



series: Red Letter City
title: The Law
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Onward we continue through our series on the “Sermon on the mount.”

I have had a great time so far studying this... every day I am learning something new, and I hope that you guys are learning from this study.

So, we have said that essentially, “The Beatitudes” which Jesus begins the whole sermon with, is essentially his text, and from there he applies them in real life situations.

But if there was one section that we absolutely can not skip over, it is the section we are going to study today. Because just like how the beatitudes are essentially the text that he applies in many ways throughout the whole sermon, the section we are about the read indicates a shift.

A dramatic shift that his listeners would have been shocked to hear. And everything beyond this section that Jesus says, must be read through the lens of what we are going to read today.

So without delay lets look at our text. It is found in Matthew 5:17-20 -

Christ Came to Fulfill the Law

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law

until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Lets pray.

One of the key questions to understanding the sermon on the mount, is the order of the sermon.

Is it coincidence that Jesus first gave us the beatitudes, speaking a blessing over the broken people who were there with him, before telling them that they were salt and light?

was it laid out in advance?

I am not sure, but I don't really get an image of Jesus going into his sermons with an outline. I think its probable that everything he said was incredibly timely and that he discerned what it was the the people needed to hear next, and I think that its very likely that he said what he said *here about the law*, because he realized that these people were beginning to go somewhere in their minds.

again, you have to consider the crowd. Just take the disciples... the bible says that they were often slow to understand. they were uneducated fishermen... beyond the uneducated fishermen were a group of outcasts who had just been told that they are blessed... that they are salt and that they are light.

Could it be that these things were already getting to their heads?

He says “do not think...” did he get the impression that they had begun to think this?

Jesus has brought a brand new, upside down Kingdom, and with it he has promised the marginalized crowd on the outskirts of the mountain and his

ragamuffin group of disciples, that they were ultimately going to be the image bearers of hope.

Could it be that these people began to think in their minds, that everything he was teaching meant he was replacing the law with himself... and that in the new role he had just given them, of being salt and light, meant that they no longer needed to follow the law, but instead needed follow this new teaching.

So right away he brings them back to reality. He says "I didn't come to do away with the law. Heaven and earth will pass away before the law does... I came to fulfill the law!"

I am sure they were thinking, okay, awesome, glad we got that out of the way. Now lets go back to our beards that we can't cut, our side burns we can't trim, the foods we can't mix together, and the 613 laws that we have spent our whole lives trying to keep even though we know that it is impossible for anybody to ever keep them all perfectly...

Why would we have thought that he came to do away with those laws? Silly us.

He only is claiming that he will fulfill them.

back. to. the. grind. of the law.

and then its likely they had another moment... one of those "Wait a second!" moments.

Fulfill the law? Is this guy crazy?!!!????!?!?!?!!!!!?

The law was not something that the Hebrew people thought needed to be fulfilled. They thought the law was a book of rules that they were bound too. They didn't understand that they all pointed, as did the rest of the bible, to the coming Messiah. and so for him to come here and say, "I am going to fulfill the law" they would have been totally, utterly, shocked.

but not only the law... but the prophets as well! For those of you who have been joining us at Equip as we have been studying each beatitude in depth, we have been talking a lot about Luke chapter 4, when Jesus said that he had fulfilled the first half of what the Prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 61... and how the crowd was shocked by that statement.

But here, Jesus is making, without a doubt, the boldest statement anybody could ever had made in that culture.

He is saying in this moment... "I am going to fulfill the entire thing."

The prophets... The law... all of it.

Many of you are probably wondering, what is the law?

"All I have ever been taught in church was that I am not bound to this thing... but the heck even is it?"

The law was 613 laws written in the Torah that the people in that day essentially built their lives on. Everything in that culture revolved around the Torah, and the books of the prophets...

By the time a child in that culture was 6 years old they had the entire book of Leviticus memorized, which is kind of the centerpiece of the law.

Could you imagine what it would take for a parent to have to do to see their child learn the entire book of Leviticus by the time they were six years old. In our culture six year olds barely know how to read yet. So literally they would have to have been speaking the book to them over and over from the time they were a baby... it would have had to have been all around them all the time.

By the time that a child was 12, they would have the entire Torah memorized, which is Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Most people in that culture had at least gotten that far in their studies, and the ones who wanted to really continue on and go deeper and potentially study under a Rabbi, would then memorize the rest of the old testament.

But even the ones who didn't memorize the old testament, at least memorized the prophecies throughout the old testament about the Messiah.

So everywhere in the bible that the Messiah is promised, and every detail given about him, they would memorize, so as to not miss him, when he one day comes.

So they knew every word. Every law. The whole Torah. Every prophecy that pointed to the Messiah so that when the day comes that the Messiah comes, they will know it.

But of course we know from the New Testament, that when the Messiah came, they missed it.

They didn't recognize him. He fulfilled every one of their prophecies, and they still missed it. There is a moment that we have talked about before, it was after Jesus had already died and rose again, when he meets some followers on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24) and even in that moment they still don't recognize Jesus but what does he do? You can read about it on your own in Luke 24, but He begins with Moses, and then onto all of the prophets in the Old Testament, and he takes them through every moment that spoke of his coming. Every moment that was fulfilled right before their eyes, that they missed.

They knew every word. They had it all memorized. It didn't matter.

Which comes to show you, that you can know the entire bible, and still not know Jesus.

You can follow every rule that was ever laid out for you... and still not know Jesus.

The reason that the concept of legalism is so easy to fall into, is because it is trackable. You can sort of track your progress. You can know where you can improve and where you are thriving. and where its not a bad thing to want to live a life that does the right thing, one of the best ways to miss Jesus is to get caught up in tracking your progress. And when you get caught up on your progress, it becomes very easy to miss what the Spirit is trying to do in your life. You see, when Jesus died, and fulfilled the law, what came with that fulfilling was an infilling.

Jesus tells us (John 16) that he has to go so that the Spirit can come. He has to fulfill the law so the Sprit can come and guide our lives into truth. The Holy Spirit of God is now alive and well and living in you and he gives you the discernment of right from wrong. and its very easy to lose sight of that when you are weighing your actions on a scale of laws.

but on the flip side, it is easy for people now to take on this gospel of grace... which we are completely under, and then think, "well, because of Jesus, we can throw out all the rules."

we can ignore the old testament. thinking we don't need it. not realizing that the what the law is, in reality, is the best way to live. It is actually, literally, perfect. It is not complete... but it is perfect. It is what a perfect life looks like. It is an unattainable life, because it is perfect... and that is why we need Jesus. but the point of grace is not to throw the law out the window entirely, the point of grace is to lean on the only one who has ever kept it perfectly.

Dallas Willard says this, and it is so powerful:

"Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning."

He explains that earning is an attitude. Which is the perfect picture I think of the heart of what it means to be poor in Spirit as we talked about two weeks ago and have been talking about on Thursdays.

Effort is an action step toward something. It is okay to work. It is not okay to lean on those works. For a lot of us I feel like grace has made us lazy. But Jesus a couple verses before addresses laziness in Christians... he says

“you are salt and light! And nobody hides a light under a basket so don’t do that. Don’t bury your talents. Don’t get lazy because Jesus did something amazing for you.

That is not the gospel. Jesus didn’t die to make you lazy.

The gospel is like the Apostle Paul says... I always end up doing what I don’t want to do...

but I want to do good. I try to do good. I just fail all the time. But when I don’t do good Jesus loves me anyway.

and in the moments when I actually do succeed in doing good, that I still know that I am nothing without Jesus. But when I do succeed, thats a testimony. That is something that hopefully will point someone else to how good God is... that he could take someone like me and use me to produce something *like that*.

Then Jesus says “For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Now...

Take a breath.

and get ready.

An “iota” was a Greek word for the Hebrew letter “yod”

The King James version says it this way, “not a yot or tittle will pass away.

Now, this statement “yot or tittle” was a well known statement in that time. In Hebrew, it was saying “not a “yod” (pronounced yode) will pass away - A “yod” is the 10th and smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It is significantly smaller than every other letter.



So not a yot will pass away means “not even the smallest letter of the law will pass away.”

tittle is the Greek word *keraiā* (ker-ah'-yah) and it was a little accent that would be used on letters.

it was a little mark that would be added to a letter... it was a little decorative line that would often be added to the "yod"

What this statement meant to the Hebrews was "not even the most insignificant thing" will pass away.

Heaven and earth are passing away, but this isn't.

So what is Jesus saying that He came to do, then, if not to abolish the law?

He came to fulfill it.

See, we read the bible so often through this lens: - "This is about me."

So you read the laws, and you think, "How can I do these things?" "How can I live up to this standard?" "But I already have tattoos." "and I shaved two weeks ago, that wasn't good." and I mixed the produce in my garden.

that is the way we think. We put ourselves in it, and that can be healthy when it comes to effort... until it turns into earning. Because when we read the bible, really we should read it through this lens:

"This is about Jesus."

It is impossible to understand the old testament not realizing that it is about Jesus. He was the one the who kept it perfectly. He is the one that every prophecy is about and he is the one who every story points to. But apart from Jesus, The whole thing will feel like a crazy burden that you could never lift in a million years.

You can't read it without Jesus.

But its also impossible to fully understand the depth of Jesus, without the old testament.

Without understanding the prophecies of a suffering servant who was to come... who by his stripes we are healed... who was pierced for our transgressions...

without understanding that the stories in the bible all point to Jesus.

And so Jesus stands before this crowd and he says that the law will always be here... the prophets will always be here. They will always be wisdom into how to live a fruitful life... the only difference is, is when I am finished with it, it is going to be fulfilled.

Both Martin Lloyd-Jones and later R.T. Kendall - both well known Pastors who both held the roll of Pastor at the famous Westminster Chapel in London, England and who both have studied, written and taught extensively on the sermon on the mount have said something along these lines in regard to the passage we have just read... the claim that Jesus fulfilled the law...

There is nothing more important.

Kendall said that he could make the case for Jesus saying "I have not come to abolish but to fulfill the law" as being the most important verse in the entire Sermon on the Mount.

Jones said that "Jesus claim to fulfill the law and prophets was the most stupendous claim Jesus ever made."

Because here we have a guy who was had just given us the beatitudes... he had just given us salt and light... he was totally preaching about an upside down Kingdom to these people who themselves upside down...but people who knew the Torah.

This was the sacred cow of the day. Absolutely. and this guy was now making the biggest claim he had ever made. He had come to fulfill the law.

This was an absolute turning point in the sermon.

and from that moment on in the sermon, he began to teach what life looks like with a law fulfilled looks like.

and everybody thinks that Jesus made it easier. But in a lot of ways he didn't.

Because everything that came after this section really introduced us to something new... it introduced us to Jesus' interpretation of the law.

it introduced us to "The Spirit of the law."

They already knew "the letter of the law" the letter of the law said "Thou shall not..." and it would go on to list a series of transgressions... of outward actions that people would commit. That was the law. You can't sleep with this relative or that relative, really you should only sleep with your spouse. You can't kill people. You can't commit adultery. You can't covet what is your neighbors.

But the problem was that in that culture it was all about keeping rules. What mattered was the action. What mattered was the external result. But what Jesus came in and did was so interesting... because he did not come to give us a bunch more rules... that is not what he did. He came instead and told us, "It is not about the rules at all. Its actually about something much bigger than the rules..."

It is about your heart."

He said things like "You have heard it said..."
but I say _____

Now, first of all, if they had heard that it was said, where would they have heard it from?

In most instances, it was something that was written in the Torah. So he would say things like "You have heard it it was said, "you shall not murder."

We all know, murder is the 6th commandment, he is quoting the ten commandments. But then he adds to it the Spirit of the law... He takes it a

step further, and he says... no, wait a minute, lets forget about the law for a second, and lets look at the heart of the matter... so he ratifies the law by saying "But I say to you if you are even angry with your brother you are liable to judgment."

Again, that is Jesus demonstrating the kind of authority that he had. There were not a lot of rabbis that had the authority to say something like this.

See, the job of a rabbi was to interpret the scriptures. And his interpretation of the scriptures is what was called his "yoke" - Jesus says this in Matthew 11:29 - he tells them that all who are heavy laden, he will give rest. He has come to lift the weight not enhance it, so he says "take my yoke upon you and learn from me." - He is telling them to learn from his perspective on the scriptures.

and we know that Jesus then says "My yoke is easy" - my interpretation of the scriptures, and the burden that they place on your life, is easy... but what would happen was a rabbi would interpret the scriptures, and then if another rabbi would disagree with that interpretation, he would say "You are canceling the Torah!"

It basically was a saying to call someone out on misinterpreting the bible...

and if someone would do that to you obviously that would be embarrassing, so most rabbis were very careful with giving new interpretations. Everything in that culture revolved around the scriptures. Everybody knew every word... and nobody wanted to be told they were canceling it by a bad interpretation, so it was rare that anybody would even try to do that.

But every so often a rabbi would come claiming to have new insight into those ancient words... a new understanding... they would say "this is what God actually meant" - and when that would happen they would be questioned... it had to be confirmed by others... it had to resonate, otherwise they would be accused of "canceling the Torah."

And so Jesus comes in and he has a new interpretation. And he says, You have heard it said _____ but I say "anyone angry is guilty. Anyone who even looks at a woman with lust in his eyes is guilty. Don't take an oath at

all... turn the other cheek. Love even those who hurt you and pray for them!"

You have heard that it was said: it is okay to look out for yourself and your own well being and if someone takes from you you take from them

but if you still believe that, then you are missing the point.

I know I have taught this before but what I am about to show you now, again... you have to catch this. You have to get this because we are going to reference it, probably every week for the next six weeks... because the next six sections that Jesus covers, without saying it all deal with this one word and the word is iniquity.

He was pierced for our transgressions... he paid an external price on the cross for the outward actions that we followed through on... but Isaiah 53 tells us that he was bruised... an internal bleeding... for our iniquities... for the things that we think in our heart, whether we act them out or not.

An iniquity is an internal motivation. The word in Hebrew is A-V-N (Avon)

For those of you unfamiliar with ancient Hebrew, the language was, before it became what it is now, originally a picture language. The Hebrews would explain things in written form in pictures rather than words, and the Hebrew alphabet, the way it is today, came from these pictures. A lot of the letters still look similar to the word pictures. and where we always want to be very careful to note that the bible by itself, without going to the Greek, or the Hebrew or the Hebrew word pictures... in and of itself even in English, is enough to show us right from wrong, and enough to point us to Jesus which is all that we need in life. The bible is living and active and the Holy Spirit uses it to bring to life the things we need. I believe it is dependable as is not because it was translated perfectly because it wasn't... but because the Holy Spirit works in your life when you read it.

But when we do look at some of the ancient perspectives it really can help us understand the meaning of what is being said even more clearly.

and every time that the word iniquity shows up in the Old Testament, like in Isaiah 53 when it says that Jesus was bruised for our iniquities, the Hebrew word is AVON.

and in the ancient picture graphs the letters in the word avon, it is a picture of an eye, of a hook, and of fish multiplying.

and what it is believed to mean is that “whatever your eye hooks to, multiplies.”

Jesus is basically saying the same thing... take for instance when he talks about lust, if you eye hooks on a woman, if she catches your eye and you know that she is not your wife... you know that she is someone else's wife or you know that you have your own wife, but you let your eye get hooked on her... that thought is going to multiple... the more you feed it, the more it will grow.

and suddenly You have filled your heart with something that it does not belong to. Your heart belongs to YOUR WIFE. Your eye should never have left your wife.

What Jesus was doing is, in reality, without giving us any more rules he gave us more boundaries for our lives.

Not more rules... more boundaries. and there is a difference. Boundaries guard your life. Rules bind your life.

and you could be bound by a rule and sit behind an invisible jail cell constantly dwelling on what you want to be doing... but one day you will get out of that cell and that you will have a chance to act on that desire, and if every day over and over, you thought about it and thought about it, what is going to happen when you have a real chance to act on it? You probably will.

Jesus is saying, lets cut this off at the source. This is a radical shift from their culture.

The Pharisees in that day, they had no problem looking. They didn't care how you looked at someone, it didn't matter what thoughts you had... anger didn't matter if it wasn't acted on. bitterness didn't matter... lust didn't matter... because the law was all about outward actions. So the idea then was, you can look, as long as you don't touch. You can be angry for as long as you want, as long as you don't hurt... But Jesus comes in and he says, no, I care about the person you are becoming. I care about the person you are when nobody sees.

Because the person you are when nobody else is around always leads to the person you will become. Eventually, what is inside, will come out. Every bad decision in your life that you have ever made that I am sure to this day you would take back if you could, it can likely be traced back to a moment when your eye hooked on something, and wouldn't let go.

David, his eye hooked on Bathsheba.... and it spiraled from there. Iniquity lead to transgression.

What is your eye hooked on?

Iniquity if not tackled early almost certainly will lead you down a path that you do not want to go. And it may fulfill an urge in a moment but it also has the possibility of derailing your life. And it is not because grace has left you but because the world we live in is broken, and because of that there are laws in place to keep it in order. To make sure that people treat each other fairly. To make sure that when people work for a wage, you actually give them that wage. To make sure that you didn't eat things that were going to hurt your body.

The law was given for the greater good of Israel.

It is perfect.

So perfect, that Nobody can keep the law perfectly... but everyone who meditates on it, and who has the word in their heart... then the answer to what is right and what is wrong is in their heart!

Paul says in Romans 7:7 that in all actuality it was the law that showed him how sinful he was!

The law will show you right from wrong. But it won't save you. Because you can't keep it. A few verses later he tells us, that sin will use Gods good commands for its own evil purposes. (Romans 7:13 NLT) and then he says, "the trouble is not with the law, the trouble is with me. A slave to sin." and its so interesting because Paul is having this conversation with himself almost here in his letter to the Romans... like, he is sort of talking himself through what he is going through and then basically asks WHO WILL SAVE ME FROM MYSELF AND THE MISERABLE PERSON I AM? (v25) Thank God, the answer is Jesus Christ!

without Jesus Christ, its just a broken law. Its another burden we can't live up to. Another animal we would have to sacrifice. But with Jesus, it is a fulfilled law.

Then Paul tells us in Galatians (Galatians 5:4), that those who try and justify themselves by the law are obligated to the whole thing. So if you want a works based religion, you will always be working. And you are always going to be tired. And you are always going to be wondering, "did I do this right? Did I mess that up? Is God mad at me?"

The law is absolutely the best way to live your life, it is still to this day the greatest moral standard you will ever find... but if *in it* you are seeking your salvation then you are locking yourself into a lifetime of despair and uncertainty because you are a human being prone to error and prone to mistakes.

It all can be perfectly summed up by that quote by Dallas Willard. Grace isn't opposed to effort. Its opposed to earning.

Accept Grace today as you constantly seek to be more like Jesus.

Jesus ends this passage by saying this:

"For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

What He is saying here is actually pretty simple... and we will get into scribes and pharisees a little later in this series more, but they were the religious ones of the day. They were the ones who “everybody knows they are religious.” because everything was public. It was a show. Where there was a need, they would often meet that need, but they would do it in a public way so that others would see it and see how “generous” they were.

and this is why I believe that he includes this message about the Pharisees here, of all places. When he is talking about the law.

Because when you live justifying yourself by the law, as Paul says, you are always going to be working to prove to yourself and to prove to others that you are following the law. You are not secure about who you are so you keep doing these things so that others will make you feel good about yourself. So that others will pat you on the back. But a kingdom person doesn't live like that. A kingdom person is generous as an outflowing of what God has already done in their lives, not out of an insecurity that is trying to win him over time and time again.

And the religious leaders in that day not only gave their entire lives to living this thing perfectly... but they put that burden on other people as well. Their yoke was heavy. In Matthew 23 Jesus calls out 7 woes to the Pharisees and one of them is that they lay heavy burdens on people.

After Jesus has died and ascends to heaven, and the Holy Spirit comes and the church is established (Acts 15) there is a moment that the bible calls “**no small debate**”

and the discussion was over the requirements that were to be put on the Gentiles for becoming a part of the church... and there were huge differences in opinions here and essentially the centerpiece was circumcision. The more conservative Jews wanted the Gentiles to be circumcised in order to join the fellowship... which means even more than just what we think of when we think of circumcision.

These people wanted Jews to take upon themselves the law. The thought was something like, “if they are going to be grafted in, then they need to do what we do.” Which shows that so many of them still didn't get

it. They were still trying to live by the law, and in fact shunning Gentiles who wouldn't be bound by it.

The apostles were adamant that this type of a mindset was killing grace and missing the point. The burden that they were placing on people was turning them off to the gospel.

So Peter gets up and says this:

“Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”

He is saying, essentially... we tried our whole lives to earn it. One day we realized, we will never be able to earn it. But that is what makes what Jesus did so amazing. We are saved because HE EARNED IT.

A Kingdom person knows they are broken, and they know this world is broken...

A Kingdom person understands Jesus didn't come to give us a bunch of rules, he came to give us a better Kingdom. He came with a burden that is light... that doesn't have to go to the temple and sacrifice a lamb or a goat when you screw up because he already fulfilled that too. He already was the payment. He already was the price.

He is a new rabbi with a new interpretation. A new yoke. And its not rule based. It is heart based. Jesus is looking for genuine people. People who know they are broken because when they look at the law it reminds them that they will never be it. But thats okay.

Jesus loves the scriptures. He loves the law. He never spoke a word against the law or its greatness he merely spoke of the people who fall short of attaining its standard. Which is everyone. Even the religious. Even the Pharisees. Even the ones who gave their entire lives to keeping it.

The Pharisees constantly tried to trick Jesus into renouncing the law. They constantly tried to use it against him, so he would slip and say something

negative about the law so they would have something against him, but he never did.

When they caught the woman in adultery (John 8) they said brought him out and they said “the law of Moses says we should stone her... what do you say?” and of course, Jesus does not denounce the law of Moses, he simply reminds them that none of them have kept the law perfectly. Most of them were probably guilty of the law that they were trying to kill her for. The whole thing was not about stoning a woman... they almost never actually stoned someone in that day for doing something that the law declared brought death... the whole thing was a setup to trick Jesus.

And Jesus basically tells them, “you guys’ entire lives are dedicated to the law and you still don’t keep it!”

He turns it on them. He doesn’t denounce the law he reminds them all of how broken they are because they don’t keep it.

He errs on the side of grace and instead reaches into the potential of the woman’s future when he tells her “Go and sin no more.”

Another time they try and trick him by asking about taxes. (Matthew 22:15) - the bible says that they laid out the plan in advance to try and trick him, and so they asked him, “is it right to pay the tax to Caesar?”

and Jesus asks them, “well, who’s image is on this coin?”

and they tell him, “Caesars.”

So he says “So give back to Caesar what is Caesars!” ... I didn’t come to stop you from following the law I came to show you that rules won’t save you.

I am not here to take away with the rules I am here to show you that the rules are not the point!

See, what Jesus did by fulfilling the law, it is incredibly significant.

and we miss this. We think that because of Jesus... Because Jesus came, we don’t have to do the law anymore... in fact, what we do is we actually begin to criminalize the law... call it “legalism” and explain that we are not

bound to it.. but what we don't realize is that the law is not a bad thing. In fact, the law is literally perfect. Its certainly not complete, but It is the perfect image of the best way to live!

There is nothing in there that we should be like, "yeah, thats evil." or "yeah, thats stupid."

No. The law is the most complete picture of the way that a person is supposed to live.

But the reality is, where the law is perfect, we are not.

There is only one man who has ever followed the law perfectly, and his name is Jesus. But not only did he follow it perfectly, he also fulfilled it.

You can't say that you hate the law... or you despise the law... because if you say "Oh, I don't like the law..." what you are saying, though you probably don't realize it, is you are saying "I don't like Jesus."

Because not only did Jesus fulfill the law, but he also is the manifestation of it. John begins his gospel, in my opinion in the most interesting way of any of the writers... he starts by saying, "in the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the word was God"

in the beginning all we had was the bible.

All we had was the old testament... the Holy Spirit breathed words that so many of us have come to despise because we think they are "anti-Jesus" -

and in those words... in the Torah it speaks of a place called the tabernacle. And the tabernacle was the place that the "glory of God" rested... in fact the word tabernacle means "dwelling place"

then John says (John 1:14) that "the word became flesh and dwelt among us."

Everything they had ever studied, and memorized, was manifest in this one man. And then John says “we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

The glory that once dwelled in a place, now dwells among us. and his name is Jesus. and he has fulfilled the law. And we are not bound to it anymore.

We don't throw it away. It was not abolished. It was fulfilled.

Jesus came into a world that had a system that was impossible to live by, and he lived by it. He showed us, “this is about me. It is not about you. You can't do this. Only I can live up to this standard. Now, your life in *this* Kingdom will only be made better by keeping these things, but your security is no longer found in them.”

John says “He was in the world.” He was the fulfillment of everything. He was the manifestation of everything. The world was made through him... but the world did not recognize him. It says that his own people did not receive him.

The ones who studied their whole lives to make sure that they would not miss the Messiah did not recognize him when he came.

and not only did they not recognize him... but they hated him. and they killed the fulfillment of the law.

and after they put a crown of thorns on his head, John 19 records Pilot saying “I find no guilt in him.” (19:4)

They couldn't find a single law that he had broken.

Because you can't fulfill a law that you don't keep. But because he kept it, and because he wore that crown of thorns, and because he died a sinners death...

He bore the burden that the law has put on our lives, and he has declared that in him, we are free.