



## ***St. Paul Evangelical Community Church (SPECC)***

**Worship Address :** Cerritos High School Auditorium  
12500 E. 183<sup>rd</sup> St., Cerritos, CA 90703  
(Enter at Bloomfield, across Heritage Park)

**Mailing Address :** 11428 E. Artesia Blvd. # 4 ; Artesia, CA 90701  
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**Website :** [www.sp-ecc.org](http://www.sp-ecc.org)

December 6, 2009

**Theme: Jesus Came to Change History**

**Text: Matthew 5:17-20**

The passage which I have chosen for today does not seem like a Christmas passage at first. It doesn't deal with the story of Christmas. But it does tell us why Jesus came, which is what Christmas is all about. Jesus said, "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." What did he mean by this statement? When Jesus speaks of the Law, He is speaking of the first five books of the Bible. Those books begin to introduce God's plan of salvation and contain His commandments as they were given to the people of Israel. The prophets were a long list of individuals who claimed to speak God's very words to the people of Israel. They called the people of Israel to obey God's commandments and they prophesied about the coming of the Messiah, who would save the world from sin.

Why would anyone think that Jesus had come to do a way with them? Probably because of Jesus own teaching. Jesus said things like this, "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder,' but I say to you..." Jesus taught that His words had more authority than the teaching of Moses. In fact He taught that by his words and works that he would fulfill all that God required of human beings in the Law. He also claimed that He was the Messiah of whom the prophets of Israel had prophesied. He said to the Jews on one occasion: "You search the Scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."

Jesus taught that the universe itself would not pass away until He had fulfilled everything that was written in the OT. Modern scientists say that the universe will end by disintegrating into nothing. But Scripture says Jesus Christ will bring an end to the universe as we know it. There are many interpretations of just how this will happen. The apostle Peter says that the elements of our present universe will melt with an intense heat. But this will not be the final end. In the place of our present universe, God will create a new heavens and a new earth which will be the home of righteousness.

Jesus came to fulfill the Law by obeying it. He taught that those who would follow His teachings—especially as they are summarized in the Sermon on the Mount—would also be fulfilling the Law. He warned that anyone who would teach otherwise would be least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but He promised that those who would both do and keep them would be great in the Kingdom of Heaven. History is the story of how God has interacted with the human race so as to save it from sin. One by one, He calls people to follow Him and to obey His teaching. Whenever someone listens and follows, history is changed.



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Finally, Jesus declared that people had to be more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees or else they would not be permitted to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. What did He mean? The Pharisees were men who made the goal of their lives to obey all of God's commandments. They identified 613 commandments in the Law of God. The scribes were the experts in the Law. They studied it so thoroughly that they might be called the PhD's of the Law of Moses. But Jesus severely criticized them for doing their good works in order to look good in front of people. Jesus taught his disciples that they must do their good works to please God alone—not to look good to other people.

But Jesus has come and gone, and history does not seem to have changed. Human history before and after Jesus has been a literal, bloody mess. We might be tempted to say that Jesus hasn't changed history much at all. But when Jesus came the first time, he did not intend to change history in a universal way but in a personal way. What I mean is that he intended to change history one person at a time. He has been doing just that ever since he came, died, rose, and ascended into heaven. When He comes the second time, He will change History in a universal way. At that time we will see the grandest global change in all of time and eternity. Until then, Jesus will continue to change history one person at a time.