

Lesson 35 - Why the Law Was Added

Last week, we studied the decalogue or the “Ten Commandments” - those ten laws we read about in Exodus 20 given at Mount Sinai to the Hebrew people that revealed eternal principles of right and wrong.

If you will remember our lesson of three weeks ago - we studied what God did through Abraham. God visits Abraham, his friend, and makes a seven-fold promise recorded in Gen. 12:1-3, chapter 17:1-14, and chapter 22:15-18 Abraham known as the “Abrahamic Promise”. It can be said that the historical story of the scriptures is about the 7 promises that God here makes to Abraham

1. Bless him (riches and health)
2. Bless those who bless Abraham, Curse those who curse Abraham
3. Great name
4. Great nation
5. Promised land
6. Promised king
7. All families blessed by Abraham

God gives Abraham PROMISES but among those is not included a LAW. We don't read “And I will reveal and give unto your descendants a Law that will bless them and through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed (because they have the Law). But the Law was given by Moses to the Hebrew people, Abraham's descendants, as they were brought out of Egypt and assembled at Mount Sinai.

Today we will study **WHY** the Law was added or given through Moses to the Hebrew people.

Galatians 3:15-28 - *“even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. 16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. 17 This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. 18 For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.*

*19 **Why then the law?** It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. 20 Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.*

21 Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. 22 But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

23 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. 24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."

Rom. 7:1-6 - "Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know **the law**—that **the law** is binding on a person only as long as he lives? 2 For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

4 Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to **the law** through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by **the law**, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we are released from **the law**, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code."

Galatians 5:16-25 - "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under **the law**. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

In these passages in Romans and Galatians, when Paul writes "the Law" he is referring to the "written code" or all that is included in the Mosaic system as given by Moses. The 10 commandments as well as the various and sundry laws in Leviticus and all the rules that the Hebrew people were instructed by Moses to keep.

Deut. 31:24-26 - "When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book to the very end, 25 Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, 26 "Take this Book of **the Law** and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your

God, that it may be there for a witness against you.”

the Mosaic System is spoken of as the Law in all the apostolic writings because it was essentially a legal system. The entire Old Covenant was a Covenant of Law.

John writes: “For **the law** was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)

Jesus said:

*“Has not Moses given you **the law**? Yet none of you keeps **the law**”* (John 7:19)

What was the purpose of the Mosaic Law?

Gal. 3:19 - *“**Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made.**”*

The Promise was given first - that is the Abrahamic promise in Genesis 12:1-3. Then, the Law was ADDED. Added to what? It was added to the Promise.

Furthermore, it was added “because of transgressions” that is on account of the rapid spread of sensualism, idolatry, and moral corruption, it became necessary to reveal and establish the eternal principles of right and to distinguish the right from the wrong. This was done in and through the LAW, particularly the Ten Commandments.

It was added, moreover, until the SEED should come - that is Christ, who was Himself the **fulfilment** of the Law by His own perfect example of righteousness and holiness.

Paul refers to the Law in Gal. 3 as a “guardian”/“tutor”/“custodian”/ “schoolmaster”

Prince Charles of Wales was under a tutor - subject to their authority and discipline - until he was full grown and the promise for him to be heir of the throne would be given. Is he any longer under the authority of those tutors?

Jesus said in Matt. 5:17 - *“Do not think that I have come to **abolish the Law or the Prophets**; I have not come to **abolish** them but to **fulfill** them.”*

Jesus is the heir according to the promise. We are now under Christ and the tutor (the Law) has been relieved of its duty and purpose for God’s people.

“fulfill” ?

bring to completion or reality; achieve or realize (something desired, promised, or predicted) carry out (a task, duty, or role) as required, pledged, or expected

First, Jesus FINISHED the work that He came to do. Before he breathed his last breath on the cross, he cried out “It is FINISHED!” When Jesus died on the CROSS, he fulfilled the law.

Hence, when He died on the Cross and fulfilled the Law the Law was abrogated as a covenant, and the **Covenant of Grace** was ushered in:

John 1:17 - *“For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”!*

The design of the Old Covenant or the Covenant of Law was fourfold:

1. It was to serve as a civil and religious code for the government of the Hebrew nation.
2. It was added to convict and convince men of sin, by giving them a perfect rule of moral conduct.

Rom. 3:20 - Paul says *“through the law comes knowledge of sin”*

Rom. 7:7 - *“What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.”*

3. It was “to prevent the universal spread of idolatry, by preserving among men the knowledge and practice of true religion, until Christ should come”
4. Finally, the entire Old Covenant was for the purpose of giving to the world a pictorial outline of the Plan of Redemption as consummated in the Christian System, by means of certain **types** and **symbols**, **rites** and **ceremonies** - physical metaphors - “shadows” or “copies” that men can use as object lessons

Most of the characters, institutions and events of the Old Covenant were typical of Christ and His Church.

The altar = the cross

The sacrificial lamb = Jesus the Christ

The high priest = Jesus the High Priest

The holy of holies = Heaven

The veil in the temple = the separation between God and man

etc. etc.

However in all the complexities and formality in the solemn feasts and sacrifices and rituals and rites of the Mosaic covenant, the **great truth revealed and made clear through the Mosaic System** was that it was, in the end, **INADEQUATE TO SAVE MEN FROM THEIR SINS**.

Law is not designed to make us better men and women, nor can it possibly make us more spiritually-minded. A 60 MPH speed limit doesn't make me a better driver. I will become a better driver when my heart sets itself to do so. Law's function is to define what is right, and to

distinguish right from wrong. So until my heart is changed and I want to be a better driver, there remains a penalty and law's penalty is for the purpose of restraining the lawless (those who live as though there is no law).

Therefore LAW is inadequate to save men from their sin because it doesn't get to the root of the problem.

Rom. 3:20 - *"For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law (just) comes knowledge of sin."*

1 Cor. 15:56 - *"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law."*

A person may keep the moral law diligently and circumspectly and still fall far short of salvation. Hence it is vain to expect to be saved on the ground of respectability, of being a good citizen, paying your taxes, giving to the poor, being a moral man, etc.

Salvation is not on the ground of obedience to the moral law, but is a gift of God (Rom. 6:23) to be accepted and appropriated on our part by the obedience of faith.

A few weeks ago when we studied the elements of TRUE RELIGION we asked, "What is the root of true religion on the human side?" And that is our FAITH. (Abel, Heb. 11)

Law merely defines and points our sin, and provides the penalty; hence it is wholly inadequate to remove the guilt of sin.

3. Hence, what the Law could not do for man, God did for him, in that out of His divine grace He provided a Savior for him, who is able to save him from his sins.

Rom. 8:3 - *"For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do [that is, make us righteous before God]. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh"*

4. It follows, therefore, that if men reject the only Sacrifice for sin which God has provided, the Lamb of God Himself, they are without promise and without hope; for the simple reason that there is **no other sin-offering, no other atonement, no other means of salvation.**

John 14:6 - *"no one comes to the Father, but by me"*

"That is very exclusionary!" "Yes, and truthful."

Salvation is through CHRIST ALONE; no human being was ever pardoned except on the merits of Christ's atoning blood. That is Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc

It the Law can't save, then the question is, what is it if anything to us in Christ?

Are the Ten Commandments which we reviewed in detail - that holy law given to the Hebrew people at Mount Sinai in Ex. 20 with thunder, smoke, lightning, earthquakes - binding upon us who live in the Christian Dispensation under the New Covenant with Jesus as our High Priest and savior?

The answer is that those laws which have been RE-ENACTED by the apostles under Christ are binding upon us - especially the first and second great commandment that underpins all the law and the prophets

Matt. 22:35-40 - "And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

*Luke 10:25-28 - "And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" 27 And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; **do this, and you will live.**"*

A testament is a will. God has made two wills. The old was made with reference to the **fleshly** seed of Abraham through the mediation or intermediary or arbitration or priesthood of Moses. The new is made with reference to the **spiritual** seed of Abraham - all true believers - Jew and non-Jew (Gentile) - through the mediation of Jesus Christ: and is therefore known as "The Last Will and Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"

It is a well-known principle of law that a final will abrogates and supersedes all previous wills that may have been made.

Therefore, we who live in the Christian Dispensation are under the provisions of the New Testament.

Oftentimes, when a man makes a second will he will take certain provisions of the old will and incorporate them in his new will. Those provisions become binding , not because they were in the old will, but because they have been re-enacted in the new will.

Consequently the moral principles embodied in the Ten Commandments, which have been re-enacted in the New Testament, are binding upon us, not because they were in the Old Testament, but because they are re-enacted in the New.

As shown in our last lesson on the DECALOGUE, all the commandments, or the moral principles embodied in them, have been re-enacted in the apostolic writings with but one exception.

(see Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-5; 1 Cor. 6:9-10, Rev. 21:8, 22:15, etc.)

The sole exception is the Fourth Commandment. There is no command in the New Testament Scriptures that Christians should keep the Sabbath. As previously explained, we as Christians are divinely authorized to keep the first day of the week, the Lord's Day by command and example of the apostles. The other commandments have been re-enacted in the New Testament, however, and are therefore remain binding upon us.

But today, if someone kept the Ten Commandments, could it make someone a Christian or right with God and procure for them salvation under the new covenant?

No. We cannot be Christians if we do not earnestly strive to keep the Commandments; but on the other hand, we may keep all the Commandments and fall short of salvation, for the simple reason that salvation is only through Christ, and must be accepted on our part **by faith in Him**.

As the moral principles embodied in the Ten Commandments have been incorporated in the civil law of all civilized nations, it follows that one must obey the Commandments in order to **keep out of jail**. Murder will land you in jail just about everywhere.

On the other hand, we may obey all the commandments, and still not be Christians; for there is nothing in the Ten Commandments about Christ, the gospel, the church, etc.

We could keep the Commandments and not even know about Christ, not believe in Him, not accept Him as our Savior, not be baptized, not observe the Lord's Supper, in fact not keep any of the appointments essential to our salvation and growth in holiness.

Therefore the Ten Commandments are wholly inadequate so far as the matter of procuring salvation for anyone is concerned. For a clear illustration of this truth, see the story of the rich young ruler:

Matt. 19:16-22

Mark, 10:17-22

Luke 18:18-30

What great lesson should we derive from these truths?

We should learn that salvation is not a **reward which we can merit by our obedience to the moral law**, but that it is a **gift which can be received only through our faith in Christ** and appropriated only through our obedience to His commands and appointments in Faith

John 14:1 - "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me."

John 14:6 - "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Rom. 3:20 - "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin."

Eph. 2:8 - "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,"

Titus 3:5 - he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,

Rom. 6:23 - *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*