



Law, Covenants and the Sabbath

Law – Part 1

Table of Contents

• Introduction	2
• Definition of ‘Law’	2
• Kinds of Law	2
• A Call to Obedience	3
• Saved by Grace Alone, Not by Works	3
• Faith/Salvation Evidenced by Good Works	3
• Love and Obedience go Hand in Hand	3
• Ten Commandments: A Concrete Expression of Love to God and Man	4
• Purpose of the Law	4
• Obedience is not Legalism	5
• Salvation and Obedience Cannot be Separated	5
• God and His Law Have the Same Characteristics	5
• The Law Before Sinai	6
• Christ and the Ten Commandments	6
• Jesus Rejected the Pharisees’ Man-Made Laws	7
• Commandment Breakers Will Not Inherit the Kingdom	7
• Doesn’t the Bible say that faith or grace cancels out commandment keeping?	7
• Doesn’t love fulfill the law? [Rom. 13:10]	8
• What about Jesus’ new commandment of love in John 13:34?	8
• The Cross is Evidence that the Law Should Still be Kept	8
• Holy Spirit Shows People Their Lawlessness	9
• Rejected Because of Disobedience to God’s Laws, Due to Ignoring the Lawgiver	9
• The Law: One Unit	9
• Commandment-Keeping, an Identifying Factor of God’s End-Time People	9
• Does God hold people accountable if they did not keep all His commandments?	9
• Blessings of Obedience	9
• Endnotes	10

Introduction

The subject of the Law, Covenants and Sabbath is one that has confused many Christians, and yet is so important that if misunderstood, it could mean the difference between eternal life and death.

In this subsection, Law – Part 1, we explore the relevance, purpose, characteristics and nature of the law. In Law – Part 2, we will particularly look those ‘problematic texts’ which many have quoted in favour of the law’s abolishment – such as ‘not under law, but under grace,’ ‘law nailed to the cross,’ ‘law not based on faith,’ ‘law for sinners only,’ etc.

This study will prove very fruitful. Take time to look up the verses and mark your Bible, for not only will it clear up many confusing arguments, but it will arm you to defend your faith.

LAW – Part 1

Definition of ‘Law’^A

The most common word for law in the Old Testament is *tôrāh*, meaning “direction,” “instruction,” or “law.” While *tôrāh* carries this precise meaning, often it refers to the totality of divine instruction God gave His people (Gen. 26:5; Ex. 16:4; Isa. 1:10 and 8:20, where the RSV translates “teaching”). Psalm 119 uses several words to describe God’s law (“testimonies” [verse 2]; “precepts” [verse 4]; “statutes” [verse 5]; “commandments” [verse 6]), all these terms are included under one concept: *tôrāh*, the totality of the revealed will of God. In the word *tôrāh* were included the moral, ceremonial, and civil laws of Israel. Because God’s “law” was the entire plan of salvation, Isaiah could affirm that the “coastlands wait for his law” (Isa. 42:4). The Pentateuch, the main source of this instruction, was called Torah or Law of God (Neh. 8:18; 9:3).



The New Testament uses the Greek *nomos* to represent *tôrāh*. The shades of meaning of *nomos* are varied, reflecting the rich meaning of its Hebrew original. Thus it may point to Scripture as the revelation of God’s will (John 15:25), the Pentateuch in general (Matt. 7:12), or at times the Decalogue (James 2:10–12) or the ceremonial law (Acts 15:1).

Kinds of Law^B

The abundant legal material of the Bible embraces all aspects of life—health, diet, sexuality, work, community, cult, government, and even the relationship with the environment. Some of these laws are of universal application, while others were applicable only in certain times and places. However, all of them are *tôrāh*: divine instruction for God’s people.

1. Non-Universal Laws in the Bible

The non-universal laws were given to the nation of Israel, to be kept by its citizens and the strangers who sojourned with them. These ceremonial and civil laws were not intended to be observed by those who did not form part of God’s people:

- a. *Ceremonial laws* – They were regulations that God used to teach the plan of salvation through symbols and cultic practices.
 - The ceremonial system served as a shadow or symbol of Christ’s sacrifice for sin (Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1). It pointed every believer to the coming Messiah but no longer applied after the Cross. That is why the temple curtain was torn from top to bottom (i.e. supernaturally) when Christ died (Matt. 27:51). Through this act of tearing the curtain, God was saying that the Lamb of God (John 1:29) had died and it was no longer necessary to sacrifice lambs. The whole ceremonial system had come to a halt (*more about this in Law – Part 2*)
 - This system could not cleanse sinners from sin, but served as a promise that salvation would come by the offering and sacrifice of the Lamb of God.
 - It was already in practice soon after the Fall (Gen. 4:3–7)
 - It was a cultic application of the principles contained in the **first table** of the moral law (i.e. the first 4 commandments of the Ten Commandments)
- b. *Civil laws* – These were given to the nation of Israel to regulate the life of the community. They were to be kept by its citizens and the strangers who stayed with them.
 - The basic principle of the civil laws was justice in the public service of rulers and judges, and righteousness in all actions of the covenant people (Ex. 23:1–9; Deut. 16:18–20; Lev. 19:9–18).
 - They were a local application of the universal principles as found in the **second table** of God’s Law (i.e. the last 6 commandments)

2. Universal Laws

God's interest in humans is manifested in laws given for and applicable for all persons, valid for all times and in all situations. Examples of these universal laws are natural laws, health and dietary laws, sexual laws, and the moral law of the Ten Commandments. All of these are important in the legal material of the Bible, but in the Ten Commandments we encounter a unique law governing the moral life of all human beings in all times and places (as we will see below).

Let's now take a look at the role of the law and obedience, in relation to salvation.

A Call to Obedience

The Bible is full of calls to obedience and commandment-keeping. Here are a few of them:

- Eze. 36:27 – “And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to **keep my laws**.” (Notice that the Holy Spirit leads us to obedience)
- Acts 5:32 – “And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has **given to those who obey Him**.”
- John 14:15 – “If you love me, **keep my commandments**”
- Heb. 5:9 – “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all **who obey Him**.”
- 1 John 2:4 – “He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not **keep His commandments**, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

Saved by Grace Alone, Not by Works

Yet the Bible is clear that we are **saved by grace alone** and that no amount of obedience and law-keeping can add to our salvation:

- Rom. 3:20, 28 – No one can be made right with God through law-keeping
- Rom. 3:21, 22 – Our righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ, not as a result of law-keeping (cf. Phil. 3:8, 9)
- Gal. 2:16, 21 – We are not justified by the works of the law
- Gal. 3:10, 11 – Those who depend on the law for righteousness are ‘under a curse’
- Gal. 5:4 – Those who attempt to make themselves right with God by keeping the law ‘have fallen from grace’
- Eph. 2:8, 9 – We are not saved by works but by grace

Faith/Salvation Evidenced by Good Works

Does this mean that good works are not necessary then? The verses below affirm that good works are still important. They should however proceed from a saving relationship with Christ, not in order to earn salvation. A saved person **will** produce good works.

- Matt. 5:16 – Our good works are to shine forth as a light
- 2 Cor. 9:8 – Christians should abound in every good work (cf. Col. 1:10)
- Eph. 2:10 – We were ‘created in Christ Jesus for good works’
- Titus 2:13, 14 – God's redeemed people will be ‘zealous for good works’
- Titus 3:8 – We should be ‘careful to maintain good works’
- James 2:14-18 – Works show that our faith is genuine

Love and Obedience go Hand in Hand

Obedience is really the fruit and result of a love relationship with God. God always calls us to obey Him within the context of love. Notice the order in the following verses: first love, then obedience. There are many of these verses in Scripture, but here is a sample (taken from both old & new testaments):

- “But showing love to a thousand generations of those who **love** me and keep **my** commandments” (Ex. 20:6)
 - Right **within** the Ten Commandments themselves we see that love for God is the basis for keeping His commandments. Thus God inseparably linked love and obedience.
- God keeps His covenant with those “who **love** Him and **keep** His commandments.” (Deut. 7:9)
- “**Love** the LORD your God and **keep** his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always” (Deut. 11:1)
- “I command you today to **love** the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to **keep** His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.” (Deut. 30:16)

- “If you **love** me, **keep** my commandments” (John 14:15)
- By this we know that we love the children of God, when we **love** God and **keep** His commandments (1 John 5:2)
- *Every appeal in Scripture (in both Old Testament and New Testament) to obey God’s commandments always has in mind love to God as the foundation of all obedience and God’s love for us as the source of that obedience.*^c

Ten Commandments: A Concrete Expression of Love to God and Man

Jesus showed that love is the essence of our service to God and man

- Matt. 22:37-40 says that Scripture (‘the Law and the Prophets’) is based on two commandments: 1) love to God and 2) love to man.
- It is interesting to note that the Ten Commandments are divided into these very categories. In fact they are **a concrete expression** of love to God and man as can be seen from the table below:

Love to God	Love to Man
If we love God we will:	If we love man we will:
1. Be loyal to Him alone (Comm. 1)	5. Respect parental authority (Comm. 5)
2. Not worship idols (Comm. 2)	6. Respect human life (Comm. 6)
3. Reverence His holy name (Comm. 3)	7. Be pure in our relationships (Comm. 7)
4. Honour His Sabbath day (Comm. 4)	8. Be honest (Comm. 8)
	9. Be truthful (Comm. 9)
	10. Be content and not desire someone else's goods (Comm. 10)

- So if we love God we will keep the first 4 commandments; if we love man, the last 6.
- Thus these Two commandments of Matt. 22 are a summary of the Ten, not a replacement of them (as some have argued).

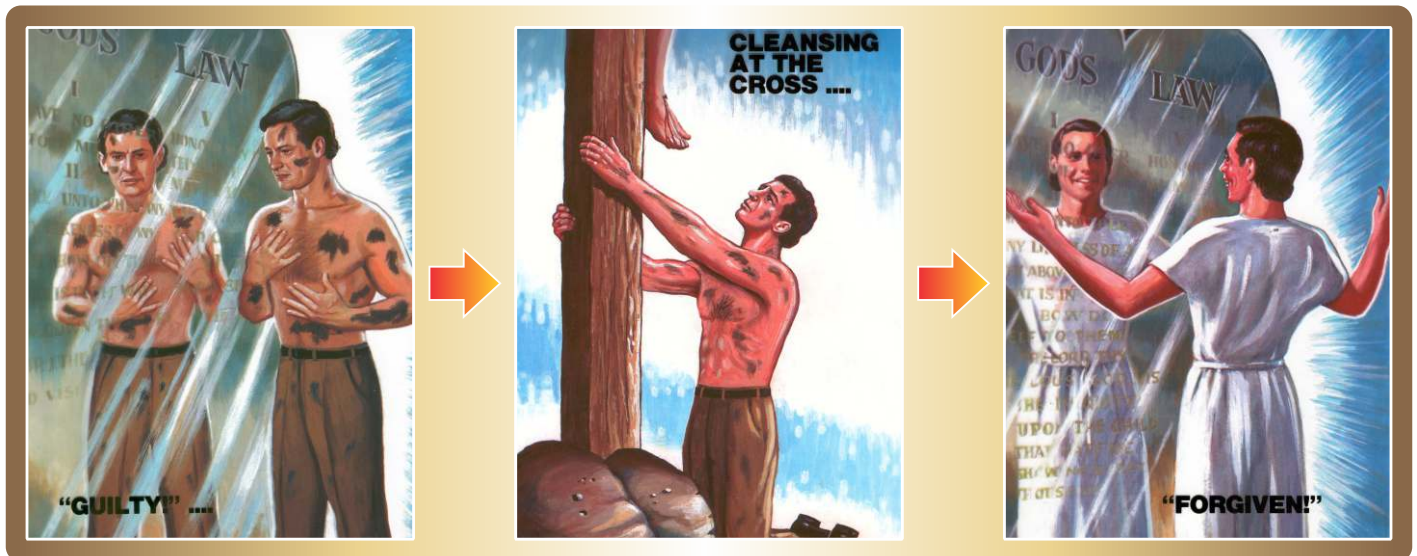
Purpose of the Law

What then is the purpose of the law? The law was not designed to save us, but merely expose sin:

- Rom. 3:20 – ‘By the law is the knowledge of sin’
- Rom. 7:7 – The law tells us what sin is
- James 1:23-25 – The law exposes sin like a mirror
 - A mirror only diagnoses a problem. For example, a mirror will tell a mechanic that there is grease on his face. It merely exposes the mark, but cannot remove it. The knowledge of the greasy mark sends the mechanic to the bathroom where he gets his face cleaned. Similarly the law is designed to expose error and sin, not to cleanse it.

Cleansing only comes from Jesus. To do away with the law is to do away with its ‘exposing’ function – or as in our example, like the mechanic smashing the mirror because it revealed the greasy spot on his face.

In the following illustration, note how the Law merely reflects our guilt, but cannot cleanse us. That cleansing can only be found through Jesus’ blood at Calvary. Once we’ve been to the Cross, the Law cannot legally accuse us for those forgiven sins.



Obedience is not Legalism

- Many people confuse obedience with legalism, which is the wrong use of the law.
- Legalism is turning to the law for salvation. It is doing good to earn merit and favour with God **in order to be** saved (Phil. 3:3-9). This is a concept the Bible strongly condemns.
- Behaviour is the consuming concern of legalists. Their religion centres around do's and don'ts. It is often practised in a cold, critical and loveless way. Legalists love to speak of their good works and are often guilty of sins they point out in others. For them rules are more important than people.
- Obedience, on the other hand as mentioned above, is keeping God's law as a fruit of a love relationship with Him. Such good works emanate from the saved person who wants to obey God because that person loves Him, is in relationship with Him and wants to please Him – never to earn salvation. Notice the following verses:
 - Ps. 40:8 – “*I delight* to do Your will, O my God, Your law is within my heart.”
 - Ps. 119:97 – “Oh how *I love your law!* I meditate on it all day long.”
- Note that we are not saved **by** our good works, yet we cannot be saved **without** them (Eccl. 12:13, 14; 1 Cor. 6:9; Col. 3:1-10) - for they give evidence of our faith in God.

Salvation and Obedience Cannot be Separated

Notice the following passage that speaks about the person who has been saved (the section concerning salvation is in bold, the section about obedience in italics):

- Col 3:1-10 – “**If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above.... For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God....** *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.... But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him....*”
- From this passage it is clear that the “life hidden in Christ” (vs. 3) is still expected to avoid and resist sin (i.e. to render obedience to God's commands [vss. 5-10])

God and His Law Have the Same Characteristics^p

The law is a copy of God's character, as the following table so graphically makes plain. To abolish the Law is like trying to abolish God's character.

God's Character	The Ten Commandments
God is Perfect (Ps. 18:30)	The Law is Perfect (Ps. 19:7; James 1:25)
God is Holy (Lev. 11:44)	The Law is Holy (Rom. 7:12)
God is Spirit (John 4:24)	The Law is Spiritual (Rom. 7:14)
God is Love (1 John 4:8)	The Law is Love (1 Tim. 1:5; Rom. 13:10)
God is Light (Ps. 27:1)	The Law is Light (Prov. 6:23)
God is True (Deut. 32:4)	The Law is True (Neh. 9:13; Ps. 119:142, 151)
God is Righteous (Ezra 9:15)	The Law is Righteous (Rom. 8:4)
God is Just (Isa. 30:18)	The Law is Just (Rom. 7:12)
God is Pure (Job 4:17)	The Law is Pure (Ps. 19:8)
God is Good (Ex. 34:16)	The Law is Good (Rom. 7:12; 1 Tim. 1:8)
God is Faithful (Ps. 36:5)	The Law is Faithful (Ps. 119:86)
God is Wisdom (Dan. 2:20)	The Law is Wisdom (Ps. 111:10; Ps. 119:98)
God is Great (Deut. 7:21)	The Law is Great (Hos. 8:12)
God is the God of Peace (Rom. 15:33)	Love of the Law Brings Great Peace (Ps. 119:165)

Why would God do away with the commandments that reflect His eternal nature and character?

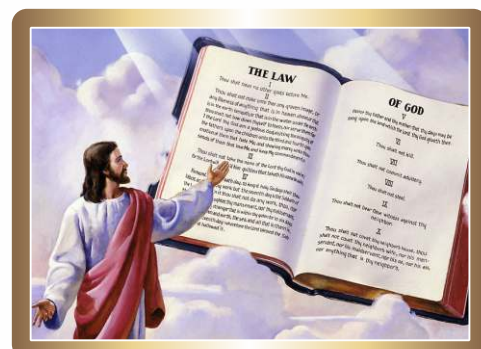
The Law Before Sinai

But wasn't the Law only given at Sinai, which means it did not apply to people before then? The following verses indicate that God's Law existed, even before Sinai:

- Gen. 4:7-10 – Cain was under the condemnation of sin for God imputed Abel's sin to Cain. If however Cain did not know it was wrong, how could he be guilty? (see Rom. 4:15; 5:13)
- Gen. 9:22-27 – Ham was cursed because he showed disrespect for parental authority (fifth commandment)
- Gen. 26:5 – God's commandments existed at the time of Abraham, over 400 years before Sinai.
- Gen. 35:2-4 – Jacob knew that having foreign gods (which the first commandment prohibits) was a sin.
- Gen. 39:9 – Joseph knew, long before Sinai, that adultery was a sin.
- Gen. 44:4 – Even though this scene was a set-up, the context makes it very clear that stealing was regarded as a sin.
- Ex. 16:28 – God gave, before Sinai, regulations concerning gathering manna on the Sabbath (fourth commandment)
- Rom. 5:14 – There could be no sin and judgment if law did not exist (see Rom. 5:13). So if death (which results from sin – Rom. 6:23) reigned from Adam, then the law had to be around since the time of Adam as well.

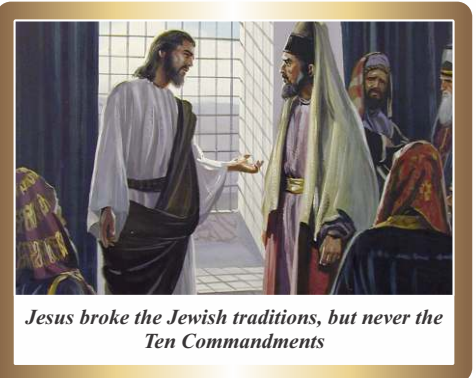
Christ and the Ten Commandments

- John 15:10 – Christ kept His Father's commandments. Some examples are:
 - *No other gods* – Matt. 4:10
 - *Obedience to parents* – Luke 2:51
 - *Sabbath keeping* – Luke 4:16
 - *No lying* – 1 Pet. 2:22. Note further that this verse says Christ committed **no sin**. If sin is transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4) and Christ committed no sin, it means He was obedient to the Law. We, as His disciples, are called to follow His Example (see 1 Pet. 2:21)



Jesus Rejected the Pharisees' Man-Made Laws

- The Jews sadly added many man-made laws and traditions to God's Law. These Jesus clearly ignored since they did not originate with Him.
- Here are some examples of Jesus' rejection of the *Jewish interpretation* of His Law:
 - Healing of the man at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath (John 5). Jesus broke the Sabbath *according to the Jews* (John 5:18), not according to the Ten Commandments since He upheld the Sabbath in His own life (Luke 4:16 – it was His custom, His regular practice to go to synagogue on the Sabbath)
 - See also Matt 12:1-14 and John 9
 - Jesus broke the first and third commandments *according to the Jews*, by claiming to be equal with God (John 5:16), which He really was
 - In Mark 7:1-9, Jesus rejected the *man-made* commandments of the scribes and Pharisees who were concerned with *external cleansing* such as the ceremonial washing of hands, cups, pitchers, etc. Jesus instead pointed them to the *internal defilement* which resulted from breaking His commandments. Notice what He said in vs 21-23 of that same chapter: “What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’ For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality [7th comm.], theft [8th comm.], murder [6th comm.], adultery [7th comm.], ²² greed [10th comm.], malice [6th comm. cf. Matt. 5:21-22], deceit [9th comm.], lewdness [7th comm.], envy [10th comm.], slander [9th comm. & possibly 3rd], arrogance [an attitude that breaks all 10 commandments] and folly [behaviour that breaks all of God’s commands – see Prov. 10:8]. All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’”
 - Jesus rejected the *false interpretation* of the fifth commandment:
 - Mark 7:9-13 – Anything over which a man pronounced the words, “It is Corban,” was dedicated to God and the Temple. Parents were not permitted to touch anything thus “dedicated,” yet the undutiful son was permitted to make use of it as long as he lived.^E So if a selfish son did not want his ageing parents to live in the extra cottage on his farm, he would pronounce “Corban” over it and say it was dedicated to God. He could make use of the cottage during his lifetime, but his parents had no right to it because it was now dedicated to God. Thus a man might defraud his own parents in the name of religion, practically invalidating the fifth commandment, which admonishes respect to parents.
 - Jesus restored the correct perspective to marriage [seventh commandment] as He originally designed at creation:
 - Matt. 19:3-9 – Jesus maintained that marriage is a lifelong union and the seventh commandment was given to protect this divine institution. Yet the Israelites divorced their spouses for trivial reasons. He called them back to the Creation model (see vs. 8) and said that divorce could ONLY be permitted on ground of sexual immorality (which includes adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality, etc. – see Lev. 18 which defines sexual immorality) – not for any petty reason.
 - In other places Jesus brought out the full meaning of His commandments, guarded it from misunderstanding, and tried to show that it was never designed for mere outward observance but to be an inward, heart response of obedience. Here are 2 examples:
 - **Sixth Commandment:** Matt. 5:21-22
 - **Seventh Commandment:** Matt 5:27-28



The above examples show that Jesus rejected the false, man-made laws that the Pharisees associated with and superimposed on His commandments. NEVER did He abolish or reject the Ten Commandments themselves. In fact, He brought out its fuller and proper meaning.

Commandment Breakers Will Not Inherit the Kingdom

- 1 Cor. 6:9 – “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators (7th comm.), nor idolaters (1st & 2nd comm.), nor adulterers (7th comm.), nor homosexuals (7th comm.), nor sodomites (7th comm.), nor thieves (8th comm.), nor covetous (10th comm.), nor drunkards (possibly 1st comm.), nor revilers (9th comm. & possibly 3rd), nor extortioners (8th comm.) will inherit the kingdom of God.”
- Obedience is therefore a life or death issue.

Doesn't the Bible say that faith or grace cancels out commandment keeping?

- The answer is a definite No:

- Rom. 3:31 – “Well then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law” (NLT).
- Rom. 6:15 – “What then? Shall we sin [i.e. break the law, according to 1 John 3:4] because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!”
 - Grace never leads to disobedience
 - *Illustration:* Imagine a wife finding out that her husband had been unfaithful to their marriage covenant, by having an adulterous relationship with another woman. This exposure makes the husband realise his great sin and how he had deeply hurt his wife. In absolute heartbrokenness and repentance, he asks her for forgiveness and another chance to prove himself. His wife says that she needs some time to process all her feelings and then get back to him. After some time, she tells him: “I was severely pained by what you did, but after much prayer, I decided to forgive you and to work on our relationship together.”
 - Do you think the forgiveness extended by the wife, now gives the husband license to go back into a life of adulterous living? Absolutely not! Forgiveness is not a ticket to sin and reckless living. The fact that he had been forgiven and is ‘living under [the] grace’ extended by his wife, should make him *even more* cautious about lawless living.
- Thus faith or grace does not cancel out obedience to God’s law

Doesn’t love fulfill the law?

Some have however interpreted Rom. 13:10 (‘love is the fulfillment of the law’) to mean ‘love does away with the law.’ But what does the Bible say?

- Matt. 3:15 – John *fulfilled* all righteousness by baptising Jesus
- Acts 13:22 – “... I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall *fulfill* all my will” (KJV). Notice what a newer translation says – “I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will *do* everything I want him to do” (NLT).
- Gal. 6:2 – *Fulfill* the law of Christ by carrying each other’s burdens

In all of the above texts, *fulfilling* means 'doing' or 'keeping.' So love, instead of doing away with the law, is the way we should keep it.

What about Jesus’ new commandment of love in John 13:34?

- The command to love was not new in itself (see Lev. 19:18), but was new in the sense that Jesus had given a new demonstration of love through His life, which He now asked the disciples to emulate. He had given them a new concept of the love of God. Where the old commandment instructed men to love their neighbors as themselves, the new urged them to love as *Jesus had loved*.^F
 - So the new commandment is the same commandment to love, but in the light of how Jesus showed us to love.
 - Love, as we have seen, is expressed in a concrete way by keeping the commandments, which deal with love to God and man (see ‘*Love, the Essence of God’s Ten Commandments*’ above).
 - Nowhere in this text does it show that love replaced the Ten Commandments.
- Love also does not replace the many other New Testament commands:^G
 - It’s very interesting that there are over 900 direct commands and 300 indirect commands in the New Testament (including repetitions, which serve for emphasis), compared to the Sinaitic covenants’ 613 specific commands (which actually were not many considering that they covered all areas of life – moral, ceremonial, civil and health – for a very large nation.)
 - Examples of some of these New Testament commands are: Eph. 5:3-5; Matt. 5:23; 1 Cor. 10:10; Eph. 4:31; Gal. 5:20-21; Phil. 2:3; etc.
- These numerous New Testament commands teach us that:
 - **No spiritual authority – not Jesus, Paul, Peter, James nor any other New Testament author – trusted ‘love’ as a safe single command**, or felt that the Holy Spirit’s internal guidance was a replacement for all specific divine commandments.
 - It is not the number of commands, nor the nature of those commands, nor whether they were issued in the Old Testament or New Testament that are at issue – but a person’s attitude to them. Even a single commandment to love others as Jesus loved us (John 13:34) can engender disobedience and legalism in an unconverted heart.

The Cross is Evidence that the Law Should Still be Kept

- The Cross is unmistakable evidence that the Ten Commandments have not been done away with.
- Man sinned in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3) and broke God’s law. Through symbols (sanctuary service) and prophecies, it was announced that Christ would come and die in man’s place, taking the penalty of sin upon Himself (see for instance Isa. 53).

- Now if Christ were coming to do away with the law, why would it be necessary for Him to carry its penalty, viz., death. He died because the law was still in effect. Why would He die under the penalty of a law that He was going to abolish? That does not make sense.
 - *Illustration:* If a person pays the penalty for a traffic offense, it implies the traffic law that he had transgressed is still in effect. By paying the penalty the person is not abolishing the law, but recognising its validity and force. No traffic fine can be paid against a non-existent law.



Holy Spirit Shows People Their Lawlessness

- In 1 John 3:4, sin is defined as the "transgression of the law." That is, sin is called lawlessness, or in other words, disobedience to God's law. Throughout the Bible, God calls His children away from a life of sin, which therefore means that He calls them to be law abiding.
- One of the duties of the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of sin (John 16:8). Now if sin is defined as disobedience to God's law (1 John 3:4), then part of the Holy Spirit's work is to convict men of their disobedience to God's law, and to call them to a life of obedience.

Rejected Because of Disobedience to God's Laws, Due to Ignoring the Lawgiver

- In Matt. 7:21-23 it says: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the **will** [God's law is called His will – see Ps. 40:8] of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who **practice lawlessness!**'"
- Notice that many practise religious acts in God's name, but are rejected by Him in the end. The reason for their rejection is found in the last sentence of the verse: they "practice lawlessness" (i.e. they have rejected / ignored / been disobedient to God's laws)
- Why do they practise lawlessness? Earlier in the verse Jesus gives the answer: "I never knew you." Thus lawlessness is a direct result of a lack of personal relationship with the Loving Law Giver.

The Law: One Unit

Some have tried to remove commandments from the Ten Commandments (particularly the 4th commandment), but the Bible says that if ONE law is transgressed, a person is guilty of ALL. The law is a unit that cannot be separated.

- James 2:10 – If we break one of God's commandments we are just as guilty as if we had broken them all

Commandment-Keeping, an Identifying Factor of God's End-Time People

- Commandment keeping defines God's end-time saints:
 - Rev. 12:17 and
 - Rev. 14:12



Does God hold people accountable if they did not know about all His commandments?

- John 3:19 – We are condemned if we choose darkness after having been exposed to the light
- Acts 17:30 – God overlooks ignorance (but not a refusal to know the truth)

Blessings of Obedience^H

- *Insight and wisdom:* Ps. 119:98-99
- *Peace:* Ps. 119:165; Isa. 48:18
- *Righteousness:* Deut. 6:25
- *A pure and moral life:* Prov. 7:1, 2, 5

- *Knowledge of the truth:* John 7:17
- *Protection against disease:* Ex. 15:26
- *Longevity:* Prov. 3:1,2; 4:10,22
- *Assurance that one's prayers will be answered:* 1 John 3:21-22; Ps. 66:18

Endnotes

- ^A Dederen, Raoul. Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology. Commentary Reference Series, Vol. 12. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2001, p. 458
- ^B Ibid, pp. 458-459, 468
- ^C MacCarty, Skip. In Granite or Ingrained? PowerPoint presentation, sent to author.
- ^D Shelton, Danny & Quinn, Shelley. Ten Commandments Twice Removed. Michigan: Remnant Publications, 2005, p. 30, adapted
- ^E Nichol, F.D., Ed. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 5. Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980, p. 624
- ^F Ibid, pp. 1031-1032
- ^G MacCarty, Skip. In Granite or Ingrained? Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2007, pp. 144, 152-154
- ^H Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh-day Adventists Believe, Silver Spring, 2005, p. 277

Facing Challenges?



Visit: www.friendswhocare.org

Needing Lifestyle & Dietary Guidance?



Visit: www.keepwell.com

THE FOLLOWING ARE ALL FREE SERVICES Help is Just a Click Away

Health Problems?



Visit: www.lifeguidance.info

Impact Your World



Visit: www.trulygreat.info

Encourage Someone You Know



Visit: www.blessothers.net