by the phrase "But I say to you" (e.g., 5:22, *ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν*). Meeting the requirement for righteousness went beyond legal compliance. Jesus brought to completion the ethical requirement of *νόμος*, a requirement essential for entrance into the kingdom of heaven (5:20).²³ In relation to the text, the third definition of *πληρῶσαι* fits best. The other definitions, while expressing an accurate relationship between *νόμος* and *Ἰησοῦς*, derive their

validity more from the broader context of Scripture than this specific passage.

Jesus upholds the authority of the Law and at the same time does not lessen His own divine authority. This balance is powerfully conveyed in the Greek tenses used in verse 17. *μη νομίζετε* (with the weaker negative and the subjunctive) denies with hesitancy and uncertainty any thoughts that Jesus came to lessen in some way the authority embraced in Scripture (*τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας*). Following this He states in the indicative mood (with the stronger emphatic negative *οὐκ*) that He did not come to abolish the authority resident in Scripture but to fulfill Scripture. The contrast of the statement is heightened by the use of *ἀλλά* . Jesus did not view His mission (implied in *ἦλθον*) as being in any way a threat to Scripture but in fact the very fulfillment of Scripture. Rather than a conflict existing between Christ and Scripture, there is harmony. Jesus fulfilled the divine will expressed in the Old Testament in regard to both demand (the Law) and promise (prophecy).²⁴ What Jesus taught was not a lessening of the requirements of the Law but a redefinition and interpretation which both encompassed and surpassed the letter of the Law. Jesus gave the Law meaning which extended beyond legalism.

Jesus' high regard and support for the Law is evident in verse 18. *ἀμήν* at the beginning of the verse and the use of the indicative (*λέγω*) gives a note of seriousness to what Jesus says.²⁵ Jesus identifies in this verse what must take place before even the smallest change will occur in the Law. Two preconditions are identified and represented by the use of the aorist subjunctive. One involves the "passing away" (*παρέλθῃ*) of heaven and earth, and the other involves

the "coming to be" (*γένεσθαι*) of all things. There seems to be a possibility that Jesus was not considering two conditions that would allow for a change in the Law, but was only stating the same condition from two perspectives. The passing away of heaven and earth would involve the reversal of creation (see Gen. 1:1ff.). This in an eschatological framework consummates history (see Rev. 21:1ff.). The same climax of history could also be viewed as that point in time when all things which are destined to occur have come to completion. Since the major thrust of Jesus' teaching in verses 17-20 is to uphold the validity of Scripture, it seems unlikely that He is anticipating the time of its demise prior to the end of time. He states that the focus of His mission is not to do away with the Law but to fulfill it. If Jesus' mission posed no threat to the Law, it is inconceivable that any other occurrence should set the condition for invalidation. Jesus upholds the validity and unchanging character of the Law. Creation itself will come to an end prior to the smallest change occurring in the Law. That point is strongly emphasized by Jesus in the placement of *ἰῶτα ἐν ἡμῖα κεραία* before the verb²⁶ and the emphatic use of *οὐ μή*.²⁷ While the extent of changelessness in the Law is tied to the continuance of creation, the degree of changelessness is indicated by the *ἰῶτα* and the *κεραία*. The *ἰῶτα* is the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet and would be equivalent to the Hebrew *yōd*, the smallest letter in its alphabet.²⁸ What is meant exactly by *κεραία* is debatable, but the essence of its use by Jesus is in reference to the most minute detail.²⁹ Jesus supports not only the durability but the unchangeability of the Law. *νόμος* and *Ἰησοῦς* complement rather than contradict one another.

νόμος and ἐντολή

Jesus, having established the stability and validity of νόμος in verse 18, supports the authority of νόμος in verse 19. The authority of νόμος is resident in the commandments (ἐντολῶν) of the Law. The preeminence of commandment in connection with the Law is indicated in Jesus' uses of νόμος. Jesus uses the word twice in Matthew 5:17-20. Both occurrences have a related connotation but a little different emphasis. In verse 17 νόμος appears in conjunction with προφῆται. The Greek particle ἥ connects the two words. The function of ἥ in this instance is to connect "related and similar terms, where one can take the place of the other or one supplements the other."³⁰ νόμος and προφῆται used in this manner represented an accepted way of referring to the whole of Old Testament Scripture.³¹ The second occurrence of νόμος is found in verse 18. Here it appears without reference to the Prophets. Normally when this occurs in the Gospels, the reference is to the Pentateuch.³² The Pentateuch contained the divine imperatives relating to human conduct. Jesus makes reference to those imperatives in verse 18, and this is supported by his use of ἐντολῶν in verse 19. Not even the least commandment was to be relaxed nor was the smallest letter to be altered in the Law.

Both Jesus and His audience would have been well aware of the preeminence of the Law in God's relationship to Israel. The commandments of the Law were the standards of obedience expected by God. The Law was sacred and maintained an integral part in Israel's existence. It was to people who had this high regard for the Law that Jesus spoke the words of Matthew 5:17-20. Jesus knew that His audience acknowledged the divine character of the Law, and it was with this knowledge that Jesus showed

care not to appear as an innovator of heresy.

κόμος and ἡ βασιλεία
τῶν οὐρανῶν

Jesus presupposed the desire on the part of His audience to enter the "kingdom of heaven." Some of the benefits and blessings afforded to citizens of the "kingdom" were enumerated by Jesus in verses 3-12. Citizenship was desirable, but entry was conditional. A person's relationship to the commandments of the Law was critical not only to his inclusion but also to his position within the kingdom. Discussion on this point begins with verse 19.

Verse 19 begins with the hypothetical pronoun *ὅς ἐάν*.³³ He is described as one who "destroys, brings to an end, abolishes, or does away with"³⁴ (*λύσῃ*) one of the least of the commandments. The use of *λύσῃ* instead of *καταλύσας* (vs. 17) indicates the lesser degree of action.³⁵ In this change of verbs resides the lesser authority of man to undermine the Law. Condemnation comes upon a person not only for "doing away with" the commandment but also in his teaching others to do likewise. This person will be called least (*κληθήσεται ἐλάχιστος*) in the "kingdom of heaven." A parallel relationship exists between annulling the least commandment and being called least in the kingdom of heaven. *ἐλάχιστος* means in both situations "very small, quite unimportant, insignificant."³⁶ Two questions arise from the double use of *ἐλάχιστος*. What does "least" mean in reference to commandments, and what does "least" mean in reference to the "kingdom?"

With regard to the "least" commandment, the reference is to the Ten Commandments as those occupying the smallest amount of space.³⁷ The reason for this conclusion rests primarily upon the significance given

by the Rabbis to the keeping of all the commandments. A person was guilty of breaking the commandments regardless of the value placed upon one commandment in relation to any other. No ranking in the kingdom of heaven is intended in this text. Whoever breaks one of the Ten Commandments will not be least in the kingdom according to rank, he will not be included at all. Verse 19 follows a rabbinic form of argument for supporting the authority of every commandment in the Law and the consequent seriousness attached to the breaking of even the seemingly most insignificant.³⁸

The person who does away with the commandment is contrasted with the person who obeys (ποιήσῃ) and teaches (διδάξῃ) obedience. δέ serves as the adversative conjunction. The consequences of the first action lead to the position of being least in the kingdom. The reward of the second results in being called great in the kingdom. Behind this whole discussion of "leastness" and "greatness" in the kingdom of heaven rests the theological importance of the kingdom. The kingdom embraces God's plan of salvation for man.³⁹ Inclusion in the kingdom is synonymous with the receipt of salvation. Therefore, one would wish to be called great in the kingdom rather than least. When it comes to a person's own salvation, few if any would intentionally risk being excluded by only attempting to meet the minimal requirements for "being called least."

Moving on to verse 20 Jesus addresses directly (in the indicative mood) an added word about those who will be included in the kingdom. ὅτι introduces a condition. ἐὰν μὴ with the subjunctive verb περισσεύσῃ indicates the hypothetical nature of the condition. The requirement is for righteousness which exceeds (πλεόν) that of the

scribes and the Pharisees in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. The strength of this requirement is forcefully conveyed by the emphatic prohibition *οὐ μὴ*.⁴⁰ To understand what Jesus meant by this statement, the level of righteousness attached to the scribes and Pharisees must first be established. Both were ideologically devoted to the preservation of the Law. The scribes were primarily concerned with the business of teaching and interpreting the Law.⁴¹ The Pharisees were characterized by a strict adherence to the legal requirements of the Law.⁴² The requirement for righteousness which exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees is not intended to be an attack against them.⁴³ In verses 21-48 Jesus teaches that meeting the legal requirement of the Law is insufficient. Legalism characterized the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees toward achieving righteousness. Righteousness according to Jesus went beyond legalism to include not only strict outward conformance but also a right attitude. Murder was wrong according to the scribes and Pharisees (vs. 21). But, Jesus extended the circle of application to include not only the act but also the attitude (vs. 22). Entry into the kingdom required more than legal conformity, it required an inward conformity as well. Only the person whose righteousness reaches this level will find entry into the kingdom of heaven. The fulfillment which Jesus brought to the Law in no way abrogated it but established it on a deeper level, the level of inward obedience. The lifestyle Jesus presents to mankind involves continued obedience to *νόμος* both outwardly and within. Entry into the kingdom of heaven requires it.

Chapter 4

EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW 7:12

Contextual Considerations

Immediate Context

No strong link in thought exists between Matthew 7:12 and the verses immediately preceding or following. Verses 7:13-14 describe in contrasting figurative speech two alternatives available to mankind and the imperative to choose the way which leads to life. The content of the verses represents a change of topic from the ethical discussion of verse 12 to the process of choosing a personal lifestyle. Logically it is not necessary to link verse 12 with verses 13-14. Almost the same degree of independence exists in relation to those verses immediately preceding the 12th verse as those following. Verses 7-11 form a unified thought related to prayer. Jesus emphasizes the importance of making requests known to God and the resulting confidence one can have in God's goodness. The focus is upon man's relationship toward his fellowman. Although there is no necessary logical connection between verses 7-11 and verse 12, the author ties the two thoughts together with the inferential conjunction *οὕτως*.¹ This serves to make the example of God's goodness in dealing with persons who make requests from Him (vs. 11) as an example or the basis for men to treat each other in similar manner. The author has taken two distinct thoughts (vv. 7-11 and vs. 12) and has tied them together so that the one (vv. 7-11) enlightens and contributes to the meaning of the other (vs. 12). T.W. Manson² and other form critics³

view this connection of thought as an interpretation added by the author of the Gospel rather than a connection directly attributable to Jesus. They point out that verse 12 appears to be in a more natural context as it is found in Luke 6:31. In that context the verse follows the parallel of Matthew 5:42.⁴ The form critics may be right in their contention, but the exegesis of the verse (vs. 12) is affected little whether or not it be considered in or out of its assumed original context. The basic meaning remains the same.

Extended Context

Matthew 7:12 occurs in the broader context of the "Sermon on the Mount." The verse is commonly referred to as the "Golden Rule." A more natural location for the verse would be within the context of Matthew 5:38-48.⁵ In that context, Jesus instructs His audience to "turn the other cheek" and to "love your enemies." However these instructions do not attain the universal principle which is enunciated in the "Golden Rule." One commentator views this verse as "the capstone" of the whole sermon.⁶ Whether one agrees with this conclusion or not, the commentator is right in recognizing the importance of the theme in the "Sermon." Jesus in a number of ways throughout the "Sermon" focuses upon the proper character of human relationships. Matthew 7:12 elucidates a principle which is well suited to the context of the "Sermon on the Mount."

Textual Observations

12a πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἐὰν θέλητε
 ἵνα ποιῶσιν ὑμῖν οἱ ἄνθρωποι,

Note: The whole clause is the protasis of a conditional statement.⁷ ἵνα introduces a substantival clause which is in opposition with πάντα.⁸

12b οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιεῖτε αὐτοῖς.

Note: The relative adverb οὕτως reflects the condition of the protasis in the apodosis.⁹

12c οὗτος γάρ ἐστιν ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται.

Note: γάρ is an illative conjunction introducing a reason.¹⁰

οὗτος refers to the thought expressed in the preceding main clause of the sentence.¹¹

Exegetical Discourse

νόμος and οἱ προφῆται

The occurrence in Matthew 7:12 of νόμος in conjunction with οἱ προφῆται reflects Jesus' conception of νόμος. Both words together form the compound predicate nominative of the near demonstrative pronoun οὗτος. This indicates that Jesus was not considering νόμος or οἱ προφῆται individually but as a single unit of thought. Reference to Scripture as a whole fits this formula.¹² Recognizing the unity in conception of νόμος and προφῆται, however, does not identify the specific aspect of Scripture Jesus had in mind. This must be derived by looking at the content of 12a (v., "Textual Observations"). 12a functions as the antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun οὗτος. The content of 12a relates directly to Jesus' conception of νόμος and προφῆται. The theme of 12a involves interpersonal relationships, more specifically the guiding principle of those relationships. Focus upon this theme occupies the center of Jesus' conception of Scripture. The validity of this conception is obvious to the student of the Old Testament, for both the Pentateuch and the Prophets deal quite extensively with the subject.

The manner in which Scripture addresses the subject of interpersonal relationships underlines Jesus' view of the authority with which *νόμος* is determinative of human conduct. The "Ten Commandments" express the negative boundary of God's imperatives for human relationships, "Thou shalt not...." The prophets such as Micah and Amos foretold the approaching doom resulting from disobedience to the demands of social justice. Jesus' audience may be assumed to have been well aware of the authority of Scripture, a logical presupposition. Jesus himself recognized Scripture as authoritative and so indicates that position by pointing to Scripture (12b) as supporting the proposition of 12a. Jesus does not consider himself to have presented anything other than the essence of scriptural teaching and requirement. Because Jesus appeals to Scripture, it may be concluded that He both recognized and upheld the authority of Scripture in its broader conception and in its inclusion of *νόμος*.

νόμος and *αὐτοῦς*

From the foregoing discussion it has been asserted that Jesus recognized the authority inherent in *νόμος* as part of Scripture. Along with this recognition it may be asserted that Jesus was aware of the authority that rested in himself as the Son of God. The ground for this assertion rests upon Jesus having begun His formal ministry (Mt. 4:17). In Matthew 7:12 there is evidence of interaction between these two positions of authority. In the interaction, Jesus plays the role of interpreter and innovator.

As interpreter Jesus was able to distill a major theme from Scripture and state it in positive and concise terminology. Instead of

a number of separate guidelines for interpersonal relations, Jesus gave one which He claimed met all the requirements of Scripture. To make this kind of interpretive evaluation required authority. By human standards such authority can come only with long and studious examination of the source documents. No doubt Jesus was a scholar par excellence of Scripture. But He had another source of authority of even greater significance. He was intimately related to the divine originator of Scripture. Jesus as the Son of God spoke with the intimate knowledge of knowing the very mind of God the one who had inspired scripture. This was the real source of His authority. He had authority which superseded the authority of Scripture, but He did not contradict it. He was able to summarize the essence of Scripture into a concise statement which did justice to Scripture and at the same time spoke cogently of those truths to His audience.

While the basic message of Jesus is founded in the essence of Scripture, Jesus also may be viewed as innovator. The summation of interpersonal relationships into the "Golden Rule" finds no exact parallel in early literature. The rule appears in negative terms widely, but Jesus is the only one to state it in a positive form.¹³ Jesus changed the focus of ethical action from the limitation of action toward another, while reflecting upon that which one would not want done to himself, to the positive initiative of doing to others the same kind of things one would like to have done to himself. When a person follows the guidelines of the "Golden Rule," he will not only fulfill the requirements of *Logos* and Scripture but he will have exceeded those requirements. The new rule for conduct deals not with limitations but with possibilities for action. Jesus was the innovator of a rule for living which included the "old"

while at the same time superseding it.

νόμος and ἄνθρωπος

Both Jesus and His audience would have acknowledged the authority which the divine imperatives of Scripture held for man. *νόμος* was one repository of those imperatives. Jesus' Jewish audience knew that they were obligated to obey those imperatives. But, the authority behind Jesus' teachings would not have been so evident to them. Jesus showed great persuasive wisdom in tying His teachings to that which they already acknowledged. *νόμος* represented the minimum requirement. The "Golden Rule" calls for a maximum potential. The authority behind this new "Rule" rested in the divine nature of Jesus. Christians recognize this authority as making the "Golden Rule" applicable to all people.

The Greek grammar of the "Rule" reinforces the character of its application for mankind. The fact that Jesus mentions it as summarizing the essence of *ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται* reflects the great significance which God places upon man's relation to his fellowman. The inferential conjunction *οὕτως*¹⁴ relates the goodness of God toward man on the vertical plane (vs. 11) as the basis for man's relationships on the horizontal plane (vs. 12a). The subjunctive verbs of the protasis give the clause a hypothetical mood. It is not how a person is actually treated that serves as the rule for treating others; but, the guiding principle is how in one's own mind he would like to be treated by others. The first step of action is to get a picture in mind of how one would like to be treated by other men. Then he applies this in guiding his action toward others. The rule applies to all actions (*πάντα ... ὅσα ἐάν*) and to all occasions (indicated by the present tense of the subjunctive verbs *θέλητε* and *ποιῶσιν*). The relative adverb *οὕτως*,

"in this manner,"¹⁵ introduces the apodosis clause. *καί* is used adjunctively¹⁶ to emphasize the application of the principle expressed in the protasis. Emphasis in the apodosis is upon the action of the people whom Jesus is addressing, *ὑμεῖς*. The verb *πορεύετε* is more likely to be in the imperative mood than the indicative. This would be in keeping with Jesus' repeated use of the imperative within the "Sermon on the Mount" (e.g., Mt. 7:7). The force of the principle of action is expressed in the imperative mood and is contingent upon mental reflection, actions are first to be reflected upon. Reflection involves hypothetically placing oneself in the position of receiving the action he intends to give. All actions are to measure up to what he would want to receive himself from others. The profound significance of this rule rests not upon restrictions of conduct but upon unrestricted possibilities. It is obvious that most people would like others to treat them with respect, love, friendship, and a number of other desirable attitudes and actions. The "Golden Rule" takes the ceiling off of doing good to one another. Jesus issued this imperative to guide the conduct of His audience. As an imperative, it rests upon both the authority of Scripture and the authority of Jesus' divinity.

Chapter 5

EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW 12:1-8

Contextual Considerations

Immediate Context

Matthew 12:1-8 records the first of a series of incidents in which the Pharisees oppose Jesus (Mt. 12:1-50). The first two incidents (Mt. 12:1-8 and 12:9-21) involve controversy concerning the Sabbath.¹ In Matthew 12:1-8 Jesus' disciples are charged with violating the Sabbath restriction against work. In the following passage, verses 9-14, the Pharisees attack Jesus for healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath. Jesus justifies His action in both cases, and His argument follows a similar pattern in both cases. In response to His accusers, Jesus addresses rhetorical questions to them which anticipate positive agreement, *οὐ* with the indicative (vv. 3,4,5,11).² The answers to the rhetorical questions form the foundation of Jesus' argument. In the controversy, the central issue focuses upon what is acceptable activity upon the Sabbath in light of the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy (Ex. 20:8-11). The Pharisees had one interpretation but Jesus another.

Extended Context

Both Mark (Mk. 2:23-28) and Luke (Lk. 6:1-5) contain parallel passages to the incident recorded in Matthew 12:1-8.³ *νόμος*, the key word in this study, occurs only in the Matthew passage. The actual speaking of Jesus is much longer in Matthew with several quotes included in Jesus' reply to the Pharisees which are not recorded in the other

Gospels. All three Gospels mention the incident concerning David, but only Matthew makes reference to the priestly functions required to be performed upon the Sabbath (vs. 5) and the quote by Jesus of Hosea 6:6 (vs. 7). Mark includes a passage peculiar to his account that quotes Jesus as saying, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."⁴ This statement is enlightening as possibly the governing principle in Jesus' interpretation of regulations aimed at keeping the Sabbath. A similarity between the three Gospel accounts is found in the closing remarks of Jesus: "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."⁵ In comparing the parallel passages in Mark and Luke with Matthew 12:1-8, neither version provides information directly related to the subject of νόμος. Their main contribution relates to understanding the regulations concerning the Sabbath.

Textual Observations

- 1a Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἐπορεύθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς
τοῖς σάββασιν
διὰ τῶν σπορίμων.

Note: The three adverbial modifiers identify the time, day, and location of Jesus' action.

- 1b οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπείνασαν,
καὶ
ἤρξαντο τίλλειν...
καὶ
ἐσθίειν ... στάχυν.

Note: ἐπείνασαν precedes and motivates the actions of the following verb forms.

- 2a οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἰδόντες εἶπαν αὐτῷ,

Note: The aorist participle ἰδόντες indicates the Pharisees were "observing" prior to addressing Jesus.

- 2b Ἰδὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ σου ποιοῦσιν
ὃ οὐκ ἔξεστιν ποιεῖν ἐν σαββάτῳ.

Note: The fact that the disciples belong to Jesus is emphasized by the subject preceding the verb. The action of the disciples is emphasized by the repetition of the verb form (ποιοῦσιν ... ποιεῖν).

- 3a ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε

Note: οὐκ with the indicative mood assumes that the Pharisees indeed have read.⁶

- 3b τί ἐποίησεν Δαυὶδ ὅτε ἐπείνασεν
καὶ
οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ;

Note: The verbs of the accusation, πορεύω (2b), and of the physical need of the disciples, πεινάω (1b), parallel the description of David's actions (ἐποίησεν ... ἐπείνασεν).

- 4a πῶς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ
καὶ
τοὺς ἄρτους τῆς προθέσεως ἔφαγον,

Note: The subject is singular for the leading verb but plural for the trailing verb. A form of the verb ἐσθίω occurs here and in verse 1b.

- 4b ὁ οὐκ ἐξὸν ἦν αὐτῷ φαγεῖν
οὐδὲ
τοῖς μετ' αὐτοῦ,

εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἑρεῦσιν μόνοις;

Note: The question mark reflects the continuation of the rhetorical questioning posed by Jesus in 3a, and again He expects an affirmative answer. A form of the verb, ἐσθίω is repeated again. ἑξὼν parallels ἕξεσιν in verse 2b.

5a ἢ οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι

Note: The question of 3a is repeated for a second argument of defense.

5b τοῖς σαββασιν... ἐν τῷ ἑρῶ...
οἱ ἑρεῖς... τὸ σαββατον βεβηλοῦσιν
καὶ
ἀναίτιοι εἰσιν;

Note: Jesus picked an illustration in defense that addressed the major point of the accusation by the Pharisees, that the disciples were working on the Sabbath (see 2b; *σαββασιν*). The effect of the priestly action (*βεβηλοῦσιν*) corresponds to the charge brought against the disciples.

6a λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι

Note: The present tense marks a change in Jesus' argument. He now addresses the accusers.

6b τοῦ ἑροῦ μείζον ἐστὶν ὧδε.

Note: That which is greater than the temple is present while Jesus speaks and is neuter in gender. ἑροῦ links verses 5b and 6b.

7a εἰ δὲ ἐγνώκετε τί ἐστὶν,
Ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν,

Note: ἐγνώκετε stands in sharp contrast to the rhetorical questions of 3a and 5a (οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε).

7b οὐκ ἂν κατεδικάσατε τοὺς ἀναγνώστους.

Note: οὐκ is decisive in character. The innocent are both the priests (5b) and the disciples.

8 κύριος γάρ ἐστιν τοῦ σαββάτου
ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

Note: γάρ as a conjunction sums up the basis for the innocence of the disciples.

Exegetical Discourse

νόμος and σαββάτου

As a preliminary to understanding how Jesus makes use of νόμος, it will be helpful to explain the situation He faced. He and His disciples were walking through a field on the Sabbath, when motivated by hunger, the disciples proceeded to pluck and to eat the grain. Some Pharisees, who were observing the disciples, saw the action of the disciples as a violation of the fourth commandment (Ex. 20:8-11) which prohibited work on the Sabbath. The actual taking and eating of the grain was permitted in the Law (Deut. 23:25), but the accusation of the Pharisees centered upon it being done on the Sabbath (vv. 1a, 2b). The Pharisees focused upon the act rather than the motivation leading up to the act. Matthew in his retelling of the incident rightly precedes the act with a verb describing the motivation. Work for the sake of work was not the motivation of the disciples but hunger, physical need. It was failure to consider the motivation behind the act which brought rebuke from Jesus upon the Pharisees (Mt. 12:7). A combination of

prejudice against Jesus and predetermined legal casuistry blinded the Pharisees to more important considerations.

Although the real problem confronting Jesus in the charge of the Pharisees was rigidity and coldness in their attitude, Jesus responded to their charge with an appeal to Scripture. Jesus answered the accusers with two rhetorical questions asking them if they have not read about David and the priests. The expected answer is "yes, we have read." In the case of David, Jesus calls their attention to an incident in which he did what was "unlawful" for him to do. The corresponding points of comparison between David's actions and the actions of the disciples are shown as follows:

<u>Disciples</u>	<u>David</u>
Motivation: ἐπεινάσαν (1b)	Motivation: ἐπεινάσαν (3b)
Action: ἐσθίειν (1b)	Action: ἐφαγον (4a)
Violation: Working on Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11)	Violation: Eating Shewbread (Lev. 24:5-9)
Verdict: Guilty, according to Pharisees (2b)	Verdict: Justified, according to Scripture (I Sa. 21:1-6)

Jesus points out that the motivation in the two cases is identical, and the corresponding actions which followed also were identical. Both the disciples and David violated a legal regulation. The verdict passed upon the disciples for their action by the Pharisees was "guilty." Jesus assumed that the Pharisees would not be so hard upon one of Israel's greatest national heroes. In fact, according to Scripture (I Sa. 21:1-6), the priest gave the bread to David because he needed bread for a special commission from the king (I Sa. 21:2), and because David assured

the priest that he and his men had kept themselves holy (I Sa. 21:4,5). On the basis of these two considerations, the prohibition against eating the bread was lifted. David and his men were justified because of a higher need or principle. Jesus saw that a basic element of the higher principle which justified both David and His disciples rested upon the need for food. This appeal to the precedent set by David from the "Prophets" (Samuel is part of the prophetic tradition in the Hebrew Bible)⁷ served as one argument in vindicating His disciples. The weightier argument comes in Jesus' appeal to *νόμος*, the most authoritative division of Hebrew Scripture.⁸

In the appeal to *νόμος*, Jesus once again asked a rhetorical question which expected an affirmative answer. The charge against the disciples involved the breaking of the fourth commandment regarding the prohibition against work on the Sabbath. Jesus called attention to the fact that along with the prohibition against work, the Pentateuch required priests to work on the Sabbath in order to prepare and offer sacrifices (Nu. 28:9-10). This amounts to a conflict within the Law regarding the performance of work upon the Sabbath. The Pharisees would have been aware of this conflict and the pattern followed in settling such cases was called gal wahomer.⁹ This was a well known rabbinic hermeneutic for deriving a rule from Scripture. It recognized that some aspects of the Law carried greater weight than others. In the situation of the priests, the performance of the ritual of sacrifice was weightier than the prohibition against work. In cases of conflict T.W. Manson says "The general principle for interpretation of the Law is that positive commandments for which a definite time is prescribed take precedence of the Sabbath law if the two happen to clash."¹⁰ Manson also points out

that the many rules which developed concerning the keeping of the Sabbath were derived by interpolation and were passed down through oral tradition. The majority of Sabbath regulations consisted of "ancient custom hallowed by long observance."¹¹ By appealing to *νόμος*, Jesus called in question not the validity of the Sabbath commandment but the principles upon which the Pharisees had constructed their regulations regarding the keeping of the Sabbath. The Pharisees failed properly to identify the weightier aspects of *νόμος* and the situation involving the disciples. Jesus elaborates upon these two deficiencies in verses 6-8.

Part of the Pharisees' problem was that they had failed to recognize that something greater than the temple was present (vs. 6). Work was justified for the priests because it was part of the temple worship. Jesus identified the actions of the disciples within a context that exceeded the weight of temple service. T.W. Manson identifies this context as service in the Kingdom of God.¹² Service in the kingdom was greater service than service in the Temple. It was service which took precedence over Sabbath rules. This identification of the Kingdom fits with the neuter gender of *μείζων*, a use consistent with the centrality of the Kingdom in Jesus' ministry.¹³ Jesus and His disciples were busily involved in the work of the Kingdom. This dedication may have precipitated the need to pluck grain on the Sabbath to satisfy their hunger. However, a major problem with the identification of *μείζων* with the kingdom is the feminine gender of *βασιλεία*. While identification of "something greater than the temple" fits appropriately with "kingdom work," conclusive evidence for correlation is lacking. In any case, for the sake of Jesus' argument it is only necessary to recognize;

first, something could be greater than the temple (2 Chr. 6:18; Is. 66:1-2; Mt. 12:41-42); and secondly, it was present. Because it was present and because the disciples were involved in it; they were justified by virtue of its weightier character.

The vagueness of *μεῖζον* was probably intended by Jesus. It fits with the references to himself in the third person as the "Son of Man." Because the Pharisees were blinded by their prejudice in perceiving Jesus as the Messiah, they also failed to recognize that which was "greater than the temple." Their goal was to discredit Jesus. If Jesus had been more explicit, He would have served their purposes more than His own. By calling their attention to an exception to the fourth commandment, one which they would support, Jesus presented a challenge to the Pharisees to apply the gal wahomer hermeneutic to the present situation. He was challenging them to recognize who He was and what He had come to do. But, their lack of belief blinded them to those realities as exemplified in Matthew 12:24 when they accused Him of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul. In Jesus' use of *νόμος* there was more motivation than trying to justify His disciples' actions. Jesus was communicating to the Pharisees on a level which they understood. He began with what they knew, the Law, and challenged them to accept that which was "greater than the Temple." Used in this context, *νόμος* became a tool, a point of reference, useful in communicating Jesus' message.

νόμος and Ἰησοῦς

Jesus upheld the authority of *νόμος* in this passage (Mt. 12:1-8). As was mentioned earlier, *νόμος* was the most authoritative division of Hebrew Scripture. In answering the Pharisees, Jesus conspicuously avoided saying anything which could be taken to invalidate the

fourth commandment. By pointing to an exception (vs. 5) to the commandment, He sustained the authority of *νόμος* by finding support for the vindication of His disciples within the context of *νόμος*.¹⁴ In this way Jesus avoided a conflict between His own divine authority and the authority of *νόμος*. The precedent for exception was contained within *νόμος*. Jesus applied the principles involved in the vindication of the priests to the situation of His disciples and found them innocent. It was an innocence not by special exception but by the introduction of greater evidence. The nature of the work done by the priests in the Temple was surpassed by the task of which the disciples were a part. *νόμος* remained as authoritative as ever. The only change involved the introduction of new data, new data in the form of the revelation of a new stage in God's dealings with humanity as inaugurated by the presence of Jesus Christ into the world.

To the Pharisees, this new information and its application in the light of their tradition and understanding of *νόμος* must have been quite threatening. Their failure to accept Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God conditioned their acceptance of what Jesus was trying to teach them. To them, Jesus must have seemed to be in direct conflict with the authority of *νόμος*; but to the believer, harmony rather than conflict could be seen. Jesus was working with levels of authority rather than conflicts of authority. It is only in poor organization that the various components of authority conflict with one another. It would be incomprehensible to view God as initiating this kind of chaos. Jesus possessed authority and *νόμος* possessed authority; neither overruled the other. This is shown in Jesus' response to the Pharisees. The Pharisees were probably expecting conflict so they could discredit Jesus.

Jesus skillfully avoided a confrontation of authority in a way which preserved both the validity of *νόμος* and also introduced His own authority. Jesus' own claim to authority is stated in verse 8.

Jesus was speaking of himself when He stated that the Son of Man was Lord of the Sabbath.¹⁵ The position of lordship by definition implies authority. It is significant that Jesus did not claim lordship over *νόμος* but over the Sabbath. Once again Jesus avoided authority conflict with *νόμος*. The basis of Jesus' authority over the Sabbath rested upon the comparison drawn in verse 6. The priests were obeying a precept within the Law which was more urgent than the injunction against work. Their tasks on the Sabbath contributed to the positive side of the fourth commandment, that of keeping it a holy day (Ex. 20:8). They were performing work not for their own benefit but in the service of God. Jesus as the Son of God sent into the world to bring about its redemption was engaged in the highest and greatest of service to God. Jesus worked not for himself but only in behalf of God's plan for His life. He was a "holy man" on a "holy mission." With those credentials, He could do no injustice to a "holy day," the Sabbath. Jesus claimed lordship over the Sabbath but not over *νόμος*.

νόμος and *προφῆται*

The hermeneutic which Jesus illustrated regarding *νόμος* has been mentioned previously. Jesus called attention to the fact that within the Pentateuch there were commands which appeared contradictory. When this occurred, the higher requirement took precedence. Jesus applied the same principle to all of God's requirements, as illustrated in His quotation from the "Prophets" (Mt. 12:7; Ho. 6:6). The quotation highlights the problem characterized by the accusation of the Pharisees.

Their problem was based not upon inadequate knowledge of what was written in Scripture (the question *οὐκ ἀνέγνωντε*, vv. 3,5) but upon their failure to prioritize properly the requirements of Scripture. Jesus points out this deficiency with the pluperfect tense of "*εἰ δὲ ἐγνώκετε*" (vs. 7a). That which they should have known was the priority requirement found in Hosea 6:6.

Looking at the quote in the context of the Old Testament illuminates the charge Jesus brought against the Pharisees. The quote came from a passage in which God was addressing the divided kingdom of Israel and Judah (Ho. 6:4-6). In verse 4 God expressed exasperation about the transitory character of the people's loyalty to Him. The nature of that loyalty is described by the word *אֱמֻנָה*. Their *אֱמֻנָה* was deficient. It compared to the loyalty shown by Gomer toward Hosea (Ho. 1:2). The people still were engaged in the pretext of worshipping God through the offering of sacrifices, but their *אֱמֻנָה* was like a morning mist which quickly disappeared as the sun rose in the morning (vv. 4,6). Hypocrisy characterized the people's worship of God.¹⁶ They were not lacking in the area of sacrifice; that was not the problem. The problem was with their loyalty. God's judgment was that their *אֱמֻנָה* was more to be desired than sacrifice. He did not invalidate the value of sacrifice, but He prioritized *אֱמֻנָה* above sacrifice. *אֱמֻנָה* defined in the context of Hosea 6:4,6 refers to "covenant loyalty;" although, another aspect of *אֱמֻנָה* involves the concept of "mercy."¹⁷ Both meanings are pertinent. Loyalty to God plus mercy shown to a fellowman is more preferable than sacrifice by itself.

The preference of *אֱמֻנָה* over sacrifice was acknowledged by Jesus, and He uses the quote from Hosea for the purposes of His own argument.

The Pharisees demonstrated great zeal for the Sabbath regulations, as shown in their condemnation of the disciples; however, they failed to demonstrate the higher quality of *ἐλεος* or *τὴν*. They demonstrated a lack of "mercy" by failing to consider the physical need of the disciples, their hunger; and, they demonstrated a lack of "covenant loyalty" by rejecting Jesus as the Messiah.¹⁸ Sabbath regulations were of greater importance to them. Misplaced priorities were at the root of their problem.

Jesus illustrated by reference to *νόμος* and by reference to the "Prophets" that some divine imperatives ranked in importance over others. This did not negate the validity of the lower imperative except as required to accomplish the higher. In Matthew 12:1-8 Jesus taught that proper application of prioritizing made work on the Sabbath permissible for meeting physical need. Jesus also taught that the practice of showing mercy toward another surpassed the requirement for keeping the Sabbath and for the offering of sacrifices. In application, one may break the Sabbath or sacrificial requirement of *νόμος* for the purpose of showing mercy. Jesus does not reveal in this passage every priority rating within *νόμος*, but He does establish a hermeneutic which allows conflicts between divine imperatives to be reconciled. *νόμος* and *προφῆται* are both instrumental in discovering God's requirements and priorities.

Chapter 6

EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW 22:34-40

Contextual Considerations

Immediate Context

The incident with the lawyer recorded in Matthew 22:34 is one example of an incident in which Jesus was quizzed by opponents. Just prior to the incident with the lawyer, Matthew records two other encounters. Verses 15-22 involve the question of paying tribute to Caesar. Following this, the Sadducees question Him about the nature of the resurrection (vv. 22-33). Then comes the passage related to the Law (vv. 34-40). Finishing up the series is a passage in which Jesus questions the Pharisees and brings to an end the efforts by His opponents to discredit Him (vv. 41-46).¹ In each of these incidents, Matthew records Jesus as having the final and decisive reply to the questions addressed to Him. Jesus avoided the traps placed before Him in such an impressive manner that He finally put His testers to silence (vs. 46). The unity among the various passages rests in the parallel attempts to trap Jesus with words. Beyond this unifying element, each passage centers upon a specific question and represents a separate unit of thought.

Extended Context

The encounter with the lawyer as recorded in Matthew (22:34-40) has somewhat similar incidents recorded in Mark (12:28-34) and in Luke (10:25-28). In all three passages quotations are taken from Deuteronomy

6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. Jesus quotes the verses in the Matthew and Mark accounts, but the lawyer quotes the passages in Luke's version of the incident. In each case the emphasis of the Gospel writer adds a slightly different flavor to the story.

Textual Observations

34 Οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ἐφίμωσεν
τοὺς Σαδδουκαίους συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό.

Note: The action of the aorist participle ἀκούσαντες denotes the event which precipitated the gathering together. The substance of their hearing involved Jesus' silencing of the Sadducees (vv. 23-33). ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό refers to the incident.

35 καὶ ἐπηρώτησεν εἰς ἐξ αὐτῶν
νομικὸς πειράζων αὐτόν,

Note: καὶ points to verse 34 for the motivation behind the questioning (ἐπηρώτησεν). The present participle πειράζων indicates that the "testing" occurred simultaneous with the question. νομικός without the article stands in contrast to the article with the Pharisees in verse 34. The Pharisees were the major actors, the νομικός served only as spokesman.

36 Διδάσκαλε, ποία ἐντολὴ μεγάλη
ἐν τῷ νόμῳ;

Note: Διδάσκαλε is in the vocative case. ποία is an interrogative pronoun. μεγάλη is a predicate adjective. ἐν τῷ νόμῳ identifies the location of the unspecified

singular ἐντολή.

37 ... Ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν Θεόν σου
ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ σου
καὶ
ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου
καὶ
ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου.

Note: The verb ἀγαπήσεις has no separate subject. The three prepositional phrases modify the verb. ἐν ὅλῃ begins all three prepositional phrases. σου occurs 4 times.

38 αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μεγάλη
καὶ
πρώτη ἐντολή.

Note: αὕτη refers to verse 37. The article with μεγάλη is specific in contrast to the unspecific question of verse 36. Jesus adds the adjective πρώτη in conjunction with μεγάλη.

39a δευτέρα δὲ ὁμοία αὐτῇ

Note: δευτέρα follows πρώτη (vs. 38). ὁμοία is a predicate adjective. αὐτῇ refers to the commandment in verse 37.

39b Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου
ὡς σεαυτόν.

Note: The verb is the same as in verse 37. ὡς is a relative adverb which functions as a comparative conjunction.²

40 ἐν ταύταις ταῖς δύο ἐντολαῖς

ὅλος ὁ νόμος κρέματα
καὶ
οἱ προσήται.

Note: *δυσὶν* follows *πρώτη* (vs. 38) and *δευτέρα* (vs. 39a). *κρέματα* being singular, *νόμος* is probably the intended subject. If the writer had intended to consider *νόμος* and *προσήται* as a singular sense, logic would assume that the verb not come between them.³ It seems probable that *οἱ προσήται* is an after thought.⁴

Exegetical Discourse

νόμος and νομικός

The *νομικός* (vs. 35) approached Jesus with a question concerning ὁ νόμος. Matthew viewed the question as arising out of the general opposition of the Pharisees to Jesus' ministry (see Mt. 22:15, 23, 34, 46). The present participle *πειράζων* (vs. 35) indicates that a "testing" accompanied the question posed by the *νομικός*. More than just information was desired. The questioner was a Pharisee, but also one who was "learned in the Law."⁵ He was an expert with regard to the contents of νόμος. His expertise in the Law made him an appropriate choice from among his colleagues to address the question to Jesus. If Jesus should answer inappropriately, he would undoubtedly be able to catch Him in His error.

Knowing the intent behind the question leads to inquiry regarding the nature of the "test." The Pharisees prided themselves in "legalistic rigorism."⁶ Their casuistic zeal led to the construction of an oral legal tradition. They were noted for strict accuracy in interpreting

Scripture and an equally strict adherence in observing its precepts.⁷

In regard to the Law, tradition recognized 613 individual statutes of which 248 consisted of commands and 365 of prohibitions.⁸ In view of this great number of commandments within *νόμος*, the intent of the question becomes clearer. Which of the 613 was the greatest? Evaluation of commandments would not have been an unfamiliar concept to the lawyer. The experts in the law evaluated commandments by considering some "light" or "small" in importance and others "weighty" or "great" in importance.⁹

The basis for making this evaluation rested either upon the degree of demand for obedience or upon the degree of penalty for disobedience. But, even though the commandments were evaluated according to this scale, no one was released from strict compliance to the total requirements of the Law.¹⁰

In consideration of this background information about the Pharisees, it appears that the questioner was seeking to draw Jesus into the casuistic morass which characterized Pharisaism. However, Jesus avoided such entanglement by evaluating the commandments not upon the basis of "demand or possibility for atonement" but upon the will of God.¹¹

The Pharisees focused upon those requirements which were easily measurable visibly. Jesus placed the greater requirement upon an inner condition, a condition not easily measured by men but knowable by God. Both the "questioner" and Jesus had the commandments of *νόμος* in mind in their short discourse. The commandments as legal requirements and regulating outward conduct was the focus of the "questioner." In contrast, Jesus identified two commandments applicable to a person's inner disposition, and He identified them as comprising the great requirement of *νόμος*.

νόμος and *Ἰησοῦς*

From the previous discussion concerning the Pharisaic view of

νόμος , it is obvious that *νόμος* was both extremely important and authoritative for the Pharisees. Jesus did not invalidate either the importance or the authority of *νόμος* in His response to the questioning. While the Pharisees viewed Jesus as a threat to the status quo as they conceived it, Jesus viewed His teaching as compatible and consistent with Scripture. He cited two Old Testament texts from the Pentateuch (*νόμος*) as stating the great requirement of *νόμος*. It required a person to love God (Deut. 6:5) and to love his neighbor (Lev. 19:18). Upon these two requirements hung (*κρέμαται*) all the other commandments, even the requirements expressed in *οἱ προφῆται*. The two functioned like the hinges on a door.¹² Without hinges a door falls. Without love for both God and neighbor, the Law had no support. As useless and ineffective as a door without hinges, so was the Law without love for God and neighbor. While recognizing the critical importance of these two commandments, the importance of the door must not be overlooked. Jesus by identifying the greatest did not depreciate the least. Like hinges and doors, both are essential and both are valid. Jesus was not teaching what might be called a "hinge theology." Hinges and doors go together. They complement each other. The priority motivation of love for God and neighbor expressed itself in the fulfillment of the other requirements of *νόμος*. Love described an inner disposition, a disposition which Jesus identified as the crucial motivational factor in all relations to God and neighbor. Jesus did not use His authority as Son of God to invalidate *νόμος* but to interpret and identify the foundation upon which all ethical requirements were built.

νόμος and *ἐντολή*

The existence of divine imperatives (*ἐντολή*) is the basis for

Christian ethics. Ethics as a philosophical discipline is rooted in the existence of "right" and "wrong." For the Pharisees and Jesus, *νόμος* served the function of identifying the character of "right" and "wrong" in the sight of God. The divine imperatives were given to guide human conduct. When the Pharisee asked Jesus which was the great commandment, he was asking Jesus a question related to ethics. The question, however, did not deal in categories of "right" and "wrong," but was confined to discussion within the realm of right behavior. All divine commandments are aimed at right behavior. But, within this broad category of permissibility, which "right" behavior is most important? In the words of the Pharisee, "which is the great commandment?" Jesus responded to the question with an answer that stands as the foundation of Christian ethics.

In its simplest form, what does God require of man? The religious zealots of Jesus' day found within *νόμος* 613 statutes describing God's requirements. Jesus picked out two requirements upon which all ethical action could hang. He dealt with the category of motivation rather than mere action itself. Love was to be the motivation for all actions, both vertically and horizontally. Love your God and love your neighbor. Love was the greatest requirement of *νόμος*, and love was the foundation of the ethical system which Jesus taught. Action motivated by love must be at the center of all actions to be "right." Hate, or greed, or selfish interest as a motivating factor makes any activity, no matter how good, unethical. The only ethical motivation is that of love for God and neighbor. This affirmation leads to inquiry as to the exact nature of love. A closer look at the specific commandments in both Greek and Hebrew sheds some light.

In Matthew 22:37-38, Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6:5 and labels

it the great (*μεγάλη*) and first (*πρώτη*) commandment. *μεγάλη* identifies the commandment with the question of the *νομικός* (vs. 36). *πρώτη* should be considered not to indicate first in importance but first in a series (*δευτέρα* in verse 39 identifies the second in the series). The quote formed part of the Shema, a portion of Scripture repeated twice daily by every Israelite.¹³ Placed in this position of prominence in daily worship, the commandment which Jesus was quoting was not from some obscure passage of Scripture.¹⁴

The title for the recitation, Shema, comes from the first word of Deuteronomy 6:4.¹⁵ Shema is the imperative form of the Hebrew verb "hear." Verse 4 emphasizes the oneness and uniqueness of God. Verse 5 contains the commandment which Jesus quotes. The verb *שמע* is preceded by *שמע* consecutive and is qal perfect, second person, masculine, singular in form (*שמע שמע שמע*). While the verb is not imperative, the *שמע* consecutive functions to continue the imperative nature of the preceding verse (vs. 4).¹⁶ The verb retains its perfect connotations as the "perfect of certitude."¹⁷ The *שמע* gives to the verb the sense of "a nascent action to be viewed as advancing to completion."¹⁸ Stated more concisely, the verb indicates the beginning of an action which, though not yet completed, indicates a certitude regarding completion. The commandment is requiring commitment "to love" God from the present until a time of completion is reached, a completion which will never occur. It will never occur because love for God never reaches a point of completion. Added to this timeless character of love is the inclusiveness of the elements of humanity involved in the loving process. The totality of human commitment is indicated by the preposition "all" (*כל*) before *שמע שמע* and *שמע שמע* and *שמע שמע*. *שמע שמע* (heart) refers to the "inner man" as "comprehending mind,

Chapter 7

EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW 23:23-24

Contextual Considerations

Immediate Context

Matthew 23:23-24 is part of a public denunciation of the religious hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. The larger discourse (Mt. 23:1-39) occurs in the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus' entrance into the Temple is described in 21:23, and His leaving is described in 24:1. Jesus seems to show no caution in the discourse about arousing the wrath of the scribes and Pharisees. His caustic analysis of their religiousness no doubt contributed to their desire to see Him eliminated. Jesus penetrated the superficial layer of their religious piety and shook the foundations of their self-righteousness. Arising from this cogent evaluation, the scribes and Pharisees had only two alternatives, either repent or reject and silence their accuser. History records that they chose the latter recourse.

T.W. Manson outlines Jesus' denunciation into four sections. First, verses 1-7 deal with the pride and hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees. Second, verses 8-12 contain a warning to the disciples not to imitate their example. Third, (vv. 13-36) Jesus names seven characteristics of the scribes and Pharisees which begin with "woe." Fourth, (vv. 37-39) Jesus prophesies the fate of Jerusalem.¹ The verses which are the focus of this study involve the fourth of the seven "woes." The negative nature of the immediate context heightens the condemnation

evident in the text and serves to illuminate the seriousness of the condemnation.

Extended Context

Matthew is the only Gospel to record the lengthy discourse of Matthew 23:1-39. Although some of the discourse is included in Mark (12:38-40) and Luke (20:45-47), it fails even to approach the extent (39 verses compared to 3 each) and intensity of Matthew's record. The passage which is the focus of this study (23:23-24) occurs only in Matthew.

Textual Observations

23a οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι
ὑποκριταί,

Note: The interjectional phrase οὐαὶ ὑμῖν is repeated in verses 13, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, and 29. Out of these seven, all but verse 16 describe the scribes and Pharisees as ὑποκριταί.

23b ὅτι ἀποδεκατοῦτε τὸ ἡδύοσμον
καὶ
τὸ ἄνηθον
καὶ
τὸ κύμινον,
καὶ ἀφήκατε τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου,
τὴν κρίσιν
καὶ
τὸ ἔλεος
καὶ
τὴν πίστιν.

Note: *ὅτι* points to the cause of *οὐαί*. The scribes and Pharisees are the ones performing the actions of the verbs. *ἀποδεκατοῦτε* describes the present situation and disposition. *ἀφῆκατε* refers to past situations. The corresponding lists of three are in contrast to each other.

23c *ταῦτα δὲ ἔδει ποιῆσαι
κακεῖνα μὴ ἀφίεναι.*

Note: *ταῦτα* refers to the second list of three (23b) as nearest in mental thought.² *ἔδει* is an impersonal verb, singular in form with a neuter plural subject (*ταῦτα*). *ἔδει* translates "it is necessary, one must or has to, denoting compulsion of any kind."³ *κακεῖνα* refers to the first list of three in 23b.⁴ *μὴ ἀφίεναι* recalls *ἀφῆκατε* in 23b. *ποιῆσαι* as an aorist infinitive is consistent with the aorist *ἀφῆκατε*. The same type of relationship exists between the present infinitive *ἀφίεναι* and *ἀποδεκατοῦτε*. The imperfect *ἔδει* refers to more than an isolated instance. The weaker negative *μὴ* is used.

24 *ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοί,
οἱ διϋλίζοντες τὸν κώνωπα...
δε...
τὴν κάμηλον καταπίνοντες.*

Note: *ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοί* refers to the scribes and Pharisees (23a). Jesus describes them as *τυφλοί* in verses 16, 17, 19, 24, and 26. The predicate of the sentence is

understood in the position of the predicate adjective

τυφλοί. The present participles διΰλίζοντες and καταπίνοντες describe the nature of their blindness (the present participles denoting action simultaneous with the unexpressed verb of the predicate adjective). κώνωπα and κάμηλον are used figuratively to emphasize the contrast.⁵

Exegetical Discourse

νόμος and ὑποκριταί

Verse 23 begins with the interjection οὐαί. It may be translated either "woe!" or "alas!" and indicates "pain or displeasure."⁶ The ones to whom this interjection was applied were the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus called them ὑποκριταί, "play-actors."⁷ This refers to the facade of piety which the scribes and Pharisees wore so proudly. They were like actors on a stage playing a part with convincing authenticity but in real-life something quite different. In 23:3 Jesus described them as "saying" but "not doing" the things which issue in real piety. To the crowds their acting may have been convincing (see vv. 5-7). But, to Jesus, their hypocrisy was cause for woe. The situation was lamentable; because, far from being actors on a stage, they were engaged with the seriousness of real life. Piety was not a game of insignificance but a requirement of God calling for utmost commitment. "Woe" reflects the seriousness with which Jesus viewed the actions of the scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus goes on in verse 23 to describe how the scribes and Pharisees resembled "play-actors." ὅτι introduces the reason. Jesus

described them in their play-acting roles with the present, active, indicative verb ἀποδεκατοῦτε. Like actors in a play they were busy tithing mint (ῥόδον), dill (ἄνηθον), and cummin (κύμινον). These three plants were grown for seasonings.⁸ Used as a seasoning, a small quantity would suffice. A tithe of each would amount to a very small quantity. However, it was proper to tithe such items, and the requirement is found in the Pentateuch (Lev. 27:30). Jesus, the scribes, and the Pharisees would have known this. Jesus' criticism does not attack them at the point of tithing. In fact, such meticulous attention to tithing the smallest of objects should have proved the integrity of their devotion to God. But, the problem that destroyed the merits of attention to such miniscule affairs was the fact that they failed to observe those matters which Jesus identified as "weighty."

While busy with minutiae, the scribes and Pharisees failed to do the more important. ἀφῆκατε describes their relationship to τὰ βαρύτερα. The verb is aorist, active, and indicative. As a "punctiliar action," the verb denotes not a specific, isolated instance but a summary description of a period of time conceived as a whole. A contrast is developed between the present, continued "tithing" performed by the scribes and Pharisees and the action denoted by ἀφῆκατε, which is viewed as a punctiliar and completed activity. The activity of "abandoning" should be viewed as subordinate to the activity identified by the present tense verb ἀποδεκατοῦτε.⁹ It was because the scribes and Pharisees had abandoned (ἀφῆκατε) τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου that they were condemned. Contrasting what was being done (tithing) with what had been left undone (the weightier provisions), they resembled "play-actors." Strict compliance in observing νόμος in one area did

not counterbalance negligence in another, especially when the other category was of more relative importance. In the case of the scribes and Pharisees, this described part of their problem.

Jesus identified three things as comprising the *βαρύτερα* of *νόμος*. The trio represent more a logical counterbalance to the prior listing of items tithed than an attempt to be inclusive. For each item tithed, Jesus identified a corresponding item which had been left undone. Micah 6:8 is a frequent Old Testament reference attached to the list Jesus gave.¹⁰ The reference, however, is not from the Pentateuch but from the Prophets. Either Jesus was referring to the broader context of Scripture in the reference to *νόμος* or He was distilling three important elements of *νόμος* which had been neglected by the scribes and Pharisees in a manner like Micah did for his time. The first of the neglected activities listed is *τὴν κρίσιν*; which means "right in sense of justice, righteousness."¹¹ The second term is *τὸ ἔλεος*; which refers to "mercy, compassion, pity, clemency."¹² The third is *τὴν πίστιν*; which means "faith, trust."¹³ The first two refer to interpersonal relations and the latter to relations toward God.¹⁴ Failure by the scribes and Pharisees to demonstrate these qualities and the resulting consequence of such omission was the basis for "woe." The prophecy of Jesus in verse 38 is reminiscent of the prophecy of the Prophets when they too spoke to a people who left these same things undone.

νόμος and *τὰ βαρύτερα*

τὰ βαρύτερα suggests the existence of an ethical priority within *νόμος*. The basic meaning of the word is "heavy," but figuratively it can be translated "weighty" or "important."¹⁵ Identification of some aspects of *νόμος* as weighty implies that other items

evident in the text and serves to illuminate the seriousness of the condemnation.

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καὶ
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καὶ ἀφήκατε τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου,
τὴν κρίσιν
καὶ
τὸ ἔλεος
καὶ
τὴν πίστιν.

Note: *ὅτι* points to the cause of *οὐαί*. The scribes and Pharisees are the ones performing the actions of the verbs. *ἀποδεκατοῦτε* describes the present situation and disposition. *ἀφήκατε* refers to past situations. The corresponding lists of three are in contrast to each other.

23c ταῦτα δὲ ἔδει ποιῆσαι
κακεῖνα μὴ ἀφίεναι.

Note: ταῦτα refers to the second list of three (23b) as nearest in mental thought.² ἔδει is an impersonal verb, singular in form with a neuter plural subject (ταῦτα). ἔδει translates "it is necessary, one must or has to, denoting compulsion of any kind."³ κακεῖνα refers to the first list of three in 23b.⁴ μὴ ἀφίεναι recalls ἀφήκατε in 23b. ποιῆσαι as an aorist infinitive is consistent with the aorist ἀφήκατε. The same type of relationship exists between the present infinitive ἀφίεναι and ἀποδεκατοῦτε. The imperfect ἔδει refers to more than an isolated instance. The weaker negative μὴ is used.

24 ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοί,
οἱ δι᾽ ἡλίσσοντες τὸν κύνωπα...
δε...

τὴν χάμηλον καταπίνοντες.

Note: ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοί refers to the scribes and Pharisees (23a). Jesus describes them as τυφλοί in verses 16, 17, 19, 24, and 26. The predicate of the sentence is

understood in the position of the predicate adjective τυφλοί. The present participles δι' ἁλίσζοντες and καταπίνοντες describe the nature of their blindness (the present participles denoting action simultaneous with the unexpressed verb of the predicate adjective). κώνωπα and κάμηλον are used figuratively to emphasize the contrast.⁵

Exegetical Discourse

νόμος and ὑποκριταί

Verse 23 begins with the interjection οὐαί. It may be translated either "woe!" or "alas!" and indicates "pain or displeasure."⁶ The ones to whom this interjection was applied were the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus called them ὑποκριταί, "play-actors."⁷ This refers to the facade of piety which the scribes and Pharisees wore so proudly. They were like actors on a stage playing a part with convincing authenticity but in real-life something quite different. In 23:3 Jesus described them as "saying" but "not doing" the things which issue in real piety. To the crowds their acting may have been convincing (see vv. 5-7). But, to Jesus, their hypocrisy was cause for woe. The situation was lamentable; because, far from being actors on a stage, they were engaged with the seriousness of real life. Piety was not a game of insignificance but a requirement of God calling for utmost commitment. "Woe" reflects the seriousness with which Jesus viewed the actions of the scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus goes on in verse 23 to describe how the scribes and Pharisees resembled "play-actors." ὅτι introduces the reason. Jesus

described them in their play-acting roles with the present, active, indicative verb ἀποδεκατοῦτε. Like actors in a play they were busy tithing mint (ῥόδυσμον), dill (ἄνηθον), and cummin (κύμινον). These three plants were grown for seasonings.⁸ Used as a seasoning, a small quantity would suffice. A tithe of each would amount to a very small quantity. However, it was proper to tithe such items, and the requirement is found in the Pentateuch (Lev. 27:30). Jesus, the scribes, and the Pharisees would have known this. Jesus' criticism does not attack them at the point of tithing. In fact, such meticulous attention to tithing the smallest of objects should have proved the integrity of their devotion to God. But, the problem that destroyed the merits of attention to such miniscule affairs was the fact that they failed to observe those matters which Jesus identified as "weighty."

While busy with minutiae, the scribes and Pharisees failed to do the more important. ἀφῆκατε describes their relationship to τὰ βαρύτερα. The verb is aorist, active, and indicative. As a "punctiliar action," the verb denotes not a specific, isolated instance but a summary description of a period of time conceived as a whole. A contrast is developed between the present, continued "tithing" performed by the scribes and Pharisees and the action denoted by ἀφῆκατε, which is viewed as a punctiliar and completed activity. The activity of "abandoning" should be viewed as subordinate to the activity identified by the present tense verb ἀποδεκατοῦτε.⁹ It was because the scribes and Pharisees had abandoned (ἀφῆκατε) τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου that they were condemned. Contrasting what was being done (tithing) with what had been left undone (the weightier provisions), they resembled "play-actors." Strict compliance in observing νόμος in one area did

not counterbalance negligence in another, especially when the other category was of more relative importance. In the case of the scribes and Pharisees, this described part of their problem.

Jesus identified three things as comprising the *βαρύτερα* of *νόμος*. The trio represent more a logical counterbalance to the prior listing of items tithed than an attempt to be inclusive. For each item tithed, Jesus identified a corresponding item which had been left undone. Micah 6:8 is a frequent Old Testament reference attached to the list Jesus gave.¹⁰ The reference, however, is not from the Pentateuch but from the Prophets. Either Jesus was referring to the broader context of Scripture in the reference to *νόμος* or He was distilling three important elements of *νόμος* which had been neglected by the scribes and Pharisees in a manner like Micah did for his time. The first of the neglected activities listed is *τὴν κρίσιν*; which means "right in sense of justice, righteousness."¹¹ The second term is *τὸ ἔλεος*; which refers to "mercy, compassion, pity, clemency."¹² The third is *τὴν πίστιν*; which means "faith, trust."¹³ The first two refer to interpersonal relations and the latter to relations toward God.¹⁴ Failure by the scribes and Pharisees to demonstrate these qualities and the resulting consequence of such omission was the basis for "woe." The prophecy of Jesus in verse 38 is reminiscent of the prophecy of the Prophets when they too spoke to a people who left these same things undone.

νόμος and τὰ βαρύτερα

τὰ βαρύτερα suggests the existence of an ethical priority within *νόμος*. The basic meaning of the word is "heavy," but figuratively it can be translated "weighty" or "important."¹⁵ Identification of some aspects of *νόμος* as weighty implies that other items

correspondingly would be considered "light" or of "less importance." The word easily calls to mind the simplest scale, a balance. When uneven objects are placed upon opposite sides of a balance beam, it becomes evident which object is heavier. Jesus and His contemporaries would have been quite familiar with this method of weighing in the market places of their day.¹⁶ The imagery conveyed by *τὰ βαρύτερα* is pictured literally by Jesus. Upon one side are placed three present activities of the scribes and Pharisees; the tithing of mint, dill, and cummin. Upon the other side are placed three activities that have been abandoned by the scribes and Pharisees; justice, mercy, and faith. According to Jesus, those things which they had neglected were weightier than those things which they were presently doing. Also, the balance is illustrative of the measure of their righteousness. According to Jesus, their abandoning of justice, mercy, and faith accounted for their deficiency. The evidence against them outweighed the evidence for them.

Jesus illustrates the contrast in importance between *τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου* and the tithing of mint, dill, and cummin in verse 24. *ὁδηγοὶ τυφλοὶ* refers to their position as religious leaders. The description highlights the absurdity but also the tragedy involved. A guide is needed for those who do not know the way. But, if the one who is to point out obstacles and hazards is himself blind, the situation is hopeless.

Jesus verbally pictured a person straining a liquid which was intended for drink to make sure a very small "unclean" insect did not accidentally get swallowed with the liquid (see Lev. 11:20-23, 41-44). Having successfully strained out all the tiny insects, the person drinks and swallows the largest unclean animal in Palestine, the camel (Lev.

11:1-8).¹⁷ By using this hyperbolic illustration Jesus called attention to the foolishness of play-acting by the scribes and Pharisees.¹⁸ The straining out of small insects parallels the degree of detail in tithing seasonings. The swallowing of a camel compares with their neglect of *τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου*. A person preparing his drink should most logically remove the large objects from his drink and then finish by straining. The scribes and Pharisees attended to the small objects but negated their efforts to avoid a prohibited food by "swallowing" an even larger object.

From the above discussion it can be concluded that Jesus recognized some acts of greater ethical priority than others. It should be pointed out that the evidence does not indicate that tithing in itself is of lower ethical priority. The only thing which can be said for sure is that justice, mercy, and faith rank in importance over the minute application of the requirement for tithing to the inclusion of one's household seasonings. However, even the straining out of insects is still of value. Paying tithe on all property was a requirement of *νόμος*. Likewise, justice, mercy, and faith are things that are necessary (*ἐἶδει*) for one to do.¹⁹ Jesus avoided depreciating the value of tithing. It too was not to be abandoned (*μὴ ἀφείναι*).

In summary, Jesus recognized the existence of an ethical priority in the application of *νόμος*. The specific instance cited by Jesus involved justice, mercy, and faith as of greater weight or importance than meticulous attention to tithing. The passage also indicates the reluctance of Jesus to deny the validity of even the smallest requirement of *νόμος*. The criticism aimed at the scribes and Pharisees was not because of their close attention to minor matters of *νόμος*, but

because they overlooked the major elements. Even the smallest aspect of *νόμος* remained valid. There is no support from this passage to indicate that Jesus was negating the validity of lesser commandments. While Jesus criticized the failure of the scribes and Pharisees to keep the weightier aspects of *νόμος*, no justification is present in this criticism to justify the neglect of minor details, so long as they do not prevent attending to matters of major importance.

Chapter 8

EXPOSITION OF LUKE 10:25-37

Contextual Considerations

Immediate Context

Luke 10:25-37 requires no identification with verses either immediately preceding or following for accurate interpretation. The passage stands as a distinct unit from the immediate context. It records a singular event among Jesus' encounters. Preceding the passage, Luke records Jesus' deputation of the seventy and their return (Lk. 10:1-20). In verses 21-24, Jesus rejoices that God has made known His truth to "babes." Following this, a lawyer approaches and asks a question. He, rather than being a "babe," is one of the "wise" and "intelligent" ones from whom the truth has been hidden (vs. 21). The encounter with the lawyer covers verses 25-37. He has been sitting and listening with Jesus' disciples when he stands to address his question (see vv. 23-24). After Jesus has dealt with the lawyer's question, the scene changes as Jesus travels to a village in which Mary and Martha live (vv. 38-42).

Extended Context

Luke 10:25-37 bears a resemblance to Matthew 22:34-40. The value of studying Luke 10:25-37 rests not upon similarity to the Matthew passage but upon its dissimilarity. Only Luke records the story about the "Good Samaritan." Luke clarifies the definition of "neighbor" in the commandment to love one's neighbor. A major dissimilarity between Luke and Matthew involves the person who quotes the commandments. In Matthew

it is Jesus, but in Luke it is the lawyer. Also, in Matthew the question of the lawyer is about which commandment is great, but in Luke the question involves the requirement for obtaining eternal life.

Textual Observations

25a καὶ ἰδοὺ νομικός τις ἀνέστη
ἐκπειράζων αὐτὸν
λέγων,

Note: *τις* is an indefinite pronoun. The two present participles denote action coincident with ἀνέστη. *τις* is repeated in verses 30, 32, 33, and 38.¹

25b Διδάσκαλε, τί ποιήσας
ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω;

Note: Διδάσκαλε may explain ἐκπειράζων? ζωὴν αἰώνιον is viewed as a possible future attainment. The aorist participle ποιήσας indicates that the νομικός expected the requirement to be punctiliar. The singular interrogative pronoun (τί) along with the singular participle (ποιήσας) indicates his expectation of either a single requirement or at least an answer that included all requirements which when accomplished resulted in eternal life.

26 ...Ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τί γέγραπται;
πῶς ἀναγινώσκεις;

Note: Jesus asks two questions in response, the first with a perfect tense and the second with a present tense. This suggests that the answer the νομικός sought was not

new but related to the present.

27 ... Ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου
 ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας σου καὶ
 ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ
 ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ἰσχύϊ σου καὶ
 ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου,
 καὶ
 τὸν πλησίον σου
 ὡς σεαυτόν.

Note: The uniting of Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 bears similarity but also dissimilarities to Matthew 22:35-40.²

Here the νομικός is the one who quotes the commandments.

28 ... Ὁρθῶς ἀπεκρίθης.
 τοῦτο ποίεις καὶ ζήσῃ.

Note: The change from aorist, to present, to future tense is significant. The right answer must be followed up with present, continual "doing" in order to achieve the life which is eternally future.³ τοῦτο refers to verse 27. ποίεις is imperative.

29a ὁ δὲ θέλων δικαιῶσαι ἑαυτὸν εἶπεν...

Note: εἶπεν is the main verb. The present participle θέλων represents a continuing condition simultaneous with εἶπεν. δικαιῶσαι ἑαυτόν indicates his motive and his deficiency.

29b Καὶ τίς ἐστίν μου πλησίον;

Note: The interrogative pronoun τίς is definite. The present tense of ἐστίν relates to the present imperative

ποῖός (vs. 28). This question as an attempt "to justify himself" would require a limited definition of πλῆσζον.

30a ... Ἄνθρωπός τις κατέβαινεν...
καὶ λησταῖς περιέπεσεν,

Note: It is significant that *τις* is an indefinite pronoun.

The imperfect verb *κατέβαινεν* indicates the total journey. *περιέπεσεν* as an aorist refers to one incident in the journey. *κατά* attached to the verb may indicate the down hill journey involved.⁴

30b οἱ καὶ ἐκδύσαντες αὐτὸν καὶ
πληγὰς ἐπιθέντες ἀπῆλθον
ἀφέντες ἡμιθανῆ.

Note: The aorist participles *ἐκδύσαντες* and *ἐπιθέντες* combine to form the participial phrase which refers to *λησταῖς* and functions as the subject of *ἀπῆλθον*. *ἀφέντες* is an aorist, adverbial participle indicating the condition in which they left the traveler.

31 κατὰ συγκυρίαν δὲ ἕρεός τις κατέβαινεν...
καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ἀντιπαρῆλθεν.

Note: *συγκυρίαν*, meaning "coincidence, chance,"⁵ contributes to the indefinite character of the story as does *τις*. *κατέβαινεν* is identical to the verb in 30a. The aorist participle *ἰδὼν* emphasizes the sense perception prior to passing by on the other side.

32 ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ λευίτης γενόμενος
κατὰ τὸν τόπον ἐλθὼν
καὶ ἰδὼν ἀντιπαρῆλθεν.

Note: *ὁμοίως* points out the similarity of response to that of the priest. *καὶ* before *Λευίτης* may indicate greater surprise at failure to help. Three aorist participles describe the degree of his involvement before he too passed by on the other side.

33 Σαμαρίτης δὲ τις ὁδεύων ἦλθεν κατ' αὐτὸν
καὶ ἰδὼν
ἐσπλαγχνίσθη,

Note: The indefinite relative pronoun *τις* is repeated. *ἰδὼν* describes an action the same as that of the priest and Levite. *ἐσπλαγχνίσθη* is in contrast to the actions of the other two. *σαμαρίτης* is first for emphasis.

34 καὶ προσελθὼν κατέδησεν ... ἐπιχέων ...
ἐπιβιβάσας ... ἤγαγεν ...
ἐπεμελήθη αὐτοῦ.

Note: Three aorist verbs along with three adverbial participles describe the actions of the Samaritan.

35 καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν αὐρίον ἐκβαλὼν
ἔδωκεν δύο δηνάρια τῷ πανδοχεῖ καὶ εἶπεν,
Ἐπεμελήθητι αὐτοῦ,
καὶ ὅτε ἂν προσδαπανήσῃς ἐγὼ
ἐν τῷ ἐπανέρχεσθαι με ἀποδώσω σοι.

Note: The payment established the authority for the imperative *ἐπεμελήθητι*. *ἐγώ* emphasizes the promise of future payment.

36 τίς τούτων τῶν τριῶν πλησιον δοκεῖ σοι
γεγονέναι τοῦ ἐμπετόντος εἰς τοὺς ληστές;

Note: *δοκεῖ* brings the focus back to the present. The possibilities for identifying *πλησίον* are viewed from the aspect of the one in need.

37a ... ὁ ποιήσας τὸ ἔλεος μετ' αὐτοῦ.

Note: The action denoted by a participle identifies the neighbor. *ποιήσας* ties in with the imperative *ποιέει* in verse 28. *ἔλεος* is consistent with the concept of love.

37b ... Πορεύου καὶ σὺ ποίει ὁμοίως.

Note: Two present imperatives are given. *σὺ* emphasizes the second. *ὁμοίως* refers to doing *τὸ ἔλεος*.

Exegetical Discourse

νόμος and ζωὴν αἰώνιον

It is through a question directed at Jesus about the attainment of *ζωὴν αἰώνιον* that a relationship appears with regard to *νόμος* in the text. The questioner is described as a *νομικός*, one "learned in the law."⁶ His interest in the topic of "eternal life" suggests that he was of the Pharisaic party rather than the Sadducean, for the Sadducees denied the doctrine of the resurrection.⁷ However, the topic of "eternal life" was of interest to the Pharisaic party. They believed eternal life to be a new creation of God, and they associated it with the resurrection of the dead.⁸ The exact understanding of the *νομικός* regarding the nature of "eternal life" is not clearly known.⁹ However, the text does provide some insight relative to his perception. He recognized the desirability of the "life" which is shown by his personal interest in the subject. The question itself, *τί ποιήσας*, indicates

that he understood its attainment to require something. Using an aorist participle shows that he viewed the requirement from a punctiliar viewpoint. This could mean that he expected only a single act to be necessary for achievement. However, because of the eschatological nature of the "life" (*κληρονομήσω* is future tense), the aorist may be reflecting not necessarily a single requirement but a single answer which would summarize the requirements leading to its attainment. In either case, Jesus' answer came with a different emphasis.

What must a person do to inherit eternal life? Jesus began His response by addressing two questions to the *νομικός*. First, "In the Law, what has been written?" Second, "How do you understand?" These questions suggest that the answer the *νομικός* sought was based not upon some new requirement but upon the established teaching of Scripture. Jesus' first question pointed to the location of the desired information, but His second question identified the crux in the solution. The crux of the issue involved not insufficient information but how the *νομικός* understood his present situation (present tense of *ἀναγινώσκεις*) in respect to the truth that had already been revealed in *νόμος*. In response to Jesus' questions, the *νομικός* quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. He unified the two commandments into a single commandment. T.W. Manson suggests that his answer may have reflected a prior knowledge of Jesus' teaching concerning the great commandment (see Mt. 12:28-31), and he was merely repeating back what he knew was Jesus' position.¹⁰ The rationale for this supposition is that great teachers often repeat themselves, and a topic as important as this one could reasonably be expected to have been repeated by Jesus. Manson suggests that the primary purpose of the question concerning eternal life

may have been only a preparatory step prior to the real question of defining one's neighbor (vs. 29).¹¹ This seems to be a reasonable but hypothetical possibility. In any case, Jesus' counter questions indicate confidence that the information the *νομικός* sought was not a requirement unknown to him.

After the *νομικός* answered Jesus' questions, Jesus commended him for the accuracy of his answer (*ὁρθῶς ἀπεκρίθη*). However, only knowledge of the requirement was insufficient. Jesus included in His reply the present imperative "Do!" (*ποίει*). It was not merely in "knowing" but in "doing" the commandments that one became qualified to inherit eternal life. While the original question was asked in the aorist tense (*τί ποιήσας*), the answer involved the present tense, the present imperative expressing a "continual doing." The future of the *νομικός* was not determined by a single act but by a continual compliance with the commandments of *νόμος*, two of them being identified by the *νομικός*. (Time will not be taken to elaborate upon the commandments here since the topic has been treated in the study of Matthew 22:34-40.)¹²

The discussion should have ended with the imperative "Do!" However, the commandment to love one's neighbor troubled the *νομικός*. He followed up Jesus' command with a question regarding the identification of one's neighbor (vs. 29). Evidently, "loving God" presented no problem to the *νομικός*. But, "loving one's neighbor" raised the question regarding the definition of neighbor. He asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Luke interjects the comment "wishing to justify himself" (*θέλων δικαιῶσαι ἑαυτόν*) as the motivation behind the question. *Θέλων δικαιῶσαι ἑαυτόν* may represent not so much conviction

regarding failure to comply on his part but dissatisfaction with the simplicity of Jesus' answer.¹³ The question is pertinent. If one's acquiring of eternal life rested upon the keeping of two commandments, clarity with regard to their meaning was essential. Jesus' answer is significant with regard to a proper understanding and application of the commandment to love neighbors.

νόμος and ἀγαπήσεις
τὸν πλησίον σου

Jesus endorsed the validity of the commandment to love one's neighbor. Jesus did not claim himself as originator of the requirement, but He recognized its Old Testament roots in νόμος (Lev. 19:18). However, Jesus gave to the definition of neighbor an interpretation which effectively eliminated the possibility of any form of exclusiveness. It is possible to understand "neighbor" in Leviticus 19:18 within the limitation of national/racial boundaries, in the case of Israel within the covenant community.¹⁴ In the question of the ρημικός (Lk. 10:29) there is reason to suspect he anticipated an exclusive definition of πλησίον. An inclusive view of neighbor would not have required the clarification he desired. It is only when one thinks of limitations that more precise definitions are required. Jesus answered the question by illustrating not only who is a neighbor but also how love is displayed. The story of the "Good Samaritan" illustrates Jesus' position. Four major characters are involved in the story of the "Good Samaritan." The man on the journey from Jerusalem to Jericho is one character. He is not identified by nationality. Some commentators assume that he was a Jew because he was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho.¹⁵ Such assumptions regarding the man's identity do not appear intended by Jesus.

His ethnic identity is noticeably absent in contrast to the identities of those able to help. The *ληστοὶς* are minor characters in the story. They explain the condition in which the traveler finds himself, and they also provide a realistic basis for the story. The road between Jerusalem and Jericho had a bad reputation regarding safety for travelers.¹⁶ Three additional travelers upon the road enter into the plot one at a time. The first two identify strongly with the racial nationality of Israel, a priest and a Levite. Both pass by the beaten man without assisting him. The third traveler is a Samaritan. His identity is emphasized by being placed first in the sentence. Knowing the general negative feeling felt by Jews toward Samaritans (see John 4:9) and the fact that the *ρομικός* was a Jew gives added significance to the story. The one who proved to be a neighbor was not Jewish but of a nationality despised by Jews. In mentioning the various nationalities of the characters, Jesus attacked any racial/national interpretation of neighbor. The definition of neighbor is irrespective of such distinctions. The story goes on to provide a positive illustration of the process of loving one's neighbor.

At the end of the story Jesus asked the *ρομικός*, "Which of the three proved to be a neighbor to the one who fell among thieves?" (vs. 36). Even though being a neighbor involves a reciprocity of relationship, Jesus noticeably avoided defining neighbor as a person in need. The neighbor was the one who acted. He had compassion (vs. 33, *ἐσπλαγχνίσθη*) along with the "observing" which the priest and Levite demonstrated (vv. 31, 32, 33, *ἰδών*). In the words of the *ρομικός*, the neighbor was the one who showed mercy (*ἐλεος*). *ἐλεος* in this context means the showing of love and the act of mercy.¹⁷ Jesus changed

the focus of the question from "Who is my neighbor?" to "How do I become a neighbor?" In logic, Jesus arrived back at the starting point. The imperative "love" and not the noun "neighbor" is the key. The Samaritan, who demonstrated love, was the neighbor. Likewise, the person who desires to demonstrate love toward others does not concern himself with identifying whether or not the person is a neighbor. Attempting to define "neighbor" represented just another example of the Pharisaic casuistry. Jesus avoided entanglement by returning the focus back to the central issue of love. In the story of the "Good Samaritan" Jesus avoids giving a direct answer to the question of the *νευκός*. The answer which the *νευκός* arrives at in verse 36 is really nothing more than a restatement of the commandment "love your neighbor" (vs. 27), but the answer is significantly appropriate.

Chapter 9

EXPOSITION OF LUKE 16:14-18

Contextual Considerations

Immediate Context

Study of Luke 16:14-18 in context with the rest of the chapter presents some questions regarding the author's continuity of thought. At times the relationship between verses appears strained. T.W. Manson solves this problem by treating the verses as separate units.¹ While recognizing the difficulty of continuity between verses, the approach in exegesis will be to study the passage as a unit and attempt to discern the logic pattern behind the author's linking of the verses. It is believed that an undertaking of this nature will provide valuable information for the present study. Even if the verses are a compilation of sayings from various sources, their union by Luke reflects his understanding of Jesus' teaching and should be treated as consistent with that teaching.

Alfred Plummer in his commentary on the Gospel provides one of the better outlines of the passage reflecting an attempt to treat the subject from Luke's perspective.² He identifies the entire chapter as dealing with the use of wealth. Verses 1-8 deal with the parable of the "Unrighteous Steward." This is followed by a section (vv. 9-13) which Plummer describes as supplementary to the parable. Verses 14-18 he refers to as introductory to the second parable of the chapter, "The Rich Man and Lazarus" (vv. 19-31). However, the transitions linking

verses 14-18 to the preceding verses is more obvious than transitions linking to the following parable (vv. 19-31). For exegetical purposes, the verses (1-13) leading up to the text serve as prerequisites for interpretation, and the concluding verses (19-31) are illustrative. These relationships will be noted in the appropriate places throughout the study.

Extended Context

T.W. Manson treats Luke 16:14-18 as four independent sayings of Jesus. Verses 14-15 have no parallel passage and Manson identifies them as peculiar to Luke's Gospel.³ Verse 16 has a parallel in Matthew 11:12-13.⁴ The Matthew passage makes reference to *νόμος*, and a close identification exists with Luke 16:16. (Matthew 11:12-13 is treated briefly in Chapter 2.)⁵ Matthew 5:18 bears a similarity to verse 17 of Luke.⁶ (Matthew 5:18 is treated separately in Chapter 3.)⁷ Luke 16:18 has several parallel passages in which Jesus talks about divorce; Matthew 5:31-32, Matthew 19:9, and Mark 10:11-12.⁸

Textual Observations

14 Ἦκουον δὲ ταῦτα πάντα οἱ Φαρισαῖοι
 φιλάργυροι ὑπάρχοντες,
 καὶ
 ἐξεμυκτήριζον αὐτόν.

Note: ταῦτα πάντα refers to the content of Luke 16:1-13.

The imperfect verbs Ἦκουον and ἐξεμυκτήριζον describe the reception and corresponding response of the Pharisees. φιλάργυροι is a predicate noun in connection with the participle ὑπάρχοντες.⁹

- 15a καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς,
 Ὑμεῖς ἐστε οἱ δικαιοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς
 ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων,
 ὁ δὲ Θεὸς γινώσκει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν.

Note: εἶπεν indicates Jesus' response to the Pharisees, motivated by ἐξεμυκτήριζον. Ὑμεῖς adds emphasis. ἐξεμυκτήριζον is an example of the on-going attempt at δικαιοῦντες ἑαυτούς. The conjunction δέ is a mild adversative used in connecting two indicative statements. The stronger nature of the adversative (δέ) is subtly present and requires reflection upon the content of the statements.

- 15b ὅτι τὸ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὑψηλὸν
 βδέλυγμα ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Note: ὅτι introduces clarification of the statement of 15a. ἐνώπιον is repeated from 15a. τὸ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὑψηλὸν is an attributive prepositional phrase modifying the noun βδέλυγμα.

- 16 ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται
 μέχρι Ἰωάννου.
 ἀπὸ τότε
 ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ εὐαγγελίζεται
 καὶ πᾶς εἰς αὐτὴν βιάζεται.

Note: The prepositions point to John as representative of transition from one emphasis to another. εὐαγγελίζεται emphasizes the subject and the "continuing" process. βιάζεται has several possible meanings.¹⁰

- 17 Εὐκοπώτερον δέ ἐστιν
τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν παρελθεῖν
ἢ
τοῦ νόμου μίαν κεραίαν πεσεῖν.

Note: *εὐκοπώτερον* is a comparative adjective indicating the comparative ease of the first possibility with regard to the second.¹¹ *τοῦ νόμου* is a transitional word linking to the previous verse.

- 18 Πᾶς ὁ ἀπολύων τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ
καὶ γαμῶν ἑτέραν μοιχεύει,
καὶ
ὁ ἀπολειψμένην ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς γαμῶν μοιχεύει.

Note: Two examples of adultery are described. The subject of the verb in each case is a substantival participial phrase. *πᾶς* appears in verse 16 in the same case, number, and gender.

Exegetical Discourse

νόμος and οἱ δεικαλοῦντες ἐαυτούς

The primary audience which Jesus addresses in Luke 16:14-18 is a group of Pharisees who have been "hearing" and "ridiculing" the content of Jesus' teaching. The descriptive verbs, ἤκουον and ἐξεμυκτήριζον in verse 14, are imperfect tenses indicating the continual nature of their listening and ridiculing. This activity occurred as they comprised a secondary audience listening while Jesus was addressing His disciples (see Lk. 16:1-13). Their negative response to Jesus' teaching

was characteristic of their receptivity. To discredit Jesus in His teaching was the motivation for their listening (see Lk. 11:53-54). As a secondary audience with ulterior motives, they followed Jesus and engaged in condemnation of His actions (see Lk. 15:2) and His teaching (see Lk. 16:14). On occasion, Jesus interrupted His primary teaching to address the negative comments of the Pharisees (e.g., Lk. 15:2-32, 16:14-18). The focus of this study is upon one such instance. Prior to addressing the Pharisees, Jesus was teaching the disciples about the hazard of riches (16:1-13). In the closing statement of verse 13, Jesus conclusively stated that a person cannot serve both God and mammon, mammon referring to wealth or property.¹² The ridiculing by the Pharisees, Luke attributes to their fondness for money (vs. 14, *φιλάργυροι ὑπάρχοντες*). In consideration of Jesus' statement of verse 13, this points to the root of their rejection of Jesus. They served mammon rather than God. Considering the pride of the Pharisees in their religiousness, ridicule was an appropriate response to Jesus' teaching concerning wealth.

Jesus understood the reason for the ridicule directed at His teaching. In verse 15 Jesus addressed the heckling Pharisees with a penetrating analysis of their religious deficiency. He addressed them emphatically with *ὑμεῖς*, as if pointing them out with a finger. *ἐστε* as a present tense, indicates He was describing their present condition, a condition of continuation. They were the *οἱ δικαιοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων* (vs. 15). *ἐστε* is in the indicative mood, denoting a statement of fact. The statement by itself probably would not have sounded incriminating to the Pharisees. *δικαιοῶ* has legal connotations.¹³ Might a person not vindicate or justify

himself so that other men could recognize it? The ridiculing of Jesus' teaching by the Pharisees lends itself to this kind of self-justification. If Luke was correct in his depicting of the Pharisees as fond of money, then in order to vindicate themselves when Jesus states that a person cannot serve God and mammon, they would need to discredit His teaching or prove themselves righteous. Ridicule would have served both purposes. Discrediting Jesus' teaching supported the status quo of their own creation.

The Pharisees were like the unfaithful steward in Jesus' parable (Lk. 16:1-8). He, instead of seeking to reconcile himself with his master, chose to make himself more acceptable to his master's debtors. The parable illustrates a comparable situation demonstrated by the Pharisees. Instead of seeking to justify themselves before God, they considered it more expedient to justify themselves before men. But, Jesus is not so blunt in addressing the Pharisees. His approach is more subtle and convicting. He follows up His statement that "You are the ones justifying yourselves before men" with another statement joined by the mild adversative conjunction *δέ*. This statement like the first has a present indicative verb (*γινώσκει*). "But God knows your hearts." In these two declarative statements, Jesus never really condemns the Pharisees. It is possible for one to be justified in men's eyes as well as before God, and it was not a new concept that God knew what was in a man's heart (see I Sa. 16:7, Prov. 21:2, 24:12). Jesus simply calls these two facts to mind and leaves each person's conscience to be his judge. In this lies the power of Jesus' response. While one might ignore the accusation of another, conviction coming from within is incapable.

Jesus ends the sentence (vs. 15) with a clause introduced by the causal conjunction *ὅτι*. "For the exalted thing among men is an abomination before God." This elucidates the relationship between the two previous statements. In seeking justification before men, a successful endeavor requires using and relying upon things which men will consider exalted. But, Jesus states that those things men consider exalted are abominable before God. *βδέλυγμα* means literally "anything that must not be brought before God because it arouses his wrath."¹⁴ This eliminates the possibility of the Pharisees being able to please both men and God. They must make a choice, they cannot do both. Seeking to be justified before men excludes them from being justified before God. The seriousness of this decision is obvious. Here as in verse 13 Jesus sets forth two alternatives from which one must choose. He can choose to serve either God or mammon, but not both. Likewise, he can choose to be justified either before men or before God. In both cases the necessity of choosing God is obvious.

In consideration of the references to wealth in verses 13 and 14, Jesus may have had in mind the Pharisees' giving of alms for the purpose of winning favor among men and demonstrating their piety.¹⁵ This represents but one way in which a person could seek to justify himself. A more inclusive element of self-justification is mentioned in verse 16 (*ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται*) and provides a link in thought between verses 14-15 and 16-18. Most commentators do not attempt to link the two sections but treat them as separate subjects.¹⁶ But, approaching the subject from Luke's perspective, a possible connection can be derived.

ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται played a significant role in the self-justification of the Pharisees. The Pentateuch and the writings

of the Prophets comprised the major portion of Hebrew Scripture for the Pharisees.¹⁷ One of the leading characteristics of the Pharisaic party was their zeal in carrying out the smallest of requirements found in the Law and the Prophets.¹⁸ Jesus on a number of occasions criticized them for attention to small matters of obedience to *νόμος* while overlooking requirements of greater weight (e.g., Mt. 23:23-26). He accused them of making an outward show of their religious piety (see Mt. 23:5-7) while inside they were full of hypocrisy (see Mt. 23:27-28). From this analysis it becomes clear that *νόμος* served the Pharisees in the process of justifying themselves before men. *νόμος* listed the requirements of God; and, by strictly conforming to certain outward elements of *νόμος*, the Pharisees could present evidence of their piety before men. However, neither Jesus nor God can be deceived by only an outward show. In chapter 18, Luke records a parable Jesus addressed to the self-righteous. The self-righteous person was a Pharisee (18:10). He prided himself in fasting twice a week and paying his tithe dutifully (vs. 12). But, it was the sinner in the story rather than the Pharisee who went away justified before God (vs. 14). In another instance, Luke records Jesus' conversation with a rich ruler (Lk. 18:18-30). He had observed all the commandments from his youth up, but he still lacked one requirement to gain eternal life (vs. 22). *νόμος* was used by the Pharisees to justify themselves, even though that was not its intention. The Law and the Prophets were the authoritative sources of knowledge regarding the divine will of God for His people. They stood along with the "Writings" as God's revelation. The advent of Jesus marked a fulfillment of prophecy and a new revelation related to God's will. Self-righteous Pharisaism did not welcome the new revelation. The status quo

suited their style of righteousness. Jesus threatened the status quo and He was eventually crucified for it. Self-justification attempts based upon *νόμος* failed for the Pharisees. The full extent of the Law's failure to justify a person is developed more fully by Paul in Romans and Galatians. While the limitations of *νόμος* in producing righteousness were known to Jesus, His primary concern seems to have been not so much the Law's deficiency as upholding its authority and validity. This will be part of the next section's focus on the Law and the kingdom of God.

νόμος and ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ

Jesus identified John as representing a transition between *ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται* and *ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ*. The prepositions *μέχρι* (until) and *ἀπό* (from) identify the transition. The absence of a verb in the first part of the sentence (vs. 16) to describe what about the Law and the Prophets existed or functioned until John presents somewhat of a problem. Most likely the verb will be a form of *εἰμί*, with the past tense indicated by the context.¹⁹ But, even after inserting the verb, it still remains difficult to understand exactly what Jesus meant. In a similar passage in Matthew (Mt. 11:12-13) Jesus likewise points to John as a transitional figure. There the verb *ἐπροφῆτευσαν* describes the function of the Prophets and the Law until the time of John the Baptist as prophecy. John is identified by Jesus as the "Elijah who was to come" (see Mt. 11:14; Mal. 4:5). Jesus' appearance, as well as John's, fulfilled the prophecy of Scripture (see Lk. 3:4f; Mt. 5:17). While the concept of fulfillment can be included in the "being" verb supplied in Luke's version, "being" itself

implies more than prophecy. It involves the full realm of implications deriving out of the Law and the Prophets at the time Jesus spoke. This list would include the elements of authority, prophecy, function, and others. The sense is one of inclusiveness as opposed to exclusiveness, all the attributes the Jewish mind attached to the function and existence of the Law and the Prophets.

Jesus points to the introduction of something new from the time of John, the proclamation of good news about the kingdom of God (vs. 16). It might appear that Jesus was indicating the replacement of the Law and the Prophets by the kingdom of God. However, this conclusion is lacking in evidence. There is no adversative conjunction between the two clauses to indicate opposition. Jesus, however, seems to have anticipated the question regarding the relationship between νόμος and ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ for He goes on in verse 17 to clarify the issue.

Verse 17 serves as a corrective for those who might interpret the kingdom of God as invalidating νόμος. Jesus uses a comparative adjective to link the stability and validity of νόμος to creation itself. A similar comparison is recorded in Matthew 5:18.²⁰ Whatever transition Jesus means in verse 16, it does not involve invalidation of νόμος. The stability of νόμος exceeds the eschatological passing of heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1). Since the kingdom of God era was inaugurated by John, νόμος still stands. The degree to which it stands is illustrated by the phrase μίαν κεφαίαν πετεῖν. κεφαίαν describes in hyperbolic fashion the full validity of every aspect of νόμος.²¹

Since νόμος is not invalidated by ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ, the question must be answered as to the nature of the transition Jesus

indicated in verse 16. From the above discussion it can be concluded that whatever the transition, it did not involve dissolution of *νόμος* with the coming of the kingdom of God. *νόμος* continued in validity after John and during the proclaiming of the gospel. Since the transition involved not the negation of *νόμος*, it must have involved the addition of the good news of the kingdom of God to it. The full implications of that addition center in Christ's mission into the world. *νόμος* remained valid in ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Verse 18 illustrates and emphasizes the interrelatedness of *νόμος* and ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ. Usually this verse is considered by itself as addressing a new topic. While the information about divorce is valid, one must then ask why Luke included it in this context. The hypothesis of this paper is that he included it not primarily for its teaching about divorce but because it illustrated the validity of *νόμος* in relation to the kingdom of God. Basic to understanding the illustration is the essential sinful nature of adultery in whatever its form. With this understanding, Jesus said that every man (*πᾶς*) who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery. The use of *πᾶς* suggests a comparison to every man (*πᾶς*) who is trying to force (*βιάζεται*)²² his way into the kingdom of God (vs. 16). The insincerity of response to John's ministry (see Lk. 3:7f) and Jesus' teaching about the narrow gate (see Lk. 13:24) support the position that men were trying to enter the kingdom with force or with inadequate qualifications. Applying this information to the teaching about divorce, the following application can be drawn. The man who divorced himself from the authority of *νόμος* and sought to join himself to the kingdom of God engaged in adultery. Such an attempt to enter the kingdom of God was as invalid and unrighteous

as adultery and consequently ineffective. In fact, that person does not enter the kingdom of God at all. The second half of verse 18 illustrates the same truth from a different perspective. Jesus identifies as adultery the case of a man marrying a woman divorced from another man. As an illustration of the relationship between *νόμος* and the kingdom of God, the man who seeks to enter the kingdom of God divorced from *νόμος* attempts a union which is forbidden. *νόμος* and *ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ* are inseparable. It is admitted that this comparison of divorce with the relationship of *νόμος* to the kingdom of God is hypothetical. But, weighing this interpretation against the other studies about Jesus' teachings will determine the accuracy of comparison.

Chapter 10

EXPOSITION OF JOHN 7:14-24

Contextual Considerations

Immediate Context

John 7:1-52 stands as a unit with reference to time and event. The incidents recorded occur just prior to and include the time of the Jewish Feast of Booths (7:2). Verses 7:1-9 tell of the discussion between Jesus and His brothers as His brothers try to persuade Him to leave Galilee and travel with them to Jerusalem. John notes that Jesus had decided not to "walk" in Judea because the Jews wanted to kill Him (7:1). Jesus refused to travel with His brothers to Jerusalem because it was an inopportune time. However, later Jesus did go up to Jerusalem in a less conspicuous fashion (7:10). Verses 10-13 tell of the controversy His teaching and works had caused among the people and the various differing views reflected. About the middle of the feast Jesus entered the Temple and began teaching. The Jews responded to His teaching, and Jesus responded to them. Verses 25-36 show the opposite degrees of response to Jesus' teaching. Some of the crowd believed (7:31), but the rulers of the Temple only renewed their efforts to seize Jesus (7:32). The divided response of the crowd continues to occupy the center of the story on the last day of the feast (7:37-44). The chapter ends with the controversy still strong. The response of the people remains divided among the multitudes and even among the rulers themselves (7:45ff.). Controversy concerning Jesus and His ministry is a keynote in the chapter.

The chapter begins with the skepticism of Jesus' brothers (7:3ff.) and ends with Nicodemus, one of the Jewish leaders, defending Jesus before the Pharisees (7:30ff.)

Extended Context

John 7:14-24 has no parallel record in the other Gospels.¹ However, the environment denoted in the text forms the setting for repeated incidents involving Jesus in John's narrative. The time of the setting is close to or during a Jewish festival and the location is in Jerusalem (see Jn. 2:13f; 5:1f; 7:2f.). The similarity of setting from the different accounts recorded by John has led some commentators to suspect the possibility of textual rearrangement within the Gospel. John 7:15-25 represents an example of a possible dislocated text. Some suggest that a more natural location for the text is immediately following John 5:47.² However, these suppositions are not essential for interpretation of the text. Some of the allusions in John 7:14-24 do seem to point to events recorded in John 5. But, these corresponding points can be sufficiently justified on the basis of the extraordinary nature of the events or on the basis of the editorial contribution of the author (cf. 5:18 and 7:1; 5:15-16 and 7:23). The events are significant enough to have remained in the mind of the people involved over the time span indicated. The points of correspondence significant to exposition of the text will be identified and discussed as the need arises.

Textual Observations

14 Ἡ δὲ τῆς ἑορτῆς μεθούσης
ἀνέβη Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν
καὶ ἐδίδασκεν.

Note: Jesus' action of going into the Temple is punctiliar (aorist), but His teaching is viewed as continuing (imperfect).

15 ἐθαύμαζον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι λέγοντες,
 πῶς οὗτος γράμματα οἶδεν
 μὴ μεμαθηκώς;

Note: The tense of ἐθαύμαζον makes the action simultaneous with ἐδίδασκεν (vs. 14) and motivates a subsequent action of speaking (λέγοντες). ἐθαύμαζον leads to the interrogative πῶς. οὗτος indicates the question was directed among themselves (3rd person rather than 2nd). γράμματα οἶδεν can refer either to "elementary knowledge" or to "higher learning."³ The later interpretation fits best with the context since it is Jesus' ability in teaching which arouses their wonder. μεμαθηκώς literally means "learn" through the instruction of someone.⁴ μὴ μεμαθηκώς questions not only the source but the validity of Jesus' knowledge. John makes a distinction between the Ἰουδαῖοι and the ὄχλος (vv. 11-13). Jesus' opposition comes from the Ἰουδαῖοι (see Jn. 5:13; 7:1,11).

16 ἀπεκρίθη οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν,
 Ἡ ἐμὴ διδαχὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὴ
 ἀλλὰ
 τοῦ πέμψαντός με.

Note: Although the Jews may not have been addressing Jesus with their comment (vs. 15), Jesus addresses (ἀπεκρίθη)

their question regarding the source of His knowledge.

The strong adversative conjunction *ἀλλά* emphasizes the source of Jesus' teaching and His role as messenger

(πέμψαντος).

- 17 *εἰάν τις θέλῃ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν,
γινώσεται περὶ τῆς διδαχῆς
πότερον ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἔστιν
ἢ ἐγὼ ἀπ' ἑμαυτοῦ λαλῶ.*

Note: *εἰάν* introduces the subjunctive clause which identifies a necessary condition to "knowing" the source of Jesus' teaching. *γινώσεται* as a future tense points to a failure of the Jews to presently meet the requirement.

Jesus recognized only two possible sources of His teaching,

ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ or *ἀπ' ἑμαυτοῦ*.

- 18 *ὁ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ λαλῶν τὴν δόξαν τὴν ἰδίαν ζητεῖ.
ὁ δὲ ζητῶν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ πέμψαντος αὐτόν,
οὗτος ἀληθὴς ἐστίν
καὶ
ἀδικία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν.*

Note: Jesus identifies two types of teachers. In verse 17 the criterion for judging between the two involved spiritual qualification on the part of the one judging. In verse 18, Jesus presents a more objective approach based on logic. The key to judging is in the answer to the question, "Whose glory is he seeking, his own or the one who sent him?" The one fitting the latter category is *ἀληθής* and not *ἀδικία*. *ἀληθής* is opposite *ἀδικία*.

19a οὐ Μωϋσῆς δέδωκεν ὑμῖν τὸν νόμον;

Note: The expected answer is "yes" (οὐ with the indicative), a rhetorical question. ὑμῖν refers to the Jews of verse 15.

19b καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐξ ὑμῶν ποιεῖ τὸν νόμον.

Note: ὑμῶν refers to the Jews mentioned in verse 15. ποιεῖ returns the question regarding the source of Jesus' teaching back to the qualification of verse 17, which the Jews failed to meet.

19c τί με ζητεῖτε ἀποκτεῖναι;

Note: The failure of the Jews to obey νόμος is illustrated by their seeking to kill Jesus. Jesus knew of their evil intentions (see Jn. 7:1).

20 ἀπεκρίθη ὁ ὄχλος, Δαιμόνιον ἔχεις.
τίς σε ζητεῖ ἀποκτεῖναι;

Note: The ὄχλος rather than the Jews respond. Δαιμόνιον ἔχεις reflects their ignorance of the attempt.

21 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς,
Ἐν ἔργον ἐποίησα καὶ πάντες θαυμάζετε.

Note: πάντες seems to indicate that now Jesus is addressing the whole crowd rather than just the Jews. Ἐν ἔργον in respect to verse 23 points to the incident of healing recorded in Jn. 5:1-17. While this incident is remote in scriptural location, the response generated among the Jews and the crowd by Jesus in John 7:10-13 may be explained by the events of that incident. Certainly, the desire of the Jews to kill Jesus is continued (see Jn.

5:18; 7:1,11).

- 22 διὰ τοῦτο Μωϋσῆς δέδωκεν ὑμῖν τὴν περιτομὴν-
οὐχ ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Μωϋσέως ἐστὶν
ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν πατέρων-
καὶ ἐν σαββάτῳ περιτέμνετε ἄνθρωπον.

Note: διὰ τοῦτο appears incongruous. The closest references seem to be a comparison of the ἐν ἔργον of Jesus (vs. 21) and the ritual of circumcision. οὐχ...πατέρων is parenthetical. πατέρων refers to an origin of the practice begun by Abraham (see Gen. 17:10-13). Moses reaffirmed its practice in the Law (see Lev. 12:3).

- 23 εἰ περιτομὴν λαμβάνει ἄνθρωπος ἐν σαββάτῳ
εἷνα μὴ λυθῇ ὁ νόμος Μωϋσέως,
ἐμοὶ χολᾶτε ὅτι ὅλον ἄνθρωπον ὑγίη ἐποίησα
ἐν σαββάτῳ;

Note: εἰ introduces the protasis of a conditional sentence.

The indicative mood of λαμβάνει indicates the reality of the premise.⁵ The present tense of λαμβάνει points to the possibility of it occurring at the time Jesus was speaking. εἷνα begins the clause stating the purpose behind receiving circumcision on the Sabbath. ἐμοὶ introduces the apodosis, a rhetorical question. On the basis of the protasis, Jesus considers χολᾶτε an inappropriate response to His action on the Sabbath.

- 24 μὴ κρίνετε κατ' ὄψιν,
ἀλλὰ τὴν δικαίαν κρίσιν κρίνετε.

Note: κρίνετε can be either indicative or imperative. As a

summary statement, the imperative seems more probable.

ἀλλά places the two methods of judging in opposition.

μὴ κρίνετε with its present tense means "stop your present habit of judging according to appearance."⁶

Exegetical Discourse

νόμος and Μωϋσῆς

The Gospel of John refers to Moses 12 times.⁷ Seven of those times his name is associated with νόμος.⁸ In verse 7:19 he is described as the giver (δέδωκεν) of νόμος. Verse 7:22 describes him as the giver of circumcision, but a parenthetical note by Jesus points to an origin of circumcision back to the time of the Fathers. Verse 7:23 interrelates νόμος and Moses (ὁ νόμος Μωϋσέως). In light of these observations, John records Jesus as closely associating νόμος with Moses' contribution in the formulation of νόμος.

νόμος and ἡ διδαχὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ

The relationship between νόμος and ἡ διδαχὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ is indirectly established in John 7:14-24. To derive the relationship will require examination of the situation in context and then pointing out the connecting links. The entire 7th chapter functions as a unit in establishing the immediate context.

The specific situation of major concern involves Jesus' entrance into the Jerusalem Temple, where He engaged in teaching (vs. 14, ἐδίδασκεν). In response to His teaching, the Jews were marveling (vs. 15, ἐθαύμαζον). This "marveling" might reflect either astonishment at the quality of Jesus' teaching or astonishment at the audacity of an

unlearned man (*μη μεμαθηκώς*) teaching in the Temple. Considering the hostility of the Jews toward Jesus and their intention to kill Him (see 5:18; 7:11), it seems doubtful they had anything but contempt for Jesus. Their desire to see Jesus dead indicates they sided with those who considered Jesus' teachings to be leading the multitude astray (vs. 12). However, not all of those listening to Jesus were hostile toward Him (see 7:12, 31). John makes a distinction between the Jews, who seek Jesus' death, and the crowd (*ὄχλος*). Those who oppose Jesus, John calls Jews (see 5:18, 7:11), and those who are undecided, he refers to as the crowd (see 7:12, 31).⁹ It was the Jews rather than the crowd who questioned Jesus' teaching (vs. 15).

Jesus understood the question of the Jews (*πῶς...μεμαθηκώς*) to relate to the source of authority for His teaching. *μεμαθηκώς* means literally "learning one has received through instruction."¹⁰ The primary focus of the question was not with Jesus' education. They asserted that He had none. Such knowledge of Jesus' qualifications could very easily have been known by the Jews. Knowledge about Jesus is reflected in the general knowledge of the crowd concerning Him (vs. 7:27). Leon Morris commenting on the charge of being uneducated, takes the remark to refer to the fact Jesus had not attended the recognized institutions of higher education, the rabbinic schools. Morris also points out that originality of thought was not prized at that time.¹¹ Attaching the source of one's knowledge to a recognized rabbi would give credibility to one's words. Jesus must have appeared to be a maverick in their eyes. This helps to understand the motive for their question (vs. 15). The question has a rhetorical quality. It was addressed not to Jesus (*πῶς οὐτως*), but only about Him. As a rhetorical question, the intended

purpose was the casting of doubt about the validity of Jesus' teaching. Since the source of His knowledge had not come through the recognized channels, one could conclude that it was a personal invention. In Jesus' response to the casting of doubt upon His teaching, He identified God as the source of His knowledge and message.

While from the Jewish perspective the absence of a rabbinical education seriously would question one's authority, from Jesus' perspective this fact not only failed to invalidate but supported the greater validity of His teaching. After concluding that Jesus had not obtained the knowledge of His teaching from other men, the only other possibilities were either He invented it himself or He received it from God. Jesus' argument considered these two remaining options. Jesus stated emphatically that His teaching derived not from himself (vs. 16, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὴ) but (ἀλλά) from the one who had sent (πέμψαντός) Him. Knowledge (vs. 17, γινώσεται) of the source of Jesus' teaching was available to those who met a personal prerequisite. Jesus stated the prerequisite with εἰ and the subjunctive mood. A condition to knowing involved first a willingness (θέλη) to do (ποιεῖν) the will (θέλημα) of Him who had sent Jesus. In the apodosis of verse 17 Jesus identified the two possible sources of His teaching, 1) from God or 2) from himself. The logical deduction is that the τοῦ πέμψαντος of verse 16 must be God since Jesus already eliminated himself as the source (vs. 16, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὴ). The conditional clause of verse 17 provides a subjective approach for distinguishing the true source of Jesus' teaching. However, verse 18 provides a more objective guide for deciding. An objective approach lends itself to validation through human experience and observation. Logic and experience support the

conclusion that a person who speaks only from himself seeks his own glory (δόξαν). Since he points to no one else as a source, a popular receptivity of his teaching will bring glory to himself. But, the person who seeks the glory of the one who has sent him neither seeks nor desires glory for himself. Jesus concludes that such a person is true (ἀληθής) and that unrighteousness (ἀδικία) is not (οὐκ) in him. In providing an objective method for judging the source of a person's teaching, Jesus challenged the Jews to evaluate His teaching according to this principle. If they did, they would discover that He did not seek His own glory but that of God. This method by its objectivity lent itself to the unbelieving Jews. Of the two approaches for judging, the latter was the only one of the two which the Jews could use since they were disqualified for the first (vs. 17). Verse 19 points to their deficiency.

Verse 19 contains three sentences from Jesus. The first is a rhetorical question regarding the source of νόμος. οὐ indicates that the expected answer was "yes."¹² The Jews did recognize that Moses was the giver of νόμος. However, νόμος was viewed as more than just a human creation. Although given by Moses, its content was of divine origin.¹³ It was considered the most authoritative portion of Hebrew Scripture. The will of God for Israel was revealed in νόμος for the covenant community. The Jews knew all this and accepted it as true; consequently, the rhetorical question of Jesus called to mind all these factors with an obvious "yes." While thinking "yes" to Jesus' first comment, Jesus followed up with a statement of accusation. Just as it was true that Moses had given them νόμος (which they would agree with) so also it was true that not one of them obeyed νόμος (καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐξ ὑμῶν ποιεῖ τὸν νόμον). While agreeing to the

first statement, they would not be so willing to admit the second.

οὐδεὶς refers not to a universal condition of mankind but to the party of Jews (*ἐξ ἑμῶν*) who had questioned Jesus' teaching (vs. 15). The final sentence in Jesus' logical treatise involves another question that indicated the failure of the Jews to do *νόμος*. "Why are you seeking to kill me?" Jesus knew of their intention to kill Him (see 5:18, 7:1), and this violated the sixth commandment of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:13). Jesus was not identifying their only failure to do (*ποιεῖ*) *νόμος*, but He was identifying one example of failure to which others could be added. Failure in one aspect of *νόμος* did not make a person more righteous than a person failing in a multitude of areas. Failure to do *νόμος* meant failure with regard to the divine imperatives expressing God's will for His people. Because of their failure, the Jews lacked the qualification to know (vs. 17, *γινώσκειται*) whether the source of Jesus' teaching was from himself or from God. Willingness to do the "will of God" as revealed in *νόμος* would have enabled them to recognize that Jesus' teaching was from the same source as *νόμος*. In this principle lies the relationship between *νόμος* and *ἡ διακονία τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*. The combination of the two is fundamental to the ministry of John the Baptist. He prepared the way for Christ by calling people to repentance for their sins under the Law (see Lk. 3:2ff). Those who failed to live up to the level of their present awareness of God's will would not be in a position to receive a new revelation of truth. Obedience to *νόμος* provided the basis for proper evaluation of Jesus' teaching. Their disobedience to *νόμος* blinded them to the truth.

νόμος and τὴν δικαίαν
κρισιν

Having finished the discourse related to the authority of His teaching (7:16-19), Jesus paused and the crowd (vs. 20, ὄχλος) responded to the charge that they were plotting to kill Him (vs. 19). The crowd appeared to be unaware of any plot and they wondered if Jesus might be raving (vs. 20, Δαυμόνον ἔχεις). In verse 7:21 Jesus takes up a new line of discourse that has strong connecting elements with chapter 5. The setting for both chapters (5 and 7) is the same, Jesus is in Jerusalem during festival time (see 5:1, 7:2). The narrative in chapter 5 indicates that the Jews had decided to kill Jesus because He had broken the Sabbath by healing a man and because He called God His Father (5:18). The interconnection between the two chapters has led some commentators to consider the order of the Gospel to have been rearranged.¹⁴ However, the present study assumes that the author was aware of literary procedures and attempted to be chronologically accurate but topically relevant. The animosity of the Jews toward Jesus during the visit recorded in chapter 5 would not have been forgotten easily. In fact, John indicates in 7:11 that the Jews were looking for Jesus at the feast. Religious indignation still burned strong in their memory, and John conveys that message in his narration. Although the situation of 7:22-24 was remote in time, both Jesus and the Jews, from John's perspective, had not forgotten the events of that earlier encounter. Jesus' words recalled the event which had aroused the wrath of the Jews toward Him; and, now He presents a defense for His actions.

ἐν ἔργον (vs. 21) refers to the healing of the man on the Sabbath in chapter 5 (5:2-9). The aorist tense of ἐποίησα points to

a previous event. Jesus indicates in 5:20 that "works" (ἔργα) were done in order that people might marvel (θαυμάζητε). Marveling was an intended response to the miracles Jesus performed. Surely the healing of a man afflicted by sickness for 38 years (5:5) was reason to marvel. Jesus' miracles were done as signs (σημεῖον) which beyond causing marveling were intended to stimulate belief (see 2:11; 3:2; 4:54; 6:2, 14, 26, 30). Works or signs were done in order that people might have a reason for believing that Jesus had been sent by God (5:36, 3:2).

διὰ τοῦτο (vs. 22) points to a similar type of sign given by Moses, circumcision. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and Israel.¹⁵ It was a visible mark to remind a person of his relationship to God. In much the same way, Jesus' works/signs were done to call people's attention to God. In the works Jesus performed, God was calling attention to the validity of Jesus' message.

Moses had given the people circumcision (vs. 22). Parenthetically Jesus noted that even though Moses called for circumcision in νόμος (Lv. 12:3), the initiation of the rite in its covenant significance went back to the time of the Fathers (Gn. 17:10-13). Because of the more ancient heritage, Jesus observed that the present practice was to circumcise (περιτέμνετε) a man even if it happened to be the Sabbath (vs. 22). Jesus argued that if (vs. 23, εἰ) a man received circumcision (a sign of the covenant) on the Sabbath in order that νόμος might not be broken (εἴνα μὴ λυθῇ ὁ νόμος), then why were they angry with Him because He had made a whole man healthy (ὅλον ἄνθρωπον ὑγιῇ) on the Sabbath (a "sign" of miraculous character). From Jesus' perspective both events were of comparable nature. Jesus was not denigrating the practice of circumcision on the Sabbath, but He

was justifying the healing of a man as also valid work to be accomplished on the Sabbath. Healing the man was not only valid, but from the perspective of the man who was healed it involved an act of even greater significance than the receiving of circumcision. Both circumcision and healing affected the body. Circumcision at the time of its performance detracts from a man's health until the cut healed. Jesus, rather than creating a wound to be healed, healed a disease-wounded man. In this respect His act was of greater good than circumcision. He brought wholeness (*ὅλον*) to a man. From the words which Jesus later spoke to the man (5:14), it appears Jesus not only brought wholeness and healing to his body but also in his relationship with God. While circumcision could only remind one of his covenant relationship, Jesus by His act restored a relationship. To the Jews, Jesus' act of healing involved a violation of the Sabbath (5:18). From Jesus' perspective, it was an act of greater value than the circumcision which they practiced in strict accordance to *νόμος*.

Jesus concluded His discourse with two imperative statements (vs. 24). First, He communicated the prohibition for the people to stop (*μή* with the present imperative *κρίνετε*) the present practice of judging according to appearance (*ὄψιν*). However, this should not be taken to mean that appearance had no value in judging. Appearance had value, but appearance should not be the sole criterion for judging. Appearances could be deceptive. The proper way to judge is expressed in the second imperative. "But (*ἀλλά*) judge righteous judgment (*δικαίαν κρίσιν*)."¹⁶ Righteous judgment looked beyond the circumstantial, beyond a mere legalism.¹⁶ It pointed to a judgment more from God's point of view than from man's point of view. Human "righteous judgment"

modeled the righteousness of God's judgment. The human judge should remember that the divine judge demonstrated His love for sinners by sending His Son into the world to save them (Jn. 3:16). Judgment intertwined with love is "righteous judgment." Judging by appearances, according to a cold legal interpretation of νόμος, resulted in faulty judgment. If the Jews had judged righteously, they would have seen that the healing of the man by Jesus was not a violation of νόμος, but, as Jesus saw it, the act of making a man whole and healthy.

Chapter 11

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Definition of νόμος

Jesus always attached the definite article to νόμος. This indicates that νόμος was always viewed as a specific identifiable object. Added to this is the association in every instance, either directly or indirectly, of νόμος with a written word. The conclusion is that Jesus was referring to Scripture when He mentioned νόμος. However, identifying νόμος with Scripture represents a broad categorical use of the word. The various contexts in which Jesus used the word indicate that He often had a more limited perspective. The narrowest perspective of νόμος is with regard to the Pentateuch (see Jn. 7:19; Mt. 7:12; Lk. 24:44). The broadest perspective of νόμος involves reference to the whole of Hebrew Scripture (see Jn. 10:34; 15:25).

Content of νόμος

When Jesus mentioned νόμος, He was referring to more than a written collection of words. Two aspects of Scripture stand out as being the most significant. Foremost in Jesus' teachings was the authoritative character of νόμος. νόμος communicated the divine requirement or commandment to mankind. νόμος above all other considerations was a message from God to man. The imperative character of Scripture was a major focus in Jesus' use of νόμος (see Mt. 5:17-20; 7:12; 22:34-40). A second focus associated with νόμος involved its

prophetic function. Theologically, this function is very close to the imperative function. However, prophecy as Jesus associated it with *vómos* referred to the predictive element and the part Jesus played in bringing about the fulfillment of prophecy (see Mt. 5:17; Jn. 10:34; 15:25). These two elements, commandment and prophecy, describe the primary perspective of Jesus with regard to *vómos*.

Relationships of *vómos*

In summary, five theological relationships stand out in Jesus' teachings. Each relationship has been discussed in one or more of the preceding chapters. They are identified here only briefly.

vómos and Jesus. The authority of *vómos* and the authority of Jesus never came into conflict. Jesus' teachings harmonized with *vómos* when properly understood.

vómos and the kingdom of God. *vómos* was not invalidated by the coming of the kingdom of God. Instead, the ethics of the kingdom are founded upon *vómos*. They are actually an extension of *vómos*.

vómos and eternal life. Jesus taught that eternal life was contingent upon obeying the divine imperatives of *vómos*.

vómos and self-righteousness. *vómos* lent itself to attempts at self-justification. Jesus pointed out the inadequacy of those who tried.

vómos and righteous judgment. Jesus presented righteous judgment as the model for applying the principles of *vómos*. This approach was in distinction from the legalistic model of the Pharisees.

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²Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), pp. 379-380.

³Manson, p. 295.

- ⁴Manson, p. 133.
- ⁵See p. 8.
- ⁶Manson, p. 135.
- ⁷See pp. 10ff.
- ⁸Manson, p. 136.
- ⁹Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, ed. and trans., William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (2nd ed.; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 838.
- ¹⁰Cf. Bauer, p. 146.
- ¹¹Cf. Bauer, p. 321.
- ¹²Bauer, p. 490.
- ¹³Cf. Gerhard Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. II, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. and ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 211, 215.
- ¹⁴Bauer, p. 137.
- ¹⁵I. Howard Marshall, The Gospel of Luke (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 625-626.
- ¹⁶e.g., Manson and Marshall.
- ¹⁷Cf. Matthew Black, "Pharisees," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, George Arthur Buttrick et al., eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 777.
- ¹⁸Black, p. 776.
- ¹⁹Cf. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, Robert W. Funk, trans. and ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 70.
- ²⁰See pp. 10ff.
- ²¹Bauer, p. 428.
- ²²Cf. Bauer, p. 140.

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- ¹Cf. C.K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 261.
- ²Barrett, p. 261.
- ³Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, ed. and trans., William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (2nd ed.; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 165.
- ⁴Bauer, p. 490.
- ⁵Cf. H.E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (Toronto, Ontario: The Macmillan Co., 1927, 1955), p. 289.

⁶Cf. Dana, p. 301.

⁷J. Strong, The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon, 1890).

⁸W.F. Moulton and A.S. Geden, A Concordance to the Greek Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897; 3rd ed., 1926; rev. J. Recks, 1963), p. 667.

⁹Cf. Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), p. 402.

¹⁰Bauer, p. 490.

¹¹Morris, p. 405.

¹²Cf. Dana, p. 264.

¹³Cf. W.D. Davies, "Law in First-Century Judaism," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. III, George Arthur Buttrick et al., eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 91.

¹⁴Cf. Barret, pp. 261-262.

¹⁵Cf. J.P. Hyatt, "Circumcision," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. I, George Arthur Buttrick et al., eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 629.

¹⁶Cf. Gerhard Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. III, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. and ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 939-940.

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