

Till All Is Fulfilled: Matthew 5:17-18

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What did Christ mean when he said not one jot or tittle would in any wise pass from the law till all is fulfilled? While Christ said he came fulfill the law, he also stated the time and event which fulfilled the law. That event and time is “the passing of heaven and earth.” Clearly, Christ said, “till heaven and earth pass.”

Next, he states what it means to fulfill the law, “till **all** is fulfilled.” To ensure that no one misunderstood what He means by all, Jesus said that not one jot or tittle (loosely expressed, not one dotting of an “l” or crossing of a “t”) would pass till all were fulfilled.

The Lord’s statements would follow this pattern: The law would pass when “heaven and earth passes away. “ The law would pass when “all is fulfilled.” Therefore, when heaven and earth passes, all is fulfilled.

Because these two phrases are equal, “when heaven and earth passes” and when “all is fulfilled” then we have identified the time when every “l” is dotted and when every “t” is crossed. Further, because heaven and earth did not pass away at Jesus’ first coming, that could not be the passing of the law.

How Are Christ’s Words to be Interpreted?

When examining more of the Lord’s teachings on the end of the law, we can expand our thinking on how his words are to be interpreted. Luke 18:31-34, offers some additional insight.

“Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.

For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon.

They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.’

But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.”

A few points are worthy of note. One, Jesus took the twelve aside to tell them about His crucifixion and death. Secondly, that text specifically mentions “all things that are written in the “prophets.” Thirdly, they did not at that time, understand what Jesus meant.

Here we would like to make two observations regarding all things being fulfilled. The location for the events of this text is Jerusalem. Thus, only the events which take place at the time of the Christ’s death in Jerusalem could be under consideration. Those events are specifically identified in Matt. 20:18-19.

“Behold we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again.”

Thus, all the events noted take place in Jerusalem, and are associated with Christ’s death.

A second observation to be made is that Jesus includes his resurrection the third day, which may suggest that he spoke more comprehensively about the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. In other words, his resurrection on the third day was not accomplished in the words, “It is finished, (John 19:30), which were spoken from the cross.

Thirdly, the Lukan text cites that it is the prophets which are being fulfilled. So, we must not be guilty of presenting this text as relating only to the civil institutions of the law. Clearly, Christ names the prophets.