

THE COMMANDMENTS AND THE BEATITUDES

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew, chapters five to seven) Christ compares and contrasts the Ten Commandments (The Decalogue) to His own manner of teaching. Some say that the Commandments emphasize the “letter of the Law”, and the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount emphasize the “spirit of the Law.” The fact is that the Commandments and the Beatitudes form a unity. St. John Chrysostom tells us: “there is a harmony between them... [because] there is but one and the same Legislator of both covenants...” The relation between the Commandments and the Beatitudes can be seen easily. How can a person be “poor in spirit” if one steals? How can one be “pure of heart” if one “covets his neighbor’s wife”? One who is poor in spirit will not be inclined to steal; one who is pure of heart will not be given over to lust.

Suggested Reading: Ten Commandments: Deuteronomy 6:6-21; The Beatitudes: Matthew 5:3-12. Christ comparing and contrasting the Mosaic Law with His own teaching: Matthew 5:21-48.

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