

Law & Grace

Part 2

by:
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As we have said before, many Christians have been taught that the Law is opposed to Grace, but nothing could be further from the truth. Justification by works is opposed to grace but Law is not. Rather, the scripture says that **"the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all man, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds"** (Tit. 2:11-14 NAS). Here we see that the grace of God through Jesus Christ is to redeem us from all lawlessness, all violations of the holy laws of God and to make us righteous, which means keeping the holy laws of God. So in this part we shall look at the laws of God in relationship to us as Christians. First, let us look at several definitions of "Law." Law is "a rule of conduct enjoined by a competent authority and, if need be, enforced by penalties" (Davis Dictionary of the Bible). "Law is a rule, particularly an established or permanent rule, prescribed by the supreme power of a state to its subjects, for regulating their actions, particularly their social actions. Laws are *imperative* or *mandatory*, commanding what shall be done; *prohibitory*, restraining from what is to be forboren; or *permissive*, declaring what may be done without incurring a penalty. 'Law is beneficence acting by rule.' Burke" (1828 American Dictionary of the English Language by Noah Webster). The Hebrew word for Law is "Torah" and the Greek is "nomos" from which we get the word antinomian, meaning "without law." Antinomianism is an anti-biblical doctrine which says that "the moral law is made void through faith, and that faith alone is necessary to salvation" (The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible). Antinomian is defined by Webster as "One of a sect who maintain, that, under the gospel dispensation, the law is of no use or obligation; or who hold doctrines which supersede the necessity of good works and a virtuous life." Webster defines the word righteousness as: "Purity of heart and rectitude of life; conformity of

righteous who is "observing divine and human laws" (Thayer's Greek English Lexicon).

Throughout the Sermon on the Mount the Lord Jesus talks of righteousness. Let us then look at what the Lord Himself said about the Law of God as He addresses this matter very specifically. Jesus said, **"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the law, until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven"** (Mt. 5:17-20 NAS). Then Jesus goes on to explain what He means by examples. We must not only keep the commandment **"Do not murder"** but we must not even be angry or say unkind things about each other. We must not only keep the law that says **"Thou shalt not commit adultery"** but we must not even allow lust to enter through our eyes or into our hearts! (Mt. 5:21-22, 27-32). And so we see how keeping the laws of God must be by and in the Spirit, and not just be of the letter. This is what Paul meant when he wrote that we are **"servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life"** (II Cor. 3:6 NAS). You see the commandments never brought life, but as Paul says, only condemnation because we have never kept them perfectly which a holy and perfect God demands; but God's love bestows upon us grace through the New Covenant which is a **"ministry of the Spirit and righteousness,"** which means that we should and can keep God's laws by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit! (II Cor. 3:7-9). Paul wrote this also to the Romans when he said that God sent His own Son **"in order that the requirement** (δικαιοσύνη, dikaioma - an ordinance, an establishment of law) **of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit"** (Rom. 8:3-4 NAS). This word is the same as that spoken of the parents of John the Baptist, **"They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord"** (Lk. 1:6 NAS). You see, dear friend, the New Covenant is a covenant of law! Jeremiah prophesied it and the writer to the Hebrews repeats it twice. **"Behold, days are**

put my laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts" (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13; 10:14-17). God does not put His laws into our hearts to be ignored or ridiculed as some do, but to be obeyed and cherished.

Further, we are dead to the law which is in letter only, and are alive to Christ which means we are **"not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,"** whose law is higher, not lower than the written commandments (Rom. 7:4; I Cor. 9:21). That is why Jesus said our righteousness is to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees who were under the old covenant. Grace does not lower the standards of God, but as we shall see, empowers us to keep the laws of Christ.

I believe it would be good now to consider some of the reasons for the Law of God. But first we need to understand that by "the Law" is meant the whole word of God, the entire teachings of God given to His church whether by Moses or other prophets or by other holy men of God in the scriptures. For instance, Jesus spoke of the three divisions of scripture that the Jews used when He said, **"all things which are written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled"** and was referring to the first five books of the bible, which we call the Pentateuch, which were those written by Moses (Lk. 24:44 NAS; Josh. 1:8; Neh. 8). But Jesus also referred to the Psalms as **"your Law"** (Jn. 10:34, Psa. 82:6; Jn. 15:25, Psa. 35:19, 69:4). Paul referred to the prophets as **"the Law"** (I Cor. 14:21; Isa. 28:11). Even the Gospel itself was referred to in prophecy and by Paul as the Law (Isa. 2:2-3; 42:4-6; 51:4, 7; Acts 13:47; Rom. 3:27). The scriptures also refer to such laws as **"the law of the wise,"** the law of father and mother, laws of the heart born witness to by conscience, law of faith, and laws such as sowing and reaping referred to by precept (Pro. 13:13-14; 1:8, 6:20; Rom. 2:14-15; 3:27-31; Gal. 6:6-10). Now, let us look at Psalm 119, then Psalm 19, and 1st Timothy 1 and see what a true child of God says and thinks about God's Law.

Reasons for the Law of God & References:

Blessing	Psalm 119:1,2
Be Unashamed	6,31,46,80,116
Purity	9-10
Keep from Sin	11
Teaching	12,26,33,64,68,124,135,171

To Behold Wonderful Things	18	
Be without Reproach & Contempt	22,39	
Delight	24,47,70,92,143,174	
Counselors	24	
Revival		25,37,40,50,88,93,107,149,154
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Strength	28	156,159
Removal of False Ways	29	
Understanding	34	
Turn away Eyes from Vanity	37	
Reverence for God	38	
Lovingkindness	41	
Salvation	41,94	
An Answer for Reproacher	42	
Walk in Liberty	45	
Hope	49,116	
Comfort	50,52,76	
Songs	54,172	
Night Watches	55,56,62,147-148	
The Lord is our Portion	57	
Grace	58	
Companionship of the Godfearing	63	
Good Discernment	66	
Knowledge	66	
Godfearing turn to Us	79	
Loving	97,113,119,127,140,159,163,	
Wisdom, wiser than enemies	98	167
Insight & Understanding	99,100,104,130,169	
Sweetness to our mouths	103	
Hatred of False Ways	104,128,163	
Direction	105	
Inheritance	111	
Joy	111,162	
Sustainment	116	
Fear of God	120	
Deliverance from Materialism	127	
Tears for Others	136	
Consuming Zeal	139	
Truth	142,151,160	
Nearness of God	151	
Loathing of Treacherous	158	
Eternity	160	

Peace	165
Lack of Stumbling	165
Deliverance	170
Righteousness	172
Help	173,175
The Lord will seek you	176

Oh, let us praise God with the psalmist:

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes,
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.
They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.
Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned;
In keeping them there is great reward.

Psalm 19:7-11 NAS

And let us listen as an older apostle instructs a younger about God's law:

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion, wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions. But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane for those who kill their fathers or mothers for

contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

I Timothy 1:5-11 NAS

Oh, how precious is God's Word! Yes, it was prophesied of the Lord Jesus, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart" (Psa. 40:7-8 NAS). And it is written of us, "The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip" (Psa. 37:30-31 NAS).

I would like to use one of the purposes of God's Laws to illustrate a point and clarify a scripture that is often only partially quoted and therefore wrested and distorted by the untaught and unstable (II Pet. 3:16).

The laws of God are like road maps, telling us how to get to where we want to go, but they have no power alone to get us there. To move physically we need the exertion of power and energy in walking or by some kind of transportation. So too, the laws of God alone can not get us where we need to go, but the Spirit of God working by His grace can! God wants us to have power over sin and be slaves of righteousness, not sin. That is what Paul meant when he wrote, "Do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:13-14 NAS). We are not under the law for power, but under God's grace. It is God's grace that gives us His power to overcome sin and death in this world. But, thank God for direction through His word that tells us how to get to God and to where we need to go in God! By God's grace we can keep the laws and commandments of God, and that is righteousness.

We need to realize that Satan is the one who tempts and deceives people into practicing sin. The Antichrist is called the "lawless one" and that spirit is so prevalent and powerful in the world today. What is tragic is that it is so prevalent among professing and immature Christians (II Thes. 2:8). But as it was in the days of Noah, a preacher of righteousness, so shall it be in this last day before the coming of the Lord, He will raise up preachers of righteousness to turn the people from their sins and to get into the

their righteous acts) and be ready for the bridegroom when He comes (Rev. 19:8).

God's Law is spiritual and the carnal mind does not understand it. It is holy, just, and good, but the immature and the disobedient mock at His holy ways because **"the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so"** (Rom. 7:14; 8:7). Therefore we must exhort God's people to give their bodies, their fleshly desires and appetites to God so that their mind can be renewed and they can then know what that good and acceptable and perfect will of God is! (Rom. 12:1-2). They are not their own for they have been bought with a price, the precious and everlasting blood of Jesus Christ, our wonderful Lord! (I Cor. 6:19-20). We must glorify God in our bodies if we are going to please Him; with our fleshly bodies!

Therefore, let us pray, remembering:

"Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTRY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,' and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law."

Romans 13:8-10 NAS

"Oh God, may Your power and grace be poured out upon us so that we can understand Your will, know Your will, and do Your will, which is Your Word, Your Holy Word. Give us true Holy Love, and **'this is love, that we keep Your commandments, and they are not difficult to observe,'** but by Your grace we shall overcome and do all Your will, so help us God! Amen! We give our bodies to You as a living, holy sacrifice upon Your altar of love. You deserve and we can do no less! In Jesus name and for His sake we pray! Amen! and Amen!!"

There are serious and eternal consequences to disobeying the laws of God, and we shall just close with this statement of the Lord Jesus Himself.

"Many will say to Me on that day 'Lord Lord did we

then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

(Mt. 7:22-23 NAS; Eze. 18:20-32; Hos. 4:6; Deut. 28-30)

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