

THE LAW AND THE CHRISTIAN

One of the main purposes of the law was to reveal sin, to show exactly what sin is (Rom. 3:19-20; 5:20; 7:7). The Apostle Paul became aware of his sinful condition by looking into the law and knowing that on the basis of the law he fell short of the righteous standards of God and became aware of the fact that he was a sinner doomed to die. 2 Corinthians 3:7 & 9 call the Mosaic law the “ministration of death and condemnation.”

This may seem strange but sin used God’s good law to find an occasion through the commandment. The sin nature started doing what it could to cause the individual to violate God’s commandments and sin all the more. Paul says that sin found an occasion through the commandment, it beguiled me and slew

me. It wasn't the law that was bad but sin that worked death in me through that which was good (Romans 7:13).

This led to faith in Jesus Christ so that we could never depend on the law for the righteousness that we need but on Christ Himself (Gal. 3:24-25). As much as we may try to keep the law perfectly, because of the flesh we will never be able to do it. So the law drove us to faith for our righteousness, in Jesus the Messiah and a dependence upon Him and His righteousness to save us, for by grace we are saved (Eph. 2:5). So the law was never meant as an instrument of salvation but was used as God's diagnostic to show our need for the Saviour.

CHRIST HIMSELF TAKES THE PLACE OF THE LAW

The New Testament teaches us that the law is replaced by Jesus Christ. The law was the instructor or teacher until the coming of the great Teacher. That Christ Himself takes the place of the law is evident from a number of scriptures. Moses, who was only a preparatory, servant teacher, foretold that God would raise up a prophet to replace him. “You must listen to Him,” said Moses (Deut. 18:18). On the mount of transfiguration the heavenly voice declared that Jesus was the One to supersede Moses - “Listen to Him” (Luke 9:35).

In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus repeatedly affirms that He replaces Moses as the great Teacher – “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago [by Moses]

...But I tell you... (Matt. 5:21) The law of Moses was a child trainer, custodian and guardian until the coming of Christ. Galatians 3:24 clearly implies that Jesus replaces the law. In Judaism whatever was contrary to the written code was sin. In the New Testament whatever is contrary to Jesus and his principles is sin (1 Cor. 6:13-15). In the New Testament, Christ and His gospel are the standard by which all behavior is measured. The timeless ethical principles in the law of Moses live on in Christ which is referred to at times in scripture as the law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2).

The New Testament focus is on the person of Christ. While the Jew found his pattern for living by following the law, the Christian finds his pattern for living by following Christ. While Paul urged Christians to practice “the righteousness of the law,” (Rom. 8:4) he did

not lay upon them the regulations of the law (Eph. 2:15). The New Testament “teachings” cannot be separated from Christ and His person. When Paul refers to the “law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2), he means commandments either explicitly or implicitly derived from the life and teaching of our Lord.

The believer in Christ is free from the law of Moses but is not free from the eternal principles found in the law of Christ. These commandments find their root in love. You are free from Old Testament cultic taboos for which no justification in nature or in reason could be given - such as wearing a garment that contains both wool and linen (Lev. 19:19), etc. But you are not free to do anything that you cannot do in love for God and in love for our fellowman.

Does it make any difference how we live? Of course it does. It must. We have a new Lord, Master and King (Rom. 10:9; Acts 17:7). We have obligations toward one another (Gal. 6:2). We are no longer the servants of sin (Romans 6:17-18).

NOT UNDER THE LAW BUT UNDER GRACE

Because all Christians sometimes sin, we continue to need God's grace – and the good news is that we continue to be forgiven and made clean through the atoning work of our Saviour (Rom. 3:24). Salvation is a gift from start to finish (Rom. 6:23).

Of course, God's grace does not mean we are given permission to sin (Rom. 6:1-2). Paul specifically says that God created us to do good works (Eph. 2:10), and that grace teaches us to deny ungodliness (Titus 2:11-

12). Throughout the New Testament, we are exhorted to obey God (Acts 5:29), and we are warned about sin (Heb. 3:13). But regardless of how obedient we might be, salvation does not come from our goodness, but through the grace of God given to us through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:21-22). The perfect righteousness that we need for salvation cannot come from ourselves. It can come only from Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). The good news of the gospel is that his righteousness is given to us by Him. “Christ Jesus has become our righteousness, holiness and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).

As Christians we are not under the law but under grace (Rom. 6:14). Our righteousness has been provided through the shed blood of Jesus (Rom. 5:9) and not by the doing of any religious law (Mosaic or otherwise – Rom.

3:21). Romans 10:4 states, “For Christ is the end of the law **for righteousness** to everyone that believeth.” And if we confess with our mouth that Jesus is our Lord (King & Master) and shall believe in our heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved (Rom. 10:9). In this profession we turn by faith from one kingdom to another (Col. 1:13-14), from one king to another (Matt. 6:24), from darkness to light, from one authority (Satan) to another authority (God) to receive the forgiveness of sins (Acts 26:18). Right relationship has been provided as a gift of grace and not a work of the law (Rom. 5:17).

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

- 1. One of the main functions of the law is:**
 - a. to show you how good you are.**
 - b. to bring to you the knowledge of your sin.**

Answer: Romans 3:20 For no one is put right in God's sight by doing what the Law requires; what the Law does is to make us know that we have sinned (TEV).

2. Our sinfulness (shown to us by the law) led us to Christ so that we might be justified (made righteous) by faith. True or False.

Answer: Galatians 3:24 So the law was put in charge until Christ came. He came so that we might be made right with God by believing in Christ. (NIRV).

3. As much as we may try to keep the law perfectly, because of the flesh we will never be able to do it. True or False.

Answer: James 2:10 And the person who keeps every law of God but makes one little slip is just as guilty as the person who has broken every law there is (LB).

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (KJV)

1 John 3:4 Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God (NLT).

4. God save us by grace through Christ redemptive work. True or False.

Answer: Romans 3:24 The free gift of God's grace makes all of us right with him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free (NIV).

5. The law was never meant as an instrument of salvation. True or False.

Answer: Romans 3:20 For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are **(NLT)**.

6. We are not saved by law keeping, but keeping Jesus' commandments show our love for Him. True or False.

Answer: John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. **21** He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: **(KJV)**

7. The Apostle Paul taught people to repent and prove their change of heart by the things that they do. True or False.

Answer: Acts 26:19-20 So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. 20 First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds **(NIV)**.

8. In the New Testament whatever is contrary to Jesus and His principles is sin. True or False.

Answer: 1 Corinthians 8:12 When you sin against your brothers and sisters in Christ like this and cause them to do what they feel is wrong, you are also sinning against Christ **(NCV)**.

1 John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin: **(KJV)**

9. The timeless ethical principles in the law of Moses live on in Christ which is referred to at times in scripture as the law of Christ. True or False.

Answer: I Corinthians 9:21 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law **(NIV)**.

Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ **(KJV)**.

10. The New Testament focus is on the person of Christ. True or False.

Answer: Luke 9:35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!" **(NASV)**

11. Paul urged Christians to practice “the righteousness of the law,” he did not lay upon them the regulations of the law. True or False.

Answer: Romans 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit **(KJV)**.

Ephesians 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; **(KJV)**

12. When Paul refers to the “law of Christ,” he means commandments either explicitly or implicitly derived from the life and teaching of our Lord. True or False.

Answer: Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ (**KJV**).

1 Timothy 6:3-4 This is the sort of thing you should teach and preach, and if anyone tries to teach some doctrinal novelty and does not follow sound teaching (which we base on our Lord Jesus Christ's own words and which leads to Christ-like living), then he is a conceited idiot! (**Phillips Modern English**)

13. The believer in Christ is free from the law of Moses but is not free from the eternal principles found in the law of Christ. These commandments find their root in love. True or False.

Answer: James 2:8 You will do all right, if you obey the most important law in the Scriptures. It is the law that commands us to

love others as much as we love ourselves
(CEV).

Romans 13:8-10 **8** Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. **9** For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law
(NLT).

14. You are free from Old Testament cultic taboos for which no justification in nature or in reason could be given – such as wearing a garment that contains both wool

and linen (Lev. 19:19), etc. But you are not free to do anything which you cannot do in love for God and in love for our fellow-man. True or False.

Answer: Matthew 22:35-40 One of them, a lawyer, spoke up: **36** "Sir, which is the most important command in the laws of Moses?" **37** Jesus replied, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.' **38-39** This is the first and greatest commandment. The second most important is similar: 'Love your neighbor as much as you love yourself.' **40** All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets stem from these two laws and are fulfilled if you obey them. Keep only these and you will find that you are obeying all the others." **(LB)**

15. As Christians we have a new Lord, Master and King. True or False.

Answer: Romans 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; **(NASV)**

Acts 17:7 "And Jason has welcomed them into his home. They are all guilty of treason against Caesar, for they profess allegiance to another king, named Jesus." **(NLT)**

16. As Christians we are no longer the servants of sin but are servants of righteousness. True or False.

Answer: Romans 6:18 Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living **(NLT)**.

17. Because all Christians sometimes sin, we continue to need God's grace – And the good news is that we continue to be forgiven and made clean through the atoning work of our Saviour. True or False.

Answer: Romans 3:24 [All] are justified and made upright and in right standing with God, freely and gratuitously by His grace (His unmerited favor and mercy), through the redemption which is [provided] in Christ Jesus **(AMP)**.

18. God's grace means we are given permission to sin. True or False.

Answer: Romans 6:1-2 So do you think we should continue sinning so that God will give us even more grace? **2** No! We died to our old

sinful lives, so how can we continue living with sin? **(NCV)**

19. God's grace teaches us to deny ungodliness. True or False.

Answer: Titus 2:11-12 11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, **12** Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; **(KJV)**

20. Throughout the New Testament we are exhorted to obey God, and we are warned about sin. True or False.

Answer: Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. **(KJV)**

Hebrews 3:12-14 **12** Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. **13** But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. **14** For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; **(KJV)**

21. The perfect righteousness that we need for salvation cannot come from ourselves. It can come only from Jesus Christ. True or False.

Answer: 2 Corinthians 5:21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. **(NLT)**

22. Our righteousness has been provided through the shed blood of Jesus. True or False.

Answer: Romans 5:9 And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. (NLT)

23. When we become Christians we turn by faith from one kingdom to another, from one king to another, from darkness to light, from one authority (Satan) to another authority (God) to receive the forgiveness of our sins. True or False.

Answer: Colossians 1:13-14 **13** For he has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, **14** who bought our

freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins. **(LB)**

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. The person will hate one master and love the other, or will follow one master and refuse to follow the other. You cannot serve both God and worldly riches." **(NCV)**

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes so that they may turn away from darkness to the light, away from the power of Satan and to God. Then their sins can be forgiven, and they can have a place with those people who have been made holy by believing in me. **(NCV)**

24. The power to express righteousness in our lives is in our dependence upon: a. our own will power. b. our knowledge. c. the Holy Spirit.

Answer: Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not **(KJV)**.

Galatians 5:16 But I say, walk and live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit]; then you will certainly not gratify the cravings and desires of the flesh (of human nature without God). **(AMP)**

Romans 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit **(KJV)**.

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