

9 -- THE MOST HOLY PLACE

(The Transcript of God's Love: God's Holy Law – Part 1)

As we move beyond the altar of incense we encounter the veil that separated the two apartments. This veil was a rich and beautiful curtain suspended from gold-plated pillars. Like the inner covering, which formed the ceiling, it was of the most gorgeous colors, blue, purple, and scarlet, beautifully adorned with designs of angels made of threads of gold and silver to represent the angelic host who are connected with the work of the heavenly sanctuary and who are ministering spirits to the people of God on earth. Beyond the second apartment was the most holy place. In this apartment was the ark, a chest of acacia wood about forty-five inches long, twenty-seven inches high and twenty-seven inches wide. It was overlaid, both inside and outside, with gold and it was the container for the tables of stone (Exodus 25:10-22). As a result it was called the ark of God's testament, or the ark of the Covenant, since the Ten Commandments were the basis of the covenant made between God and His people. On top of the golden chest were two angels made of solid gold. One wing of each angel was stretched out high and the other wing was folded over the body (Ezekiel 1:11) as a sign of reverence and humility. The position of the angels with their faces turned toward each other, and looking reverently down toward the ark represented the reverence with which the heavenly host regard the law of God and their interest in the plan of salvation. The cover of the ark was called the mercy seat (Exodus 25:17-22), and it was here where God's visible presence was manifested. This spot symbolized God's throne in heaven, which is likewise encompassed by angels (Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 6:1, 2). Beneath the mercy seat was the holy law of God and it is the great rule of righteousness and judgment.

1. What was inside the ark?

Exodus 25:21 You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you.

Deuteronomy 10:4, 5 And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments, which the LORD had 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.

Note: The Ten Commandments are the only part of the Bible that God Himself wrote with His own finger (Ex. 31:18; 32:16). The rest of Scripture was written by the prophets as God communicated with them. The Ten Commandments were of such vital importance that God wrote them with His own finger on tables of stone.

God's Holy Ten Commandments

In this study we will learn that Satan hates God's law. One of the subtle ways that he has sought to discredit God's law has been through the suggestion that since we are saved by grace we no longer need to keep God's law, but is salvation by grace a license to sin? What does the Bible teach regarding this?

2. What is sin?

1 John 3:4 Sin is the transgression of the law.

3. Which law is it that points out our sin?

Romans 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."

Note: God's law points out, or reveals sin. In quoting the tenth commandment Paul indicates that the law involved is the Ten Commandment law.

4. Is grace an excuse for sin?

Romans 6:1, 2 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Note: A person saved by the grace of God will choose to live an obedient life through the power of the Holy Spirit. Grace is not an excuse for breaking God's law. In fact, the opposite is true. A person saved by grace no longer wishes to dwell in sin or live in disobedience of God's law.

5. What is the purpose of God's law?

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Note: The law does not save; it only reveals the sinner's need of a Savior. The law does not justify, or cleanse; it only shows our need of cleansing. It is God's great mirror, reflecting the sinner's need of Jesus for cleansing and redemption (James 1:23, 24).

6. How can the Christian be cleansed?

1 John 1:7 ... the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Note: Only through Jesus can people receive cleansing. The Bible is very clear that people are not saved by law-keeping; they are saved solely by the blood of Jesus Christ. He cleanses, and then He provides the power to live a life of obedience. The devil hates God's law because it makes us aware that we need a Savior from sin. Thus, God's holy law shows people their need of cleansing, but it cannot cleanse. Only Jesus can.

7. How then are people saved?

Ephesians 2:8, 9 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Note: The New Testament is crystal clear. People are saved solely by believing and accepting what Jesus did and is doing for them (grace). Law-keeping and good works are the result of a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, but never a means to obtaining a saving relationship.

A Look at Salvation in the Old Testament

Note: The New Testament makes clear that God saves people by grace and expects them to live a life of obedience because they have a relationship with Him. Many people have not realized that the Old Testament teaches exactly the same concept. In both testaments God's people are saved by grace through faith, and then, because He has redeemed them, they will keep His law.

8. Did God enter into covenant with Israel, of which the Law was its foundation, before or after He redeemed them from Egypt?

Exodus 20:2 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Exodus 19:4, 5 ... I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice ...

Jeremiah 31:2 - Thus saith the LORD, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel...

Note: Notice how clearly God spells it out. The reason why Israel was asked to obey was an outgrowth of the fact that God had already redeemed them from bondage. Nowhere does Scripture give any indication that God ever asks people to obey as a condition of redemption. He first of all redeems them, and *then* He asks for their obedience.

9. What is the Old Testament motive for obeying God?

Deuteronomy 6:5, 6 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

Note: Most Christians will quickly notice that this commandment to love God is the same one Jesus repeated in Matthew 22:37. The second great commandment of Jesus, to love your neighbor, is also an Old Testament commandment found in Leviticus 19:18. These two great summations of the law that Jesus gives are actually Old Testament commands. The command to love God in Deuteronomy 6 immediately follows the giving of the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5, indicating clearly that love was to be the motive for obedience to God even in the Old Testament.

10. Was Old Testament religion a legalistic religion?

Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?

Note: This is surely not evidence of a legalistic religion, but a life of obedience that springs out of a loving relationship with God.

11. Was the new birth experience also an Old Testament experience?

Ezekiel 36:26, 27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Note: Here again, the very elements of gospel religion are presented. In order to serve God, people must receive a new heart. The Holy Spirit would live in this new heart, and it would be the Holy Spirit living and dwelling in the people that would cause them to obey their Heavenly Father. God has only one plan of salvation. In both Old and New Testaments, God always saves people solely by grace through faith, and never by works. Works and law-keeping, in both Old and New Testament, were always the result of a relationship with God and never a means to obtaining that relationship.

12. Therefore, are the Ten Commandments binding for New Testament Christians?

Matthew 19:17 ... But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.

John 14:15 If you love me, keep my commandments.

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, ...

1 John 2:3, 4 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Note: The New Testament plainly teaches that God's people will keep His commandments. All of us know that the world is in big trouble today because so many no longer feel it is important to obey God's law.

13. In the last days, whom does the devil especially hate?

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon [devil] was wroth with the woman [the church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed [God's end time faithful], which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Note: Please notice that in the last days the devil is enraged with those who keep, or obey, God's commandments.

14. Does God, His law, or His plan of salvation ever change?

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Malachi 3:6 For I am the LORD, I do not change; ...

Matthew 5:17 Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

Luke 16:17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.

Note: What great news this is! Our God doesn't change. What He said in Old Testament times is the same that He says in New Testament times. The plan of salvation is more fully revealed in the New Testament, but it is not different. The relationship of law and grace is the same in both Old and New Testaments. God's law is as eternal and changeless as God Himself. To change God's law would be to change the character of God, and God has declared He does not change. What assurance there is in this for the Christian! We do not serve a fickle God who changes with every whim that comes along, but one who can be counted on to deliver. "This law," said John Wesley, "is an incorruptible picture of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity....it is the face of God unveiled....It is the heart of God disclosed to man." (Forty-four Sermons, p. 385, 386)

Your Response to Jesus

Are you thankful that God has an eternal and changeless law? Are you thankful that He saves us by His grace and then gives us the privilege to keep His law through the power of the Holy Spirit the way Jesus did while He was here? (1 John 2:5, 6)

ANSWER: _____

God' Law is a Transcript of His Character

(Comparison of God and His Law)

(Additional Study)

| ATTRIBUTE | GODS CHARACTER | TEN COMMANDMENTS |
|----------------|--|--------------------------------|
| LOVE | 1 John 4:8, 1 John 4:16 | Romans 13:8-10, Galatians 5:14 |
| PERFECT | Matthew 5:48 | James 1:25, Psalms 19:7 |
| HOLY | 1 Peter 1:15, Psalms 99:9 | Romans 7:12, 2 Peter 2:21 |
| ETERNAL | Romans 16:26, Deuteronomy 33:27 | Psalms 111:7-8, Luke 16:17 |
| TRUTH | Deuteronomy 32:4, John 14:6 | Psalms 119:142, 151 |
| PURE | 1 John 3:3, Job 4:17 | Psalms 19:7-8 |
| GOOD | Nahum 1:7, Luke 18:19 | Romans 7:12, 16, 1 Timothy 1:8 |
| SPIRITUAL | John 4:24 | Romans 7:14 |
| JUST | Isaiah 45:21, Romans 3:26 | Romans 7:12 |
| FAITHFUL | 1 Corinthians 1:9, 2 Thessalonians 3:3 | Psalms 119:86 |
| LIGHT | 1 John 1:5 | Proverbs 6:23 |
| LIFE | John 14:6, Psalms 36:9 | Matthew 19:17, Proverbs 3:1-2 |
| RIGHTEOUS | Psalms 145:17, Jeremiah 23:6 | Romans 9:31, Psalms 119:172 |
| TRUE | John 3:33, 1 John 5:20 | Nehemiah 9:13 |
| PEACE | Romans 15:33, Hebrews 13:20 | Psalms 119:165 |
| HONOURABLE | Isaiah 58:13 | Isaiah 42:21 |
| GREAT | Psalms 48:1 | Hosea 8:12 |
| WONDERFUL | Isaiah 9:6 | Psalms 119:18 |
| THE WAY | John 14:6 | Psalms 119:30-32 |
| SURE | 2 Timothy 2:19 | Psalms 19:7, 111:7 |
| UNCHANGING | Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8 | Matthew 5:18, Psalms 111:7-8 |
| WISE | Daniel 2:20, Job 36:5, Jude 1:25 | Psalms 119:98, Psalms 19:7 |
| ENLIGHTENMENT | Psalms 18:28 | Psalms 19:8 |
| BLESSED | 1 Timothy 1:11, Psalms 28:6 | Revelation 22:14, Exodus 20:11 |
| HAPPINESS | Psalms 146:5 | Proverbs 29:18 |
| MERCIFUL | 2 Corinthians 1:3, Exodus 34:6 | Matthew 23:23, Nehemiah 1:5 |
| UNDERSTANDING | Psalms 147:5 | Psalms 119:73, Psalms 119:99 |
| DELIGHT | Psalms 37:4 | Psalms 1:2 |
| LIBERTY | 2 Corinthians 3:17 | James 1:25, Psalms 119:45 |
| KNOWLEDGE | Isaiah 11:2 | Romans 3:20 |
| HOPE | Psalms 71:5, Romans 15:13 | Psalms 119:43 |
| OUR MEDITATION | Psalms 63:6 | Psalms 1:2 |