

Are the Laws of God Still in Force, Today?

Are the Laws of God abolished and done away with? Or are they eternal?
Is there more than one Law of God? Is the “Law of Moses” a different law?
Does “grace” do away with God’s Law? Did the Messiah come to abolish it?
What was really wrong with the “old covenant”? Here is new insight into the truth about God’s Law!

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When I was a high school teenager and began keeping the true Sabbath (Saturday), my Dad became concerned about my new-found “religious fanaticism”. So when two Jehovah Witnesses knocked on our front door, my Dad arranged for them to visit me in our home later that week. We talked and talked covering many subjects.

One thing upper most in my mind about that discussion that night was talking about the laws of God. They insisted the laws of God are abolished—done away. As Christians, we are only under grace. Even the Ten Commandments were abolished, as a Law, according to them.

What is the truth? Is the Law of God as revealed in the Old Testament done away with – obsolete and terminated – obliterated and nullified by God’s grace?

If so, then why did Jesus Christ declare, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law . . . I came not to destroy but to FULFILL” (Matt.5:17). He added, “For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, ONE JOT OR ONE TITTLE will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled” (v.18). Are heaven and earth still around? If so, then the Law of God is still in existence, also!

“Think Not” – So People Think the Opposite!

Jesus Christ Himself, Yeshua the Messiah, declared in no uncertain words, “If you want to enter into LIFE, *keep the commandments*” (Matt.19:17). He went on to explain which commandments, showing which Law He was referring to (vs.18-19), including “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev.19:18), which is one of the statutes of the Law God gave Moses for Israel.

Yeshua also told His true disciples, in plain language, “Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will be no means pass from the Law till all is accomplished” (Matt.5:17-18).

The NIV has it, “I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will be any means disappear from the LAW until everything is accomplished.”

In a footnote to verse 17, the NIV says: “5:17. *the Law*. The first five books of the Jewish Scriptures (our OT). *the Prophets*. Not only the Latter Prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, which we call Major Prophets, and the 12 Minor Prophets . . . but also the so-called Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings). Taken together, ‘the Law’ and ‘the Prophets’ designated the entire OT, including the Writings (Ps.78:2), with ‘what was spoken through the prophet.’ *fulfill*. Jesus fulfilled the Law in the sense that He gave it its full meaning. He emphasized its deep, underlying principles and total commitment to it rather than mere external acknowledgement and obedience.”

“5:18-20. Jesus is not speaking against observing all the requirements of the Law, but against hypocritical, Pharisaical *LEGALISM*. Such legalism was not the keeping of all details of the Law but *the hollow sham of keeping laws externally*, to gain merit before God, *while breaking them inwardly*. . . . Jesus repudiates the Pharisees’ *interpretation* of the Law and their view of righteousness by works.”

“5:18. *smallest letter*. One word in Greek (*iota*) which we use when we say, ‘It doesn’t make one iota of difference.’ It is the nearest Greek equivalent to the Hebrew *yodh*, the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet (see Psalm 119:73 title). *Least stroke of a pen*. The Greek word for this phrase means ‘horn’ and was used to designate the slight embellishment or extension of certain letters of the Hebrew alphabet (somewhat like the bottom of a ‘j’).”

The Moffatt translation gives us this passage as follows: “NEVER IMAGINE that I have come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I have not come to destroy but to fulfill. (I tell you truly, till heaven and earth pass away NOT AN *iota*, NOT A *comma*, will pass from the Law until it is ALL IN FORCE. Therefore, whoever relaxes a single one of these commands, were it even one of the least, and teaches men so, he will be ranked least in the Realm of heaven; but whoever obeys them and teaches them, he will be ranked great in the Realm of heaven.”

Christ MAGNIFIED the Law

The Law of God stands eternal. Christ came to MAGNIFY it, and expound and explain it more fully. He knew the Pharisees had gone off the track, and stumbled into gross error. He came to give it NEW LIFE! Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah, “The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will EXALT the law and make it HONORABLE” (Isa.42:21, NKJV). The NIV says, “It pleased the Lord for the sake of his righteousness to make HIS LAW *GREAT AND GLORIOUS*.” The KJV declares, “He will MAGNIFY the law and make it honorable.”

The Hebrew word here for “magnify,” “extol,” or “make great,” is *gadal*, and means, “to twist, i.e. to be (caus. *make*) large (in various senses, as in body, mind, estate or honor . . .) – advance, boast, bring up, excellent, great, magnify, be much set by, nourish, promote.” *Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon* has the definition as “to twist together, to

bind together . . . to wrestle, to contend . . . (2) to be or become great, to grow . . . (3) to be greatly valued, to be celebrated with praises . . . Hiphil – *to make great . . . to make high, to lift up . . . magnitude, greatness, magnificence, majesty.*”

Christ still MAGNIFIES the Law of God, the Torah, today! Paul declared in the book of Hebrews, “Jesus Christ the SAME, yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb.13:8). He magnified the Law when He came to earth, 1900 years ago – and He magnifies the Law of God, today – and always will magnify it! The Law of God never changes, and He never changes! He is the very Personification of the Torah, the Law of God!

Why then do millions believe the laws of God are abolished, voided, cancelled out? Is it so they can justify sin and disobedience in their lives? It is perplexing. What is the plain truth about law and grace?

The Law of God

The Hebrew word translated “Law” in the Old Testament is *Torah*. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* says of this word, “Torah is derived from the root □□□ which in the *hifil* conjugation means ‘to teach’ (cf. Lev.10:11). The meaning of the word is therefore ‘teaching,’ ‘doctrine,’ or ‘instruction’; the commonly accepted ‘law’ gives a wrong impression. The word is used in different ways but the underlying idea of ‘teaching’ is common to all” (“Torah”).

Says *Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon*, the word “Torah” means, “instruction, doctrine (Job 22:22) – (a) human, as that of parents, Prov.1:8 . . . (b) divine through prophets, Isa.1:10 . . .” In the Greek of the New Testament, the equivalent word is *nomos*. Says *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*, “anything established, anything received by usage, a custom, usage, law . . . In the NT, a command, law . . .”

Says *Vine’s Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Torah is “law; direction; instruction” and occurs 220 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. It says further, “The ‘instruction’ given by God to Moses and the Israelites became known as ‘the law’ or ‘the direction’ (*ha torah*), and quite frequently as ‘the Law of the Lord’: ‘Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord’ (Psalm 119:1).”

Vine’s continues, “The priests were charged with the study and teaching of, as well as the jurisprudence based upon, the ‘law’ (Jer.18:18).

“Because of rampant apostasy the last days of Judah were times when there were no teaching priests (II Chron.15:3). . . . The prophets called Israel to repent by returning to the *torah* (‘instruction’) of God (Isa.1:10). Jeremiah prophesied concerning God’s new dealing with His people in terms of the New Covenant, *in which God’s law is to be INTERNALIZED*, God’s people would willingly obey Him. . . . The last prophet of the Old Testament reminded the priests of their obligations (Mal.2) and challenged God’s people to remember the ‘law’ of Moses in preparation for the coming Messiah (Mal.4:4).”

Concerning the Greek word *nomos*, Vine's says, "In the NT it is used (a) of 'law' in general, e.g. Rom.2:12, 13, 'a law' (RV) expressing a general principle relating to 'law'; v.14 . . . (b) of a force or influence impelling to action, Rom.7:21, 23 . . . (c) of the Mosaic law, the 'law' of Sinai . . ."

The Ten Commandments

When God gave the law to Israel, He Himself thundered the Ten Commandments from atop Mount Sinai in the hearing of all the people (Exo.20: Deut.5). Later God wrote the Ten Commandments on two tablets of stone, with the finger of God, and Moses delivered them to the people.

We read, "At that time the LORD said to me [Moses], Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain and make yourself an ark of wood. And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke; and you shall put them in the ark. So I made an ark of acacia wood, hewed out two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand. And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which the LORD has spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, just as the LORD commanded me" (Deut.10:1-5).

Only the two tablets of stone containing the 10 commandments written by the finger of God themselves were placed in the ark as a testimony. But what about the rest of the law – the statutes, and judgments, and sacrificial ordinances? God gave many more laws than the Ten Commandments. He commanded Moses, "And you shall be careful to observe ALL the statutes and judgments which I set before you today" (Deut.11:32). These other statutes and judgments are listed in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The total number of laws and statutes given in the books of Moses total 613, including those pertaining to the Levitical priesthood.

The law of God also includes *the statutes and judgments that were given by God to Moses*, as well as, the 10 commandments. They were put in a "book" of the Law – the first "law book" or "code of laws" given to mankind. "So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this LAW in a BOOK, when they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, 'Take this BOOK of the Law, and put it BESIDE the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death?'" (Deut.31:25-27).

Notice! This "Book of the Law" was written down and placed outside and next to the Ark, but in the Ark itself was only the two tablets of stone of the Ten Commandments. In the days of king David, when they brought the ark up to Jerusalem, we read, "Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 8:9).

All the laws originated from God (none from Moses himself) and were written down and taught by Moses to Israel as God commanded.

Are these laws still valid, today? Let's understand this! Other than the Ten Commandments, there were statutes and judgments which, in essence, subdivided and explained more fully the basic Ten Commandments – showing us how to worship God, and how to love our neighbor. These were statutes and judgments ordained forever.

However, there was another system of law, also added at Mount Sinai – a law of rituals and religious rites and ceremonies, which were based on the Levitical priesthood, which itself was established at Mount Sinai.

Notice what the apostle Paul says about this.

The Galatians Problem

Paul begins his epistle to the Galatians by getting straight to the point. After the introduction, he exclaims, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel" (Gal.1:6). Paul declared that some people were throwing the Galatians into confusion, "trying to pervert the gospel of Christ" (verse 7).

Paul then recounts his own personal history, showing how zealous he had been as a Pharisee, zealous for the law, and Jewish traditions, before his conversion (Gal.1:11-14). Later, after Paul began his ministry, problems arose because of false brethren of the Pharisaical persuasion who "had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves" (Gal.2:4). What were these Pharisaical brethren trying to do? They were teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). This brought them into sharp dispute with Paul and Barnabas (v.2). They went to Jerusalem to settle the dispute at the headquarters Church. These legalists told the assembly, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses" (v.5).

After much discussion, Peter stood up and pointed out how God had given the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles, making no distinction between them and Jews, even though they had not been circumcised (Acts 15:6-9). Peter declared, "Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a YOKE that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?" (v.10).

What was this "yoke" Peter was talking about? What did the Pharisees mean when they said new Gentile believers had to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses to be saved? Isn't that the very same problem Paul was encountering among the Galatians?

Of course it was! That's why Paul goes into the history of this same Jerusalem conference in Galatians 2! In other words, these false brethren were saying that Gentiles had to BECOME PRACTICING JEWS -- that is, they had to CONVERT TO JUDAISM!

Later, when Peter visited the Gentile church at Antioch, but refused to eat with Gentiles when certain brethren came from Jerusalem (Gal.2:12), Paul rebuked him,

saying, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to *follow Jewish customs?*" (Gal.2:13-14). These Jewish customs included the Jewish traditions and policies not to eat with Gentiles (who were considered "unclean").

The whole dispute in the book of Galatians, then, was over whether Gentiles had to become Jews, outwardly as well as inwardly, by obeying all the laws and traditions of the Jewish community! Did they have to embrace Judaism as well as accept Christ as Savior! Paul found this whole idea repugnant and ridiculous -- bringing people into bondage and slavery. With this background in mind, then, let's go through the statements of Paul in the book of Galatians.

Paul declares, "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law [becoming "Jews"], because by observing the law no one will be justified" (Gal.2:15-16).

No, law keeping *itself* does not justify us from our past sins -- only the blood of Christ can do that! No amount of future law keeping of itself will pay the penalty for our past transgressions of God's law!

The only way that "death penalty" can be removed from us is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Rom.6:23). Paul goes on to explain, "I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law [circumcision and all the commandments of Judaism], Christ died for nothing" (Gal.2:21).

The very idea that we can be saved, or receive salvation, by becoming "Jews" through circumcision and performing rituals was an outrage to Paul. He exclaimed to the Galatians, "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? . . . Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?" (Gal.3:1-5).

Paul went on, "All who rely on observing the law [for salvation, leaving Christ out] are under the curse, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.' Clearly no one is justified [made right, previous sins forgiven] before God by the law [only the blood of Christ can atone for sin -- not the law itself], because, 'The righteous will live by faith.' The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, 'The man who does these things [circumcision, and the whole bit, by becoming converts to Judaism] will live in them.' Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law [the "curse of the law" is the death penalty which comes through breaking the law] by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree' " (Gal.3:10-14).

Another "Law"

The apostle Paul went on, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, “and to **seeds**, as of many; but *as of one*, AND TO THY SEED, which is Christ. The covenant that was confirmed before of God *in Christ*, the law, which was *four hundred and thirty years after* (Abraham), cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of no effect” (Gal.3:16-17).

There was a “law” then, added at Mount Sinai, to the covenant which God made with Abraham. Why was this law added? What was it?

Paul answers the question, saying, “What purpose then does the law serve? It was *ADDED because of transgressions*, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one” (Galatians 3:19-20).

Notice! This added “law” was added because of TRANSGRESSIONS! What is a “transgression”? It is by definition the BREAKING OF LAW! Therefore, LAW had to be in effect already in the days of Abraham!

What is a transgression? A transgression is a broken law. The laws of God were already in effect from Abraham to Moses, and the people were breaking (transgressing the laws of God), so God added *another law* at Mt. Sinai to deal with the transgressions to provide a system of forgiveness and atonement.

That added law given at Mt. Sinai was the *law of sacrifices and offerings and the Levitical priesthood* of Ancient Israel. That was what was really added to atone for sin until the TRUE atonement should come which was Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Christ was sacrificed for the sins of the world. 2 Corinthians 5:21—“God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us (become a sin offering) that we may be made the righteousness of God through Him [Christ].”

The Levitical Priesthood and the Sacrificial Law

The entire body of Law was called "the Law of Moses," because God used Moses as His mediator with Israel. The whole body or corpus of Law came through Moses. However, it was divided into two distinct parts -- one consisting of statutes and civil laws for the community, based on the Ten Commandments. The other was the ceremonial laws involving the Levitical priesthood, sacrifices offerings, and rituals. Thus there were TWO LAWS given at Mount Sinai -- the Ethical Law, or Moral Law, governing man's relationship with God and his neighbor -- and the Sacrificial Law!

The sacrificial law consisted of ceremonial washings, various laws of offerings and sacrifices, and carnal, physical ordinances enjoined upon the people and the Levitical Priesthood. It was not a spiritual law. It could save no one.

Then why was it given to ancient Israel?

Let the apostle Paul give us the answer! [What purpose did the ritual law serve?] "It was *ADDED because of transgressions*, till the seed [Christ] should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator"

(Galatians 3:19).

Did you catch that? The "law " that was added -- the Levitical Priesthood with all the sacrifices and rituals -- was added -- why? "BECAUSE OF TRANSGRESSIONS"!

For one law to be "added" because of "transgressions," then there had to be another Law which was *being transgressed*, broken, by the Israelites! What Law?

Remember, God had said, "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" (Exodus 16:28). They had been breaking God's eternal spiritual law, the Ten Commandments -- as well as all those Laws which are based on the Ten Commandments!

Because Israel had been breaking God's Law, He *added another special law* -- the laws involving the whole Levitical Priesthood, sacrifices and offerings! WHY? -- to teach them the *lesson of repentance and of obedience!* To teach them to acknowledge their sins, He gave them certain ceremonial washings, offerings, and commanded sacrifices, and carnal ordinances, as a *foreshadow* of things to come. What things? The coming of the true sacrifice for our sins, Christ Jesus Himself! And the Holy Spirit which cleans us up spiritually within. These duties, sacrifices, washings, taught them their need for a coming Savior and Gods Holy Spirit.

As Paul tells us in Hebrews, this new law "stood only in meats and drinks [meal and drink offerings], and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them UNTIL THE TIME OF REFORMATION" (Hebrews 9:10). These rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices were "a FIGURE for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience" (Heb.9:9).

Paul also wrote of this sacrificial law, "For the law having a *shadow* of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not cease to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. *For in those sacrifices there is a REMEMBRANCE again made of SINS every year*" (Hebrews 10:1-3).

The sacrificial law did not atone for sin -- but it REMINDED THE PEOPLE of their sins, and their need for proper, true atonement!

Paul goes on: "*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins*" (Heb.10:4). Rather, the sacrifices of the law pointed to the one supreme sacrifice -- the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself, the "Lamb of God"! (Heb.10:5-13).

The Sacrificial, Ritual Law -- a "Schoolmaster"

Do you see?

Paul goes on, in Galatians, discussing the sacrificial, ritualistic part of the Law of Moses, saying, "Wherefore the law was our *schoolmaster* to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are *no longer under a*

schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:24-25).

That is, we no longer need the "types" and rituals of the Law, which were a GUIDE, and a Lesson Plan, teaching the people the need for forgiveness of sin, the need for a Mediator, and the coming Messiah, who Himself would fulfill many of these "types" and "figures," reconciling us to God through His own sacrifice of Himself as our Passover Lamb an "offering for sin" (I Cor.5:7; II Cor.5:21).

The law of Moses, with its constant round of sacrifices and washings, and the many added Halachic rules and decrees made by the Rabbis, had become a veritable "yoke of bondage" upon the people, by the time of Christ and Paul. Originally these laws had been put upon the ancient Israelites, because they refused to keep God's spiritual laws and commandments! They were to teach the people by physical means the lessons of sin, forgiveness, repentance, and obedience.

But by the time of Christ, the Pharisees had added so many additional Sabbath laws, and washings, and laws affecting every aspect of life, that they had created a Monster in itself of TRADITION and Rabbinic RULINGS, which the people were commanded to obey!

Are Christians, today, required to keep the sacrificial, ritualistic aspects of the "law of Moses"?

Let's understand this matter! No – clearly, we are not expected to do sacrifices, or rituals, or those things which were "temporary" and not a part of God's eternal spiritual Law. As Paul said, ". . . we are *no longer* under a schoolmaster." As Peter said, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:10).

Paul also wrote, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). "But in those sacrifices there is a *remembrance* [a recalling, not a forgiving] again *made of sins every year*" (verse 3).

Speaking of the sacrificial and ceremonial aspect of the law of Moses, a law of physical works, Paul wrote: "Which was a figure *for the time then present*, in which were offered both *gifts and sacrifices*, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which *stood only in meats and drinks [that is, meal and drink offerings]*, and divers *washings*, and carnal ordinances [Greek, "*rites and ceremonies*"], *imposed on them UNTIL THE TIME OF REFORMATION*" (Hebrews 9:9-10).

These animal sacrifices, washings and such were the "works of the law" that couldn't save anyone, as well as the "traditions" and halachic laws and rules handed down by the Pharisees which acted as a "yoke of bondage" to the people (Galatians 2:16).

Those things, of course, are not obligatory on true Christians, today. They clearly were types -- typifying the coming of the supreme sacrifice, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. They were but a type of the spiritual, and were given to a carnal, fleshly people, to help them understand. They are not necessary for salvation!

The sacrifices of the Old Testament times could never take away sins (Hebrews 10:11). "But this man" – Jesus Christ – "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (verse 12).

Isn't that plain as day?

Satan's Incredible Deception

Yet, Satan devil has deceived the entire world on this question of "law and grace." He wants you to think the laws of God are abolished and you may live as you please. Such a philosophy is so attractive to human nature – flesh and blood! According to Satan you can break God's Law, and there is NO PENALTY! Ha ha ha! "Go for it!"

But he is the supreme liar, and the father of lies (John 8:44). Believe him and you take your life in your very hands and play a spiritual game of 'Russian roulette'!

A lot of people get hung up on law and grace. A lot of prisoners write for literature on law and grace in the books of Galatians and Colossians, because Satan the devil has concocted a tremendous lie and perpetrated it upon the world and so-called Christian churches of the world that the laws of God are done away and God replaced that whole system with grace—*just believe* in Christ! Christ was sent to do away with our sins, not to do away with the law of God. Christ took our place on the cross and died for us to pay the penalty for us that we might have eternal life through Him.

The law is still God's standard of behavior and the Bible our spiritual instruction manual. Matthew 4:4 –"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Luke 4:4 –"We shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God." This includes the Old Testament and the New Testament—all the laws of God when we understand them properly.

The Two Covenants

The Levitical laws that were added for a time until fulfilled by the Seed to come—Christ—are no longer needed and are done away as Paul himself writes in Hebrews 9. Here Paul talks about the first covenant and the second covenant.

The first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary (on earth). The first part is called the sanctuary, in which were the lamp-stand, the table, and the showbread. The priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services of the Levitical priesthood. Behind the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the holiest of all (the holy of holies) held the golden censer, and the Ark of the Covenant overlaid with gold. Inside this were the pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the two tablets of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat.

Paul declares, "The high priest alone entered the inner room and that was only once a year on the Day of Atonement, and never without blood, before entering the holy of holies, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place

had not yet been made manifest (disclosed) while the earthly tabernacle (system) was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which fleshly imposed ordinances of gifts, sacrifices and washings cannot make perfect the conscience of the person who brings them.”

The earthly system deals only with external regulations applying until the time of reformation (the new order—until the time Christ came). Christ brought the fulfillment of what these earthly types and shadows represented—the kingdom of God.

Paul explains, “But Christ came as high priest (after the order of Melchizedek) of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is not of this creation. He entered the Most Holy Place **once** for all by his own blood (without spot) through the eternal Spirit, having obtained eternal redemption (for us). For if under the old system the blood of goats, bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” “And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.” (Heb.9:11-15).

Paul goes further, explaining that God made Christ a priest forever in the *order of Melchizedek*, and He the guarantee of a better covenant (Heb.7:22). “Therefore, He [Christ] is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

We are under the new covenant – *the spiritual covenant*, brought by Christ. The old covenant has been replaced by the eternal covenant of God. The Ten Commandments are the laws of God. The laws of God are the same except those that related to a different priesthood, the *earthly Levitical priesthood* order which was added by God at Mount Sinai.

But being under the spiritual covenant does not do away with the spiritual laws and statutes of God! Far from it! Notice!

“Do we then make void the law through faith? *Certainly not!* On the contrary, we *establish (uphold)* the law” (Romans 3:31). The law that was done away was only the temporary law that required gifts and sin offerings through the Levitical priesthood. But today we are not under the Levitical priesthood, but we are under the Christ who is our high priest under the order of Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18; Ps.110:4; Heb. 5: 5, 6, 10, 20; Heb. 7).

This is clearly shown in Hebrews 7, which also shows that we do not tithe to the Levitical priesthood today, but we tithe to Christ as forefather Abraham did – to Christ and His representatives who Christ has representing Him on this earth.

The spiritual, moral laws of God are just as meaningful and necessary as they were in Paul’s day, or Moses’ day!

Paul declares, “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! I would not have known sin except through the law. The law says, ‘Do not covet.’ But sin seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead” (Romans 7:7)

The law helps man to know what is right and wrong. God has posted His commandments in the Bible and points out what is lawlessness (sin)—i.e., coveting (desiring what belongs to your neighbor), adultery, murder, bearing false witness, eating contaminated products or forbidden flesh of unclean animals, breaking the Sabbath and annual holy days—these are all categorized as “breaking the law” and therefore as “SIN”!

According to God’s Word, the very definition of “sin” is—“SIN IS LAWLESSNESS” (I John 3:4). Or, as the King James Version has it, “Sin is the TRANSGRESSION of the LAW.”

God’s Law cannot be improved upon. It is a perfect law, ordained and bequeathed to mankind by a loving, gentle, righteous, just, merciful God who desires the very best for every one of us! As Paul wrote, “Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good” (Rom.7:12). “The law,” he wrote, “is spiritual” (v.14). And the things which are spiritual are eternal (II Cor.4:18).

David declared, “*The law of the Lord is perfect*” (Psalms 19:7).

The REAL Problem

What was the problem, with the old covenant? The real problem was never the law of God. The real problem was—and IS—human nature!

The former covenant was set aside because it was weak. God found fault with the *people* of Israel who refused to obey Him. It was their rebellious heart and nature that stood in the way of peace, happiness, and success in life. It was the greed, avarice, lust, and pride of mankind that was the cause of failure, death, suffering, and catastrophe, age after age, in kingdom after kingdom, from the beginning until now.

Since time immemorial people have refused to keep God’s commandments, statutes and judgments. In Exodus 16:27-28, God said to Moses of the people, “How long do you refuse to obey my commandments and My laws?” God had given them manna, each day, but commanded them to gather a double portion on Friday and not to gather it on the weekly Sabbath. But they rebelled, and did not listen!

Paul writes, “This is the *main point* of the things that we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the *true tabernacle* which *the Lord erected and not man*” (Hebrews 8:1-2).

The Levitical priesthood on this earth served as a copy or a shadow of the heavenly things. Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the

tabernacle: “See that you make all things according to *the pattern shown you on the mountain (Sinai)*” (v.5).

Paul continues, “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because FINDING FAULT WITH *THEM*, He says, ‘Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a NEW covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah . . . For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: *I will put My LAWS in their MIND and write them on their HEARTS*; and I will be their God and they shall be My people” (Heb.8:7-10).

As the apostle Paul explains, “For the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is IN you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Rom.8:7-10).

Jeremiah put it this way: “The heart [of man] is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked [incurably sick]; who can know [fathom] it?” (Jer.17:9).

Only the Spirit of God can plumb its depths, and conquer it, heal it, and overcome its evil tendencies and pernicious influence!

The new covenant includes the gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us to teach and enable us with the strength and power to obey God and do what is right and just in His sight. His laws will be part of us – perpetually and permanently inscribed in our hearts and minds.

When the process is finished all people shall know God from the least to the greatest.

God has made the old covenant obsolete. What is obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Under the new covenant we have been called and given the Holy Spirit which is able to inscribe the laws of God in our hearts and minds.

The Way of Life

God’s LAW is the “way of life.” As Solomon wrote, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all” (Eccl.12:13). David wrote, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all those who do His commandments” (Psalm111:10). Wisdom is to keep God’s LAW – and this is “a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her” (Prov.3:18).

God’s words, His Law, “are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh” (Prov.4:22).

God inspired Moses to declare to Israel, “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore BE CAREFUL to observe them, for this is your WISDOM and your UNDERSTANDING in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people” (Deut.4:5-6).

Moses warned Israel, “Therefore know this day, and consider it in your heart, that the LORD Himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. You shall therefore keep His *statutes and His commandments* which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time” (Deut.4:39-40, NKJV).

Obeying God’s Law and keeping His commandments is the WAY to prosperity and the abundant life of blessings! Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise!

The Laws of God were never the problem. But the heart of man is the problem! Even today we see that wicked heart making excuses for failing to obey God’s Law, and claiming that it is abolished, rescinded, and rendered null and void. That is not true. Rather, it is the lawless preachers and teachers, and the disobedient and lawless ones, who will be rendered “null and void,” and done away with, as they are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, called “Gehenna.”

God commands His people, in this end-time generation prior to the coming of Yeshua the Messiah, “Remember the LAW [*Torah*] of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.” And in connection with this God thundered, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD” (Mal.4:4-5).

God thunders to our generation: “REMEMBER THE LAW . . . with the statutes and judgments”! Never forget it! Study it, meditate over it, ponder it, review it – commit it to memory and OBEY it faithfully and zealously.

Elijah’s message is the message of REPENTANCE, to RETURN to God’s Law and His way of life! It is high time we all turn back to God, REPENT of rejecting God’s Torah, and RETURN to Him and SEEK Him, with all our heart and devotion—lest He smites the earth with “*total destruction*” (Malachi 4:6).

What about you? Where do you stand in regard to the Law of God?

For a more complete understanding of this subject of God’s Torah, write for:

“What Is the Truth about ‘Law and Grace’?”

“Is the Law Nailed to the Cross?”

“A New Look at the book of Galatians”

“Just What Do You Mean, ‘The Works of the Law’?”

“Is Obedience to God Required for Salvation”?

“What’s All This about the ‘New Covenant’?”