

Avoiding Sinful Anger

Matthew 5:21-22

I. The Truncated Teaching of the Jewish Leaders vs. 21

The *first part* of the teaching, “you shall not murder,” is an exact quote of the Septuagint translation of Exodus 20:13, where the Ten Commandments are listed. [Note: The Septuagint – often abbreviated LXX – is the Greek translation of the Old Testament that was commonly used by both Jews and Christians in the first century.]

But the *second part* of the teaching, “whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment,” is *not* a citation of any particular Old Testament passage. Rather it represents the common teaching of the scribes and Pharisees. They attempted to make righteousness more easily achievable by lowering its demands. But Jesus, the one who fulfills the Old Testament teaching, will bring the whole counsel of God to bear. In this way he will teach a “righteousness [that] exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees” (vs. 20).

II. The True Teaching of Jesus vs. 22

1. Jesus is referring not to any and all anger, but to anger *without a cause*.

Mark 3:1-5

James 1:19-20

Ephesians 4:25-27

2 Corinthians 7:9-11

2. Jesus is not really saying anything new. His response to the traditional teaching simply brings the *whole* Old Testament teaching to bear over against the scribes' and Pharisees' tendency to focus only on a part of it.

Genesis 4:3-8

Leviticus 19:17-18

Proverbs 22:24-25

Examples of the righteous use of the term *fool*: Psalm 14:1; Matthew 23:16-17; Luke 24:25-27; Galatians 3:1-3; James 2:17-20