

which took the verses out of context and missed their true meaning.

Adultery

Number two in the six matters that Jesus mentions is adultery. The quotation is directly from the seventh commandment. But Jesus says, "But I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart".

It is commonly supposed that Jesus here so applies the commandment that it may reach beyond the external act to the heart motive. It is thought that Jesus does not contradict the commandment, but amplifies it. But the question is, Does Jesus actually amplify the meaning of the Old Testament text? Did the commandment merely forbid external acts?

An interpretation of this commandment is found in the legislation in Deut. 22:22-27. There it is expressly stated that the external act without the consent and purpose is not accounted as a guilty act. The Levitical regulations were not merely external legalism, but included motives and internal attitudes. Indeed Proverbs 6:25 already gives this teaching of Jesus. The Old Testament forbids heart lust as well as the outward act. And Jesus was thus in full accord with the Old Testament.

But it seems clear that the Pharisaic doctrine emphasizing externalism as it did was here rebuked by Christ. The attitude of the Pharisees is shown in several fine touches in the Gospels. In Matthew 12:39 in answer to the scribes and Pharisee's question, Jesus calls them "an evil and adulterous generation". Such language is also used in Matthew 16:4 and elsewhere. The Pharisees according to the pericope in John 8:1-11 when they brought to Jesus the woman taken in adultery emphasized that she was taken in the act, but under Jesus' skillful accusation tacitly confessed they too had sinned though not, evidently, thus overtly. Yet in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18:9-14) the Pharisee thanked God he was not an extortioner, unjust, or adulterer when the implication is that he was at heart all three. Paul, who knew the censorious Pharisees well, accuses them directly of adultery in Romans 2:22. It seems to fit the total picture best to say here also that Jesus was contradicting the legalistic exegesis of Pharisaism; he surely was not contradicting the Old Testament or even greatly expanding its teaching.

This conclusion is reinforced by study of the first of Jesus' declarations, Matthew 5:21-26. Where, be it noted, the commanded righteousness is contrasted with that of the scribes and Pharisees in verse 20.

Here the only part of the quotation coming from the Old Testament is the sixth commandment itself, "Thou shalt not kill". The remainder, "and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment (liable to the court)", is from an unknown source, but is typical of the legal interest and regulations of the time. Now Jesus' answer, "But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment" does by no means contradict the Old Testament. Indeed it is directly in line with the Old Testament teaching, "Thou shalt