

Jesus and the Law

It is critically important to remember that the law must be understood in the context of what Jesus taught. If Jesus is left out of this subject of the law, it becomes dry, formal, and legalistic in nature. Consider the following important passages in this regard: John 14:15; 15:10; Matthew 5:17, 18, 21, 27, 28.

A Heart Issue

Some Christians have a problem with the idea of obedience to God's law. They think it's legalistic to believe that obedience to God's commandments is necessary. But the reality is that this is completely illogical. What would a wife think if her husband told her that he loved her but he didn't think that being faithful to her was necessary? How would parents feel if their children related to them this way? It is strange and foolish to think that we could treat God this way. Actually, the Bible teaches that love is actually the fulfillment of the law. So the law reveals what love actually is! See Romans 13:10; Matthew 22:37-40. When you get to the heart of the matter, it turns out to be a matter of the heart. That's the real issue! The law goes against our natural, sinful desires and pleasures. And that's where the battle is. This is why God works a special miracle in the hearts of believing men and woman. Notice Hebrews 10:16: *"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them..."* In fact this is the new covenant! See Jeremiah 31:31-34. This is when obedience is truly meaningful: when it comes from the heart—when it comes from love! Believers don't ever keep the law in order to be saved—no way—they keep the law because they are saved! It's a response from a heart that's filled with love for God. Notice this beautiful appeal from Jesus Himself:

"If you love Me, keep My commandments." - John 14:15

See also Revelation 14:12; 12:17; 22:14. These passages make it unmistakably clear that God's last-day people will be commandment-keepers! They will reject the overtures of Satan and the antichrist to make void God's holy law. With hearts beating with love and thankfulness, they will, by God's power, strive to keep His Ten Commandment law. Why? Simple: because they love Him so much!

Presentation guide 4:

What is **Your** Picture of **God?**

Our understanding of the character of God has a lot to say about the kind of relationship we have with Him. Sadly many think of God as one that restricts them from doing what they actually want to do. They see the law as restrictive and arbitrary. Through this study we want to take a fresh look at the 10 commandments and rediscover their beauty and place in the Christian life. An enemy has been at work to defame the character of God by attacking His very law.

At the Center of the Controversy

The controversy between good and evil is a central theme of the Bible. It is this battle between God and Satan that places everything else in the world in context. As we have learned, the Bible teaches that Satan will be exceedingly deceptive in the last days. This is where the end-time antichrist comes in. The antichrist is an instrument that Satan effectively hides behind in order to accomplish his nefarious intentions. The Bible lifts the veil on these various deceptions.

The Anointed Cherubim

Satan has a bad history with God. The whole problem of sin began, as we have learned, in the very inner precincts of heaven. And what was the issue? What was it that Satan rebelled against? The sanctuary reveals a fascinating answer. In the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary was found the Ark of the Covenant. In that ark was found two stone tablets on which was written the holy law of God, the Ten Commandments. There was a lid on the ark called the *"mercy seat"*. And on either side of the mercy seat, there was something very interesting. Notice Exodus

25:18: "And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat."

These cherubim were special angels that were placed over the mercy seat on either side of the Ten Commandments. All this was in the earthly sanctuary. In a future lesson we will see that the earthly sanctuary was a copy of the heavenly sanctuary. This, then, means that the cherubim on the earthly sanctuary were a model of the real ones in heaven. Lucifer (who became Satan) was one of these! See Ezekiel 28:13-15. This is a powerful insight into the controversy between Christ and Satan. We can be sure that whatever the cause for Satan's rebellion in heaven, he was well acquainted with the holy law of God!

Antichrist Agenda

With this background, we can further understand what Satan will focus on in the last days. One of the main issues, as we have clearly seen, revolves around worship. See Matthew 4:1-10 (especially v. 9); Revelation 13, 14; 2 Thes. 2:4. The antichrist is a front-man, or mask, that Satan will hide behind in order to obtain worship for himself. And here's where things get really amazing: central to this issue of worship is the law of God. Notice very carefully how the antichrist relates to God's law: Daniel 7:25 says that he will seek to "change" God's "times and law"; 2 Thes. 2:3 calls him "the man of lawlessness"—that is, the man without law! Also, Revelation 13 first depicts the antichrist, then in Revelation 14:12, by contrast, it depicts the people of "keeping the commandments of God"! So the antichrist despises God's law and Christ-followers love it and, by God's power, seek to obey it!

A Transcript of His Character

The law, in fact, is a transcript of the very character of God. The same characteristics with which the Bible describes the law of God are also used to describe the holy, loving character of God. So, according to the Bible, the law is as important as God's own character! Why? Because it is God's holy, loving character put into words! Notice below:

God Is / The Law Is:

› Holy | Isaiah 5:16 Romans 7:12

› Perfect | Matt 5:48 Psalm 19:7

› Pure | 1 John 3:2,3 Psalm 19:8

› Just | Deut 32:4 Romans 7:12

› True | John 3:33 Psalm 19:9

› Righteous | Jeremiah 23:6 Psalm 119:172

› Love | 1 John 4:8 Romans 13:10

Any attack on the law of God is an attack on His character! And it is an attack on His government! The law of God is holy, perfect, righteous, and pure just like God Himself.

At the Heart of the Gospel

The need and purpose of the law of God becomes abundantly clear when we reflect on Jesus' death on the cross. It is often in the most simple questions that we find the most sublime answers. Here's a simple question: "Why did Jesus die on the cross?" And the sublime answer: "That, by believing, we could have the forgiveness of sins!" Here's a second simple question: "What is sin?" And the simple answer: "The breaking of God's law." Notice the following verses:

› 1 John 3:4 = Sin is the breaking of God's law

› Romans 3:20 = By the law is the knowledge of sin

› Romans 7:7 = We would not know sin without the law

› James 1:23-25 = The law is like a mirror; it reveals sin

Many dozens more verses can be cited, but the point is clear because it's so simple: Without the law, there is no sin. And if there is no sin, why did Jesus die? It wouldn't make sense! The law, therefore, is at the very heart of the Gospel. The two cannot be separated! They are distinguishable, but not divisible. Think also about the judgment. Every judgment requires some standard by which to judge—some law. In the judgment of God, there is a standard—The Ten Commandments. For example, in James 2:10-12, the Bible says that we will be judged by the Ten Commandments.