



→ Oldest copy is around 250 AD

According to the Bible: the Sermon on the Mount is a collection of the sayings and teachings of Jesus found in the Gospel of Matthew. It is the first of the “Five Discourses” in Matthew’s writings and takes place relatively early in Jesus’ ministry. This message was given to his followers and a large group of attendant people around AD 30 (shortly after he has been baptized by John the Baptist and preached in Galilee). Jesus spoke on the side of a mountain – large hill. The most popular part of the speech is the Beatitudes (eight blessings or virtues), which are at the beginning.

The expression, *“But I say unto you (or) But I tell you”* occurs six times in the alluded to passage and is each time prompted by words to the effect: *Matthew 5:21 “You have heard that the ancients were told, . . . in this case: ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’”* See: 21, 22; 27, 28; 31, 32; 33, 34; 38, 39; 43, 44). This is the heart of Jesus’ teaching . . . of Jesus’ ethics . . . of Jesus’ new people – new creation persons.

ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν (Mat 5:22 BG) But I say to you (Mat 5:22 NRS) But I say this to you, (Mat 5:22 NJB)

- The Greek word translated “but” as in *But I tell you* – could be “and” *And I say . . .*
- The verb “to say” means to interpret. This was common among the Jews.

*One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself;’ – this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God. (Mar 12:28-34 NRS)*

1. First see the setting:

*“Never imagine that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to complete them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until it has all taken place. Whoever then relaxes the single least of these commandments and teaches others so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who observes them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the realm of heaven. (Mat 5:17-22 RSV)*

2. These verses set as a prolog:
3. See Luke 10:26 for the Jewish custom of teaching