

The Ten Commandments

Are they required today?

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The Dignity and Importance of History

Daniel Webster

If we and our posterity shall be true to the Christian religion—if we and they shall live always in the fear of God and shall respect His commandments—if we and they shall maintain just moral sentiments, and such conscientious convictions of duty as shall control the heart and life—we may have the highest hopes of the future fortunes of our country... But if we and our posterity neglect religious instruction and authority, violate the rules of eternal justice, trifle with the injunctions of morality, and recklessly destroy the political constitution which holds us together, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us that shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity.

To the Historical Society of New York

February 23, 1852

The Ten Commandments

Are They Required Today?

There is a growing movement in our civilization—one that is undermining the future of the United States and will ultimately affect the entire world. Ominous forces are at work removing all evidence of God from our society. Bible reading and prayer have already been prohibited in public schools. At the same time, our neighbor Canada set a dangerous precedent when a Saskatchewan court ruled that parts of the Bible are hate literature. As a result, it is now a crime in that country to proclaim certain verses of holy writ.

What these lawmakers don't understand is that, by disregarding parts of the Bible, they are actually committing a hate crime against God! They are attacking His value system and by so doing are rejecting and persecuting Him! Tragically, this trend is certain to result in the same devastating consequences that were experienced by the ungodly ancient empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome.

One of the most serious and protracted of these attacks upon God's Word has been directed at the Ten Commandments. Not long ago, Americans stood by and watched as government officials forcibly removed a courthouse monument that displayed an engraving of these sacred laws. This violation of our rights was carried out regardless of a survey showing that the majority of Americans

avored keeping the monument on display. Judge Roy Moore, who refused to banish the memorial from his court of law, was also officially removed from office as a result of his courageous decision. Since that event, displays of the Ten Commandments have been removed all around the country.

As offensive as this may be to believers, ironically the greatest assault upon the Almighty's Ten Commandments has come from the professing Christian community itself. While giving lip service to the value of God's Word, the vast majority of professing Christians have failed to recognize our personal need and obligation to literally obey the Eternal's laws!

As a result, our nation has evolved into what has primarily become a secular society. We have pushed God out of our government, business organizations, entertainment, education, and personal lives. Consequently, industrial corporations, political leaders, and even many religious groups are choosing the way that leads to ethical, financial, and sexual corruption.

While this is occurring, most of America's churches are of little help. They may put on elaborate religious productions, create uplifting music, and build fancy stages, but they provide only superficial sermons. They present a gospel of prosperity while refraining from moral or ethical correction. Sin is no longer considered the evil that God declares it to be. Almost any behavior seems acceptable as long as members claim to love God.

At the same time, morals and integrity continue to plummet in our nation. Our economy is collapsing. National disasters of every sort are on the rise while our ability to maintain peace in the world is waning.

As a result of greed, our society is suffering terribly. As we strive to avoid the costs of food production, we are outsourcing manufacturing and farming. Alerts of contaminated food products have become more common. New strains of illness and disease are on the rise. Government and corporate institutions that people once had faith in have

failed. In the process they have bilked hundreds of thousands of people out of their savings.

Our once common motivation to be a respected, well educated, and principled society is quickly fading. As it does, crime and violence are spinning out of control. Adultery and divorce are rampant and with it the commitment to rear wholesome, upright progeny has been traded for personal gain. As a result, we now find ourselves faced with horrible curses such as drug addiction, abortion, and children murdering one another.

Once we were a God-fearing country and our nation was richly blessed by the Almighty. However, as a result of our rejection of God, the United States is beginning to experience these and other devastating events that are certain to change the face of our land and the structure of our society. We are following the same catastrophic history of ancient Israel. Due to their sins, they were forced into foreign captivity and the current path we are pursuing is destined to lead to a similar fate (2Kin. 17:5-20).

Like an infected boil, this anti-God movement has swelled to such a point that many no longer fear to aggressively propagate a belief that God does not exist. These individuals now brazenly publicize the view that the Bible is simply a book of fables or legends and we are not required to keep the Ten Commandments. As Alderson Warm-Fork stated in his diatribe:

The Ten Commandments actually seem a very good example of an immoral document, one that gives very bad moral advice. Indeed, I think society would be much improved if they ceased to be anybody's 'moral basics' (*The Ten Commandment are Deeply Immoral*, <http://directionlessbones.wordpress.com/2009/07/06/the-ten-commandments-are-deeply-immoral/>, retr. 10/6/2016).

This erroneous thinking has had a profound effect on our society. Even among those who profess to believe in the Bible, many are halfhearted in their faith. The values by which

they direct their lives promote the idea that God's law does not need to be taken seriously.

In the tradition of Adam and Eve, who were the first to make the fatal mistake of ignoring God's Word, those who hold such beliefs are utterly deceived. They have erroneously been convinced that human beings inherently possess the ability to determine the difference between right and wrong.

As a result, vast portions of our society have been persuaded that they no longer need the God of the Bible. Consequently, Gnostics, agnostics, atheists, Muslim, pagan, and eastern religions abound today in the midst of what was once considered "Christian America." Even more shocking is the fact that the rapid growth of these heretical movements has primarily developed as a result of the hypocrisy propagated by the majority of professing Christian churches.

Are God's Ten Commandments No Longer Required?

One main reason for much of the thriving anti-Christian sentiment circulating today is based on a widely held, yet erroneous premise. For centuries many religious leaders have practiced the belief that they, and their churches, have more authority than the Bible. Armed with this conviction, self-styled preachers have twisted the meaning of Scripture to suit their personal agendas rather than abiding by the laws of God. As a result, millions of believers have been led to accept the lie that the Ten Commandments are no longer required.

This began centuries ago when the Roman church decided it could break the eighth commandment. During the Inquisition they simply confiscated the property of others. This powerful church also chose to ignore the sixth commandment leading to the torture and murder of thousands of innocent people whose only "crime" was that they did not believe everything the Roman church taught.

Since then, various churches have propagated lies, ridiculous traditions, and practices handed down from ancient times. False gods such as Saturn and Ashtoreth, which are straightforwardly condemned in the Bible, have

been promoted in the worship of Christ during various religious holidays. This blatant disregard for God's clear instructions is openly practiced by most who profess a belief in Christ. Vain traditions such as these have caused the Bible and its glorious Author to appear as no more than myth and fairy tale to millions.

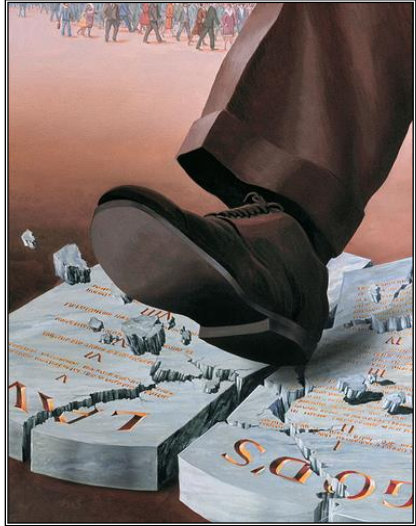
Such ludicrous practices have their origin in the mistaken idea that obedience to the Ten Commandments is no longer required. Numerous believers have been taught that Jesus did away with the need to keep God's sacred laws. Pastors across our nation teach the false belief that the commandments were only for ancient Israel.

Theologians have also dreamed up the erroneous belief that Jesus came to do away with the requirements of the law—that He actually kept them so that we do not have to. Many religious leaders have even insinuated that the Almighty's laws are too strict, that they cannot be kept perfectly, and they have wrested the Apostle Paul's writings claiming that commandments are actually against us. Such fictitious arguments have caused many to believe that we are no longer subject to God's precepts.

As a result, God's law has taken a backseat in most people's lives. Many now believe that the Ten Commandments are no longer relevant. As the author of *The New Ten Commandments* stated:

The old ten are showing their age and provincial origin by now; we need an updated set... we have the advantage of experience – we can look back across the grand sweep of human history to draw lessons from many cultures... we have come far enough to learn that the world is a rational place after all - that it is not inhabited by thundering deities... the cosmos runs according to the regularities of the laws of science and nature (<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/daylightatheism/essays/the-new-ten-commandments/> retr. 10/6/2016).

This rationale is detrimental to our wellbeing. We are drawing wrong lessons and false conclusions from non-Christian cultures. Further, while such pseudo philosophers are quick to admit that the universe runs according to specific laws, they refuse to concede that there are also emotional, psychological, and moral laws that are revealed in the very commandments they reject. They don't realize that God's laws of physics are no different than His laws of morality. If you break them, they will break you.



While many have been convinced that the Ten Commandments are out of date, the Bible reveals that such a conclusion is terribly mistaken (Rev. 22:14). Mankind is not capable of improving on the laws designed and revealed by our infinitely wise Creator. We have no inherent moral compass by which we can govern ourselves and we desperately need the Almighty's law as our guide.

Are the Commandments Out of Date?

Sadly, because this lawless view is widely accepted, it has become a false doctrine of mainstream professing Christianity. While promoting this heresy these same teachers often advance another fallacy. They state that the Ten Commandments only applied to a specific time in history. By spreading this view, even more believers have been convinced that the commandments are no longer required. As Gerald A. Larue wrote in his article, *Are the Ten Commandments Relevant Today?*

It is clear that the Ten Commandments are products of another time and place and have little or no

relevance in our present culture. Rules set down by a group of people living in a small corner of the Mediterranean world some three thousand years ago cannot meet the needs of our time (<http://www.tenamendmentsday.org/relto.php>, retr. 10/6/2016).

According to this view, the Ten Commandments can be placed on a shelf as relics of an ancient time and they have no real application to modern man. Such a view has blurred the perspective of countless numbers of people around the world. To them, God's law is outdated. They believe that His commandments no longer apply in our contemporary age and their only value is found in vague memories of antiquity.

Do not be fooled by such a view. Those who propagate disobedience to God are no less than heretics preaching bold lies! The Almighty says that He changes not and that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8). In the light of this profound truth, how could any clergyman dare suggest that God has discarded, or even altered, any of His commandments?

The truth is the exact opposite of what these heretics proclaim. If such blasphemy were true, it would mean that God's people have nothing to overcome—no character to build, nothing to conquer, and no need to obey our Creator. Such a view is preposterous. How could such a theory be true when God speaks specifically of rewarding "him that overcomes" numerous times throughout the Bible? Consider that if the Ten Commandments were no longer in effect, there would be no sin to conquer! It would not matter to God what we did or how we lived and "do as thou wilt" would be the theme of holy writ.

Clearly teaching the right way to live is the very purpose of the Bible. It is the primary message that fills its pages. To think any other way is madness. We can be confident in the truth that our Father will never lie to us. God will certainly reward those who overcome sin by their spirit-led obedience to His commandments (Heb. 11:6; Rev. 22:12).

Fulfilling the Law and Prophets

Perhaps one of the most frequent objections to observing God's Ten Commandments stems from the belief that Jesus fulfilled our obligation to keep them. While teaching this fallacy, ministers often take the following verse out of context. But, exactly what did Christ mean when He stated:

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

Many read this verse and believe Jesus is saying that we are no longer bound to the law. They believe that He died so that we do not have to obey the commandments. However, how could this be true when Christ declared that He did not come to destroy the law or the divine warnings to obey God that was repeatedly declared by His prophets?

A better understanding of this verse can be obtained by defining two key words that Jesus uttered. The term "destroy" is the Greek word *kataluo* which means "to *loosen down (disintegrate)*, that is, (by implication) to *demolish* (literally or figuratively); specifically to *halt* for the night: - destroy, dissolve, be guest, lodge, come to nought, overthrow, throw down" (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, G2647). Clearly, Christ did not come to do any of these things to the Ten Commandments. Conversely, He came to fulfill them!

The word "fulfill" is also important. It is the Greek term *pleroo* and it means "to *make replete*, that is, (literally) to *cram* (a net), *level up* (a hollow), or (figuratively) to *furnish* (or *imbue, diffuse, influence*), *satisfy, execute* (an office), *finish* (a period or task), *verify* (or *coincide* with a prediction), etc.: - accomplish, X after, (be) complete, end, expire, fill (up), fulfill, (be, make) full (come), fully preach, perfect, supply" (*Strong's*, G4134). This obviously means that Christ came to completely satisfy the hundreds of prophecies in the Old

Testament that predicted exactly what the Messiah would do when He was manifest on earth.

Furthermore, during His human life, Jesus kept the law flawlessly. This means that the Messiah kept every one of the commandments, but we need to also realize this vital truth. He did NOT obey the commandments so that we don't have to. Jesus kept the law so that He would be a perfect sacrifice for us—a lamb without blemish (1Pet. 1:19).

In addition, He was the role model for mankind leaving us the example that God's laws must be observed. His sterling example is for us to follow (1John 2:6).

Magnifying the Law

The prophet Isaiah foretold of the Savior's purpose in coming to this earth. In so doing, he made it clear that Christ's intention was absolutely not to do away with God's law. In fact, it was just the opposite! As the prophet wrote:

The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will exalt the law and make *it* honorable (Isaiah 42:21).

When an object is placed under a magnifying glass, it is enlarged so that it may be examined and studied more closely. In like manner, we are able to delve into the gospels and clearly observe the perfect way that Christ lived while He walked the earth.

When we study the record of Christ's life, we see that He fulfilled the law's requirement by keeping the commandments in the letter and how God intended for them to be applied. He showed us precisely how God would keep the Decalogue as a man. Christ came to this earth to expand and deepen our understanding of the commandments—not to do away with them!

The Law is Honorable

Christ actually did more than just magnify the law. As Isaiah prophesied, the Messiah also showed us that the law has

always been honorable. The most prolific New Testament author, Paul of Tarsus, wrote:

Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good (Romans 7:12).

In every case, the law is holy and good. It was the false religious leaders of Christ's day who had made it appear dishonorable. They did this by applying the law in ways that opposed God's intent. They created traditions that they felt could supersede God's law and believed that they were righteous for doing what was contrary to the law (Mat. 23:25).

The truth is that the Pharisees were not actually faithful to God's religion. Rather, they misused the Scriptures to create their own religion that was later called Judaism. By this they fashioned dozens of rules that placed extra burdens on some while allowing others to bypass obedience to the Almighty's law (Mark 7:13). They actually had the audacity to use the Word of God to aggrandize themselves!

Thus, Jesus did not come to do away with the law. He came for quite the opposite purpose. Christ came to show us the true and honorable way to keep it (Isa. 42:21).

Was the Law Only for Ancient Israel?

Today, thousands of preachers profess a belief in Jesus Christ and the Bible. Ironically, these same individuals also believe that the law was only given to ancient Israel. By this teaching, they claim that the law became obsolete once Jesus was crucified. But, consider the reasoning of such logic. Would any preacher ever suggest that murder, adultery, lying, and stealing were now acceptable as a result of Jesus' death? Certainly not! And yet most believe that certain laws within the Ten Commandments are outdated. However, Jesus revealed the truth regarding this matter when He stated:

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled (Matthew 5:18).

Christ's mention of jots and tittles is a reference to Hebrew grammatical strokes similar to our English comma, the dotting of an i or the crossing of a t. In this context, think of the truly awesome meaning of this statement. Not one dot of the law would pass away! Because the heavens and earth still exist, God's law has not passed away. The Ten Commandments are still binding on mankind today and those who claim to be followers of Christ should uphold them by living by their divine dictates.

Those Who Teach Against the Law

In this same passage, Jesus goes on to say that anyone who willingly breaks the commandments, and teaches others to do likewise, will be considered inferior in the kingdom. His divine judgment is:

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:19).

Those who break even one of the commandments and promote the idea that we are allowed to do so will be labeled as having been unfaithful. Those who keep the commandments, and teach that they are required, shall be called true and faithful servants (Mat. 25:21). This statement alone should be enough to end all arguments. Sadly, many are not convinced.

The Law Before the Exodus

Another false precept that many avidly teach is that the Ten Commandments did not exist until God gave them to Israel in the wilderness. Could this possibly be true? Absolutely not! While Jesus said that the law would extend to the end of the earth, the law actually existed long before its utterance at Mount Sinai. Even fact, it existed long before the creation of mankind.

The book of Job indicates that the angels “sang together” and “shouted for joy” when God laid the foundations of the earth (Job 38:4-7). The Apostle Peter indicates that sometime after the creation there were angels who sinned (2Pet. 2:4). But when did they sin, and what were the sins of certain angels?

Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 indicate that there was a covering cherub, a high-ranking angel, who was beautiful and extremely talented. God said that this angel was “perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you” (Eze. 28:15). Iniquity means lawlessness. In order for lawless thoughts and behavior to be found in Lucifer there must have been laws.

Lucifer began sowing discontent among a large number of angels, and led an insurrection against the government of God by attacking His throne. The coup failed, and Lucifer became an adversary called Satan and the devil. His legion of rebels is known as demons. Thousands of years later, Christ told 70 disciples:

I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven (Luke 10:18).

Jesus gave an example of the authority that He had by retelling what He had witnessed when the angelic rebellion was crushed long ago. The war in heaven resulted in the earth being devastated. It is described in Genesis as being “without form and void.” Darkness was on the face of the deep as an ice age engulfed the planet. God’s spirit moved over the face of the earth as He began to recreate life in the form of plants and animals that we have today.

The point is, the devil and demons already existed when God created the first man and woman. The book of Revelation reveals that it was known Christ would die for mankind “from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). If His sacrifice for our sins was determined before the earth was created, then God’s moral laws already existed at that time. It was those laws that a large number of angels violated, and God

knew the choice people would make given the opportunity. That is why He placed Adam and Eve in the garden and allowed the devil to talk to Eve without attempting to interrupt the conversation. Christ also said to corrupt Jews:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it (John 8:44).

Being the father of lies and the first murderer means that Lucifer was the first one to violate God's laws before God began to recreate life on the planet.

Next, consider the fourth day of the creation week when God set the sun and moon in their respective positions for signs and seasons (Gen. 1:14). The word "signs" is *oth* in Hebrew—the same word God uses to describe the Sabbath as a sign between Him and His people (Exo. 31:16-17). The word "seasons" is *moed* and literally means holy day assemblies (*Strong's*, H4150). Thus, the fourth commandment to keep the Sabbath and the holy days existed in the mind of God before creating Adam and Eve.

After the creation of the first man and woman, lawless behavior was planted in the heart of Eve at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Everyone would agree that Eve sinned, but in order for our first parents to have sinned, a moral law had to exist. As the Apostle Paul wrote:

For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law (Romans 5:13).

Paul's words are completely free of ambiguity. There was sin in the world before man's creation. As demonstrated earlier, sin is the transgression of the law and sin is not imputed unless there is law. Therefore, the Almighty's commandments existed prior to Adam and Eve.

This becomes even more obvious as we examine the nature of Adam and Eve's sin. The initial human transgression actually broke at least nine of the Ten Commandments. By taking from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the first humans stole what was not theirs thereby transgressing the eighth commandment. They coveted the forbidden fruit, breaking the tenth commandment. They believed Satan's lie in violation of the ninth command. Motivated by the devil, their sin brought death upon themselves and the rest of mankind. This was no less than murder; shattering the sixth commandment. They contravened the fifth by dishonoring their Father—Almighty God.

Further, by deliberately going against God's instructions, they placed Satan's word above the Almighty. By this they transgressed the first three commandments. In their eyes, the devil became another god. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil became an idol to them. Finally, as mortal children of the Almighty Father, their disobedience took His name in vain (Luke 3:38).

As man's history continued, Cain murdered his brother Abel. Because God punished him for this, it is clear that the sixth commandment was in existence (Gen. 4:8-12).

On the other hand, the righteous followers of the Almighty kept His law. For example, Enoch walked with God (Gen. 5:22-24). Walking with the Eternal is an expression that refers to being of the same mindset and similar behavior. Two cannot walk together unless they are in agreement (Amos 3:3). Thus, Enoch lived in conformity to God's way of life. In other words, he kept God's law!

Noah found favor in the eyes of God and was seen as righteous in a time when the rest of mankind exhibited wickedness (Gen. 6:5-8; 7:1). Righteous is a term used to describe those who are living the right way. According to *Strong's*, it is a term that means "just and lawful" (H6662). In the Scriptures, it refers directly to those who keep God's commandments (Psa. 119:172). Thus, we find that Noah also obeyed God's law contained in the Ten Commandments.

In another example, God made a far-reaching promise to Abraham. In the book of Genesis, He foretold that the patriarch's seed would be a blessing to all nations—but why? The Almighty explained:

Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws (Genesis 26:5).

Lucifer, other angels, Eve, Adam, and Cain sinned. Enoch walked with God. Noah was righteous. Abraham obeyed God and kept His commandments. These examples reveal something of enormous importance—God's law existed before Israel ever did! Because some of the angels sinned, we see that the Ten Commandments existed before the sun, moon, and earth were positioned in the heavens (2Pet. 2:4). They were in effect before man took his first steps on the earth. God's laws existed prior to being written in stone on Mount Sinai. This fact is also evident when we consider that Moses judged matters before the Ten Commandments were declared from the Mount (Exo. 18). If there were no laws, how could Moses have made righteous judgments?

The Ten Commandments have always existed. They will continue to be mankind's rule of faith until that historic mountain, the entire earth, and all the spiraling galaxies no longer exist (Mat. 5:18).

The Only Way to Live!

Christ Himself warned us to not break the commandments or teach others to do so (Mat. 5:19). In spite of this fact, numerous religious leaders continue to argue against the truth. They twist and misuse verses in an attempt to squeeze a lawless gospel out of the Scriptures.

We must not let false teachers deceive us into abandoning the Almighty's way of life. Christ tells us that His holy law will never pass away. Even after the heavens and earth have served their purpose, God's law of love will remain as the only real basis for living. All who attain eternal

life will be those who have lived by the Creator's law (1Cor. 6:9-10). Therefore, they will continue to honor the rules of God's kingdom.

The citizens of God's magnificent future realm will not lie, steal, murder, or covet. They will not have idols or false gods. They will only worship the Creator and will not take His name in vain. The heavens and earth will ultimately succumb, but the way of love toward God and neighbor will never end (1Cor. 13:8).

God's ways are everlasting (Psa. 52:1; 100:5; 111:3; 117:2; 119:160). He changes not (Mal. 3:6). His Ten Commandments are not to be discarded or taken lightly. They are not to be put on a shelf as a relic that no longer applies in our day and age. They are just as important today as they were to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the apostles. They are to be kept in the letter and lived in the spirit as long as we exist!

A Matter of Life or Death

It must be understood that this issue is not simply a theological argument. It is actually a matter of life or death. It is critical to salvation! We must live by God's commandments in order to obtain eternal life. This is clearly illustrated by the story of the affluent Jewish man living during Christ's time. This bright, young individual came to the Savior with a burning desire to know what he needed in order to attain eternal life. Matthew recorded the story, saying:

Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:16-17).

Jesus revealed a vital truth to this man and His words speak this same fundamental certainty to us today! If we desire eternal life, we must keep the commandments!

This man realized that the Scribes and Pharisees had devised many of their own human traditions and rules—adding them to God’s law. Therefore, he wondered which commandments Jesus was referring to. Seeking further clarification:

He said to Him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, “You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, honor your father and your mother, and, you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 19:18-19).

Jesus answered this individual’s enquiry by citing several of the Ten Commandments. By His response, there could be no question in the young man’s mind regarding which law Christ was speaking of. **ANYONE DESIRING TO OBTAIN ETERNAL LIFE MUST OBSERVE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.**

As this conversation played out, Jesus also revealed deeper insight into the spiritual intent of the law. As the rich man replied:

The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?” (Matthew 19:20).

In other words, he claimed that he had kept the commandments since his boyhood. What more could he possibly need? Jesus responded by telling him:

Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions (Matthew 19:21-22).

In a piercing blow to this man's ego, Christ revealed that this young man had not actually kept the law in its spiritual intent. His possessions had become far too important to him. They were separating him from a full relationship with the Eternal. Thus, he was putting materialism before God and this was clearly a spiritual form of idolatry (Col. 3:5).

We Cannot Earn Salvation

Some make another mistake in their attempt to understand the law. They believe that if we keep God's commandments, we are trying to earn our salvation. It must be understood that simply keeping the Ten Commandments alone will not qualify us for eternal life. Everlasting life is exceedingly precious. It is much too valuable for us to earn by our human efforts alone. It is, and can only be, a gift from an enormously generous and loving God. For example, writing to Ephesus, Paul stated:

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).

Salvation is a gift of God. There is nothing we can do to earn it. No amount of our money or works could ever be sufficient to pay the enormous cost required to redeem our lives. However, the fact that it is a free gift does not mean there are no qualifications required to receive it. The Scriptures show us that redemption will only be given to those who exhibit faith. The question we must ask is, exactly what is faith? The Scriptures explain:

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen... But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews. 11:1-6).

Faith includes a sincere and confident belief in the one true God. However, it is more than a feeling. It is more than simply believing something is true. Genuine faith is something that is evidenced by faithful actions. As the Book of Hebrews tells us, we must “diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). The Lord’s half-brother, James explained it the following way:

What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works (James 2:14-18).

We cannot rely on our works to save us. However, as the words of James explain, if we do not have works then we do not have true faith. Faith and works go hand in hand. They are not separate and certainly not opposed to one another as most teach today.

Faith is not just a spiritual emotion. People of every religious belief claim to have spiritual feelings. Real faith in the true God is reflected in how we live. Only exercising our faith by striving to conform to the example of Christ is of value. Without works, faith is dead and, in that context, while speaking of our age, Christ asks an important question:

Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8).

When Jesus Christ returns to this earth, will He find people striving to live according to the intent of His commandments? Or will they be breaking them; promoting the idea that His law is no longer required?

We must not fool ourselves. While we cannot obtain eternal life by keeping God's law, those who knowingly choose to disobey God will automatically DISQUALIFY THEMSELVES! For example, the author of Hebrews reveals the fate of those who deliberately violate the Creator's commandments:

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:26).

This fundamental truth must be understood by anyone who hopes to be a part of the kingdom of God. The Almighty will not grant eternal life to those who refuse to obey His law! Anyone who believes that they can accept Christ and not obey Him is simply out of touch with reality. They have missed the entire point of the Bible!

Do not be fooled by religious teachers who reject God's law. Keeping the Ten Commandments is imperative for those who desire to obtain eternal life! Those who will live forever in His glorious kingdom will live according to His higher way—the law of love. They will not live according to our human reasoning, but by the Almighty's true definition of love. He has revealed that definition to us through His divine code declared in the Ten Commandments (Rom. 13:10).

Understanding Law and Grace

Throughout the religious community there are few who understand the relationship between law and grace. False teachers have confused millions by teaching that these two aspects of faith are opposed to one another. By such instruction they have done exactly what the Bible tells us NOT to do. They have turned grace into a license to live as they please. As Jude wrote:

For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into

lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4).

Self-proclaimed teachers, credentialed scholars, and theologians have misled countless individuals. Many have gone so far as to teach that God's grace has actually replaced His law. By this inference, they somehow believe that they are elevating grace, but what they are truly propagating is sinful behavior.

This fallacy is overflowing with irony. They are actually cheapening God's grace by making it into something other than the Almighty intended.

God did not propagate the view that we are free from His holy law. It was human beings trivializing and misrepresenting the meaning of God's grace. Ministers have preached the fallacy of forgiveness without change and repentance. They have taught believers that we are pardoned by simply accepting Christ into our heart without seeking to live the way of His law clearly recorded in the Scriptures.

The truth is that accepting God's grace results in Christ becoming our Master. He then rules our lives by influencing the way we live through His Spirit dwelling in us. Our obedience to His law is no longer generated by fear of reprisal. It now becomes possible as a result of our enormous gratitude and the understanding of the immense value and propriety of God's way.

The Ten Commandments are the guidelines for living a joyful, prosperous, and meaningful life. They characterize true love—illuminate the path Christians are to follow—and identify righteousness:

For all Your commandments *are* righteousness
(Psalm 119:172).

The importance of this single verse cannot be underestimated. This statement is clearly telling us that without the commandments we would not know right from wrong. Like so many in today's "sophisticated" society,

without His law as our guide, we would wander into every filthy ditch in life. As James stated:

But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does (James 1:25).

In this verse, James is not declaring that we are free from the law, but rather explaining that observing the law produces freedom! It liberates us from the bondage of sin. It is sin that limits our human potential and happiness.

James also makes an analogy between looking into God's law as we would a mirror. We look at our reflection in the glass to make certain we appear proper and clean. Imagine a person attending a formal affair yet having a huge smudge of grease on their face with no way to see the filth. How embarrassing that would be! The mirror makes it possible for us to see the dirt so that we may clean it off.

In like manner, we can look into God's law and see if we have sin—spiritual dirt—in our lives. The Almighty's mirror provides the opportunity to see our flaws, correct them and by so doing avoid the many pitfalls in life. For this reason James calls it the perfect law of liberty. It liberates us from the many tragic and painful mistakes that we might otherwise make.

Thus, the purpose of the law was never to save us in the spiritual sense. Rather, the law acts to judge us. It functions to show us where we are wrong. For this reason the Apostle Paul stressed the following truth:

Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more (Romans 5:20).

Human nature is influenced by the prince of the power of the air, and it works to blind us to our sins (Eph. 2:2; Jer. 17:9). We seem righteous enough to ourselves. However, if we are honest and sincerely compare our behavior to the Ten

Commandments, we would see ourselves in a different light. Situations once regarded as simply part of life's little indulgences, indiscretions, and slips would suddenly appear to be what they really are—sin and evil! We then come to see God's law for what it is; an intrinsic part of His monumental gift to mankind.

Understanding Grace

It must be understood that grace is not in opposition to the law. It is in complete harmony with it. To understand this truth, consider the true definition of God's grace. The Greek word for "grace" used throughout the New Testament is *charis*. This profound word is defined as being:

*Graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially **the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude**)... (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5463).*

As the definition implies, God's grace is reflected throughout the Ten Commandments. It is bestowed upon us for the divine purpose of influencing our heart so that God's way is reflected in how we live our lives! God's grace is a gift that works to convince us that we need to change.

Christ's grace flows out of His love for us. It is given so that we might come to love Him in return (1John 4:19). But exactly how are we to display our affection for Him? Jesus was very specific when answering this question. He said:

If you love Me, keep My commandments (John 14:15).

The Ten Commandments do not oppose grace. Instead, they are a vital part of it. The law is an instruction manual for God's creation designed to lead us to eternal life (2Tim. 3:15).

The Bible's law, history, teachings, and all they imply, repeatedly show us the correct way to live. Thus, the giving of God's law is another manifestation of His love toward us. It is no different than the gift of the air we breathe, the food we eat, or the beautiful flowers, trees, hills, lakes, and streams He so abundantly bestowed upon mankind.

We Cannot Keep the Law Perfectly

Because human nature is an intrinsic part of our being, it is impossible for us to stay on God's path perfectly. We sometimes cross the boundaries that God has established and sin by breaking His law. All Christians fail to some degree. As John stated, Christians also sin (1John 1:8). By breaking the commandments, we suffer the physical results of our transgression. The act also earns us the ultimate sentence of condemnation—death. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans:

For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

While such condemnation may seem hard and cold, it is vital to understand that even the death sentence stems from God's enduring mercy. The Almighty does not force anyone to obey Him against their will. As a part of His love, for those who do not want to live His way, He has provided this consequence as a way out. Such individuals will NOT be thrown into a fiery furnace to suffer excruciating pain for the rest of eternity. By God's grace, they will simply cease to exist (Eze. 18:4; Mat. 10:28; Rev. 20:14).

For those who want to live God's way, the wages of sin are also a gift. After all, who would want to live forever in this current world? It is filled with dishonest people who continually break the commandments as they cause untold pain and suffering! Haven't we had enough of that already?

In His infinite wisdom, God has provided a way for everyone to have what is truly best. For those who choose His way, we see the enormity of the grace of God. The Almighty

has given us the gift of His law and His Spirit to guide, correct, and protect us. We also have the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ to cover our weakness and failures.

However, because it is impossible for human beings to be without flaw, many believe it is pointless to even try. Consider literally applying such ludicrous reasoning. For example, exactly which commandments are too difficult for us to keep? Which ones must we break? Is it an absolute requirement for us to have other gods in our worship? Does life demand that we have idols? Must we take God's name in vain? Is anyone truly forced to break the Sabbath? Are we required to dishonor our parents, murder, steal, commit adultery, lie or covet?

Those who compromise in this way have allowed themselves to be persuaded that God will simply accept them the way they are. This is a great fallacy with absolutely no Biblical basis. There is not one single sentence in the Scriptures that says God will accept us as we are. Instead, God continually commands us to repent of what we are!

We must be honest to God and ourselves. Of course, we can keep the commandments if that is our goal. The argument that it is impossible to keep God's law is actually a copout by which individuals attempt to excuse themselves from having to make a real commitment to God. It is a pathetic excuse designed to avoid sincerely striving to change their way of life. The Scriptures tell us that we can change! Keeping the commandments is the only way our behavior can be transformed from the ways of this wicked world. As the Apostle Paul stated:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:1-2).

Paul admonishes us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. This means that we are to sacrifice our will, submitting instead to the way of God. But what exactly is God's will? In the simplest of terms, He wants us to keep His commandments. As John stated:

This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it (2 John 1:6).

This is how we can be found holy and acceptable unto Him. By walking in His commandments, we avoid the unholy worship of human tradition that is filled with lies, corruption, and the lusts of this ungodly world (2Pet. 1:4).

Think this through. Are professing Christians to follow in the way of atheists who believe that God has no authority in our lives? Of course not! Instead, we are to be as God's children who admiringly look to our Father for guidance. We are to whole heartedly honor His wisdom and respectfully obey His Word that reveals right from wrong. We are not only required to keep the Ten Commandments, if we claim to be a Christian, it is our reasonable service to obey God's law.

Understanding Sin

The various arguments opposing the Ten Commandments would actually be laughable were the consequences not so tragic. Consider that very few would argue that this world is NOT filled with sin. The problem is that the vast majority do not really know what sin is. However, we can know. The apostle that was closest to Jesus defined it for us saying:

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4).

Sin is the transgression of God's law, and we know that the world is filled with sin. Therefore, the vast majority are transgressing God's law. In that context, if we are not to be of this world, we are NOT to follow the example of the masses who sin by breaking the Ten Commandments (John 17:16). Instead, we are to be transformed by putting off the old man and renewing our mind so that we understand and live by the perfect will of God.

His will is that we keep the commandments! Even if we fail at times and are unable to keep them perfectly, we were placed on this earth for this very reason and our Father in heaven expects us to learn this vital lesson:

There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death (Proverbs 14:12).

Our way of selfish lawlessness does not work! As the only real alternative, we are to live a holy life by following God's divine instructions.

Why Christ Died to Save Us

The Eternal God has expressed the supreme act of love to us. He has given us the highest possible level of favor by providing the sacrifice of His own Son to pay the debt incurred by our sin. His brutal beating and ultimate crucifixion provide us with the ability to have our sins washed away. It is this miraculous display of God's love that enables us to be justified, but this is the exact point where many people make the worst possible mistake.

Millions of individuals have misunderstood the very purpose God has in saving us. They have believed that because we sinned, Jesus died for us as a means of repairing the damage done by Satan. Most think that it ends there. They don't realize that God is creating a royal Kingdom of individuals who will be like Him in nature—pure, clean, and law abiding (Phm. 3:21; 1John 3:1-3).

This is exactly why it is imperative to understand that our Creator's grace does not do away with our obligation to

live His way. It does not mean that we no longer need to follow the commandments. In truth, God's grace reinforces the necessity of keeping them. As the Apostle Paul wrote:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works (Titus 2:11-14).

We can be purified by the sacrifice of Christ. We are redeemed by Him, but we must understand that this does NOT grant us a license to sin! Instead, we are to be zealous of good works! Good works are righteousness and as stated in Psalm 119:172, righteousness is defined by keeping God's commandments.

Wresting the Scriptures

God's desire is that each of us would live forever (2Pet. 3:9). But we were not created to eternally exist while exhibiting any kind of perverted behaviors that we might choose. We were designed for the purpose of doing good works (Eph. 2:10). Such acts of love can only be performed by observing the Ten Commandments. These rules of conduct were designed for the purpose of defining what is good and what is not. They are the only way to continual peace and prosperity. They are the way that God's divine influence affects the values by which we are to live.

In his second epistle, Peter begins to explain why many have misunderstood this truth. The apostle wrote:

Our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things,

in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures (2 Peter 3:15-16).

This passage explains what has happened within the professing Christian community. Theologians have twisted the Scriptures in an attempt to render the Ten Commandments obsolete. This is sheer lunacy! God states that we must obey these laws to have eternal life (Mat. 19:17), but according to most of these believers, Christ's unmerited pardon is equivalent to abolishing them.

While seeming to elevate the role of grace, these so-called scholars have led unsuspecting congregants to draw a wrong conclusion. Michael Horten explains this perverted definition of God's grace in his book, *The Agony of Deceit*:

Augustine's response on this point was similar to Luther's. He said that the doctrine of justification led to the maxim, 'love god and do as you please' (Moody Press, 1990, p. 143-144).

Peter warned of this error that Augustine, Luther, and others have made. To believe that we can love God and not do what he says is a fatal mistake. The apostle continues:

You therefore, beloved, since you know *this* beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen (2 Peter 3:17-18).

This verse does not admonish us to grow in unmerited pardon. The Scriptures do not tell us to expand our gift of forgiveness by abandoning God's moral code. Instead, we are to grow in the influence and understanding of Jesus Christ.

As we have already seen, grace is defined as God's divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in the way we live. This is how the term is used throughout the entire Bible. Therefore, we are not to be led away by the error of the wicked—those who do not obey God. Instead, we are to become more and more like Him by learning how to properly express love through our obedience to His commandments.

The Election of Grace, not Works

While Peter's statement should be self-evident, various theologians continue to misrepresent the Scriptures. By taking verses out of context, they have come to the erroneous conclusion that law and grace are in conflict with one another. For example, false teachers have distorted the following verses in the book of Romans:

Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work (Romans 11:5-6).

By isolating these verses, religious leaders have taught that God's law and His grace are mutually exclusive. However, when taking these words out of their proper context it causes readers to lose perspective and misinterpret Paul's intended meaning.

In this passage, the apostle is making a comparison between God's people during the time of Elijah and those living in his age. He explains that in the days of the ancient prophet, God had reserved a number people who truly obeyed Him. Likewise, in Paul's time there were a similar number of individuals who did not succumb to the vain traditions of Judaism or the influence of Gnostics and pagans. God did not set these obedient people aside because they were better or more righteous than anyone else. They were sanctified by His

grace; not because of who they were or any works they did. As Paul stated in the preceding verses:

Lord, they have killed Your prophets, and torn down Your altars; and I alone am left, and they seek my life. But what does the divine response say to him? I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal (Romans 11:3-4).

Putting the verses together, and reading them as they were intended, it is obvious that Paul was not saying the law was no longer required! He was explaining that in Elijah's time, even though the people killed the prophets, God had reserved seven thousand who had not bowed down to the false god Baal or observed false religious practices. In other words, God was encouraging Paul by saying that a similar number of people were still worshipping the true God by keeping His laws. However, their obedience was not according to their human works. It was a direct result of God's calling and His grace influencing the way they lived.

Not Under the Law, but Grace

Tragically, this practice of taking verses out of context is continued by many today. Because of this approach, vast numbers of people have been deceived into thinking that the time for obeying God's law is over. They have come to believe that we now have a free pass—a license to sin—and the Ten Commandments no longer need to be obeyed. In an attempt to support their belief, they quote Paul who said:

For you are not under law but under grace
(Romans 6:14).

Sadly, when quoting this verse, they again purposefully omit the context of Paul's words. Notice what the apostle was actually saying:

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? **Certainly not!** Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness? But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness (Romans 6:14-18).

This passage clearly shows us that sin (the breaking of God's law) shall not have dominion over us. The reason sin will not dominate us is that, as a part of God's grace, He has made His Spirit available. Through this Spirit, we can be led by His influence instead of the pulls of Satan, the flesh, and this world.

In addition, the verses above clearly say that we are made free FROM sin—not made free TO sin. This means that we can be freed from the death penalty that sin requires. If we continue to transgress the law, we make ourselves the servants of sin and our ultimate end will be death.

Paul continues saying that, having been reconciled to God, we should serve righteousness. We should be keeping the commandments from the heart. Not because we have to, but because we want to.

This truth is illustrated by the story of a man who once became involved with the wrong crowd. It seems that he got into a fight and unintentionally killed a man. He was arrested, tried, found guilty of murder, and received the sentence of death. After hearing his verdict, he was absolutely terrified. While sitting in his cell awaiting execution, He could think of nothing else. How had this happened? How did he fall in with this group of people and how did he get into so much trouble?

When the day of his execution came, he was told that the warden wanted to see him. Trembling in fear, he

approached his office accompanied by two guards. As the door opened, he sheepishly faced the warden. As the keeper of the prison spoke, the man was stunned as he heard him say that the governor had pardoned him. He would not have to die. He was free!

The joy the man felt was overwhelming. His heart leaped inside and he beamed a massive smile as he left the bolted doors of the terrible prison.

But, did his pardon mean that he was free to go out and break the law again? Could he now kill with impunity? Of course not! The forgiveness extended by the governor was gratefully accepted and the response of this convict was to act more responsibly when choosing his lifestyle. He was now dedicated to staying within the confines of the law in order to remain free. He applied the true meaning of grace to the way he would live.

This story directly applies to all of us. By God's mercy we can be forgiven of breaking the law. We are to then have a different spirit—a different frame of mind—a new perspective. We now see God's grace present in every aspect of life and by it His law is established in our heart. We now have a passionate desire to obey Him. We want to practice the way of life He has designated for us. We become committed to obeying our Father in heaven—motivated by our loving gratitude.

Not Justified by the Law

Another false concept that is often taught is that since we are not justified by the law, there is no need to keep it. Of course, it is true that the law alone can never justify us. Only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ can do that. However, what these dissidents of the law do not realize is that God designed the law for an altogether different but extremely vital purpose. It is to show us what is right and what is wrong. It is to be a moral compass guiding us towards the right way to live. As Paul powerfully stated:

Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20).

The purpose of the law is to show us what sin is. It is not to save us, but rather to function as a mirror to reveal our transgressions. As Paul continues:

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference (Romans 3:21-22).

Gentiles could also attain God's righteousness without having the law of circumcision in their flesh. This is a statement pointing towards the ordinance no longer required in order to prove one's commitment to God. One did not have to become a Jew outwardly in order to become a part of the body of Christ. A new way has been made available. There is now a different kind of mirror. Christians are now able to display the righteousness of God by having His law written in their hearts. They can keep God's commandments through the faith of Christ. This conviction abides in their minds by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

This is God's grace! Through His calling we can receive the Holy Spirit and begin to keep the law in spirit and truth (John 16:13). It becomes His divine influence reflected in our daily conduct. Without the grace of God manifest to us through the sacrifice of Christ (John 4:23) we would all fail in properly keeping the law. As Paul reminds us:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:23-24).

Christians can accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and be justified. But, does that mean that we are no longer required to keep the commandments? Absolutely not! We are justified,

but only for sins that are past. God's grace does not allow us to continue to practice sin. As the Apostle Paul next stated:

Whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had **passed over the sins that were previously committed** (Romans 3:25).

After a person repents, they are baptized and hands are laid on them to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:18; 1Tim. 4:14; Heb. 6:2). Then, by the indwelling of God's Spirit, Christ's faith now lives in them. But this does not make us free from ever being found guilty of sin. Believers are still capable of sin (1John 1:8), but through God's mercy they have the ability to repent and receive forgiveness. Juan Ortiz explains the process in the following way:

Christians are a little bit like a trapeze show. It is breathtaking as we see the dexterity and timing. We gasp at near-misses. In most cases, there is a net underneath. When they fall, they jump up, and bounce back to the trapeze. Christians live on the trapeze. The whole world should be able to watch and say, 'Look how they live, how they love one another. Look how well the husbands treat their wives.' People watch and say, 'Aren't they the best workers in the factories and offices? Aren't they the best neighbors, and the best students?' That is what it is like to live on our trapeze. We are a show to the world. What happens when we slip? The net is there for us. The blood of Jesus Christ has provided forgiveness for us. He provides both the net and the ability to stay on the trapeze. It is all due to God's grace (*Leadership*, Vol. 5, no. 4).

Mr. Ortiz sees this subject more clearly than many students of the Bible. The grace of God does not free us from keeping the commandments. Instead, His grace is given to help us understand them more fully and to keep them in their

spirit. God's law and His grace work together in bringing us to the point where we have the mind of Christ. They are both essential in our quest for salvation.

The Role of the Holy Spirit

God's grace gives more to the Christian than just a spiritual understanding of the law. Out of the abundance of His love, He gives His Holy Spirit. This Spirit works to change us from the inside out. Through it, Christ lives in us and we strive to live in Him—within His parameters. Thus, the faith of Christ is at work in our minds to convert our entire being over time (John 14:15-20).

By this Spirit, the love of God is shed abroad in our heart (Rom. 5:5). We come to love God because He loved us first (1John 4:19). It is out of this love that we strive to obey Him, not in the letter only, but in the spirit—in the very essence of our being. Thus, grace does not do away with the law. Instead, it becomes a catalyst working in us to establish God's law in all that we do. Paul confirmed this thought by saying:

Do we then make void the law through faith?
Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law
(Romans 3:31).

This point is extremely important to realize. Grace does not do away with the law, and Christ's sacrifice has a greater purpose than just paying for past sins. God's plan is to create a people zealous to do good works. To this end, He gives us His Spirit as a part of His grace so that we are able to view life as He does. It enables us to share His mind and come to love His law. For example, the great King David was a man after God's own heart and he wrote:

I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law
is within my heart (Psalm 40:8).

Later, the Apostle Paul would echo the same words when writing to the Romans:

For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man (Romans 7:22).

These are the words of two faithful men who were both inspired by God. Although one lived during the Old Covenant and the other in the New, they both had the Almighty's Spirit dwelling in them, and both of these faithful men understood the importance of these eternal laws. Like the Old Covenant, the New Testament requires our obedience to the Ten Commandments.

Further, the covenant God makes with Christians is a precursor to that which He will make one day with physical Israel during His millennial reign (Jer. 31:31). As the author of Hebrews explained:

For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people (Hebrews 8:10).

This verse reveals yet another aspect of God's grace. The commandments are based upon love and the Holy Spirit engraves God's law of love into our otherwise stone-like hearts and minds.

Without the commandments, we would have no way to define sin (Rom. 7:7). Devoid of this knowledge, and ruled only by our human nature, we would instinctively hurt others in our selfish tendency to please ourselves. Thus, the Ten Commandments show us what love is and how that love is to be expressed toward God and mankind.

A Loving Marriage

Few people understand that the Old Covenant was a forerunner of the New Testament. Thus, all that happened to Israel was for our benefit today (1Cor. 10:11). Those events stand as a timeless example for us, including the fact that Christ was married to Israel. As the prophet Jeremiah wrote:

“Return, O backsliding children,” says the LORD;
“for I am married to you” (Jeremiah 3:14).

Jesus Christ was the God of ancient Israel (John 5:39, 8:58). He was married to them and the law was their marriage agreement (Exo. 19:5). One seldom understood purpose of Christ’s death was to end that original marriage bond so that He could marry another—the Church. Paul explains this truth, giving the details, and never once does he refer to the law as if it were abolished. Instead, he confirms both its importance and validity:

Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that **the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives**? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter. 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” (Romans 7:1-7).

In these verses, the apostle shows us that Christ's death did away with the marriage covenant to ancient Israel. It did not do away with the law itself. The commandments stand as a means to point out what sin is and to show us the way of true love. A story illustrates this point.

A man and woman were married, but she did not really love and appreciate her husband. He had prepared a list of rules and regulations for his wife to follow and insisted that she read them over every day and obey them. To her, he seemed overly demanding and particular.

After several long and trying years, her husband eventually died. As time passed, the woman fell in love with another man. They married and her new husband did everything he could to make his wife happy. She realized that He continually showered her with loving tokens of his appreciation and affection.

One day, as the woman was cleaning the house, she found the lengthy list of orders her first husband had given her. As she looked it over, an amazing thought dawned on her. Her present husband hadn't given her any written demands, but she was doing everything her first husband's list required. She realized that she was now bound to her new husband in her heart and not only by a marriage certificate. She now understood that her first husband's list actually showed her the ways to express her love.

Because of her passion, the acts of love through service and obedience came to her naturally. Her deepest desire was to please him out of love—not obligation. She did her duty because she wanted to; not because she had to.

In a similar manner, through true repentance, baptism, and the laying on of hands, we become engaged to our future husband (2Cor. 11:2). He has given us every token of his love, even laying down his life for us. The list containing God's commandments still exists. However, it is not tucked away in a drawer some place. Instead, His rules are to be engraved on our heart and in our mind through His Holy Spirit.

As a vital part of becoming espoused to Christ, we are to have His Spirit dwelling in us and through it a new relationship begins. As Paul stated:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that **the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit** (Romans 8:1-4).

These Scriptures teach us that it is only the converted mind that desires to keep God's commandments. This yearning comes from the heart and flows from His Spirit producing a longing to be faithful and obedient to our future husband. In fact, without His Spirit it is impossible for us to properly keep the law. As Paul continues:

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be (Romans 8:5-7).

Paul makes it clear that the natural mind, without God's Spirit, rejects the law of God. Perhaps this is why so many outwardly profess Christ, but inwardly reject His law. The truth is that they have not been converted. They have not truly repented from sin. They have not had a true minister lay hands on them and consequently have not actually received God's Holy Spirit.

As Christ clearly said, the commandments are not done away (Mat. 5:17). By following His prescribed course of repentance, baptism, and laying on of hands, we obtain His forgiveness, we receive His Spirit, and then we are expected to go forward and “sin no more” (John 8:11). As John wrote:

Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that that one was revealed in order that he might take away sins, and in him *there* is no sin. Everyone who resides in him does not sin. Everyone who sins has neither seen him nor known him. Little children, let no one deceive you: the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as that one is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this *reason* the Son of God was revealed: in order to destroy the works of the devil. **Everyone who is fathered by God does not practice sin, because his seed resides in him,** and *he is* not able to sin, because he has been fathered by God. By this the children of God and the children of the devil are evident: everyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, namely, the one who does not love his brother (LEB, 1 John 3:4-10).

These are profound and powerful verses that make the truth undeniably clear! In these few words the Apostle John confirms the fact that keeping the commandments is righteousness (Psa. 119:172; Luke 1:5-6). On the other hand, whoever rejects them is considered to be lawless and stands guilty of committing sin. Such people are not considered children of God, but are actually acting on behalf of the devil.

Contrary to most modern teaching and preaching, John also makes it plain that we cannot continue to practice sin. The impregnation of the Holy Spirit does not give us a license to break the commandments! It is just the opposite. Receiving God’s Spirit reinforces our obligation to keep them! It is much like accepting the vows of matrimony. In

order to become one with Christ, as His future bride, we must obey Him (Rev. 19:7-8)

The Law of Love

A lawyer once came to Christ and asked Him a very important question. Believing that Jesus was the Son of God, this man knew that only Christ could give him a definitive answer. He wanted to know; what was the most important thing God requires of us?

Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is *the* first and great commandment. And *the* second *is* like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37-39).

In response, Jesus proclaimed this magnificent and wonderful truth—the law of God actually defines love. In fact, these two authoritative definitions summarize the entirety of the law. Having love toward God and neighbor is the only way that people can live in peace together and with God. Those who wish to live forever must desire to live by this code today.

However, some believe that these two commands of love are separate from, and exempt us from, the laws contained in the Ten Commandments. This is a complete fallacy! The Ten Commandments are an expansion of Christ’s two-fold commission to man. They reveal the specific ways in which we are to love God and one another.

Jesus made it clear that the entire law, and all the instruction of the prophets, hang on these two precepts. The Ten Commandments reveal exactly how we are to express love. Understanding this, we can see that these ten laws are actually divided into two categories. The first four show us how to love God. The last six show us how we are to love our neighbor.

The First Four Commandments – Love for God

Take a moment to seriously think about this important question. How should a man or woman love God? Throughout history humanity has held various ideas about how this should be done. Some have believed that they should make great statues representing God and bow down to them. In ancient times people have burned their children in a ritualistic fire believing that this was an expression of devotion to their god. There have even been people who believed their sins would be expiated by having sex with a temple prostitute. To them, this was an expression of love and devotion toward divinity.

Today, millions believe that we should honor God by dragging an evergreen tree into our homes, decorating it with ornaments and lights, then bowing down and placing gifts under its branches. We think we are showing love for Christ by handing out chocolate bunnies, coloring eggs, and attending sunrise services (an ancient practice venerating the sun). If we would make an honest comparison between how mankind has traditionally expressed love toward God, and how He commands us to do so, we would see the enormous fallacy of our way.

Man does not, and cannot, know how to express love towards God unless the Almighty reveals it to us. We were not created with an inherent moral compass to guide us in the way of righteousness. We are incapable of innately knowing how to sow love towards Him and what the proper steps to take in life are. Left to our own, mankind will steal, murder, commit adultery, covet, bow down to idols, and worship false gods of his own making. This has been the case down through history and we are reaching the pinnacle of disobedience to God today.

Without a revelation from our Creator, men will dream up all kinds of perverse ideas regarding the way they think we are to show love. A prime example of this is demonstrated by the fact that many profess to love God, but they reject His commandments! Ironically, it is this great set of fundamental laws that reveal exactly how we are to love our Creator.

Consider that numbers have profound symbolic meaning in Scripture. For example, the number four

represents that which is strong and can be built upon. Thus, there are four corners of the earth, four seasons and four gospels upon which the New Testament is built. In that context, notice that the first four commandments express the way we are to demonstrate our devotion to the Almighty. Everything else in a Christian's life is to be built upon these four commands.

1

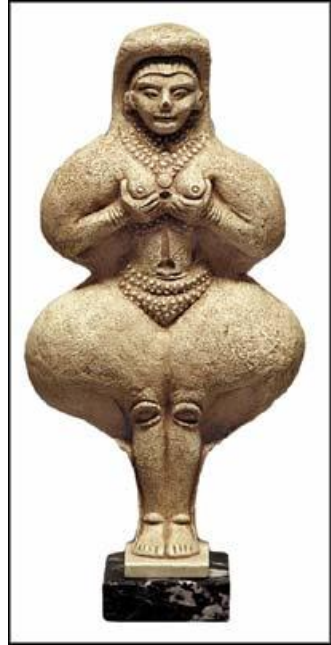
I *am* the LORD your God...
You shall have no other gods before Me.
~ Exodus 20:2-3 ~

The first commandment is a cornerstone of love toward God. As a wife is to have no other husband, we are to have no other gods before Him. However, look at our society through the lens of this command.

Today we actually celebrate the ancient pagan Saturnalia in our modern Christmas observance. This celebration honors the god Saturn and does so on the designated birthday of the god Mithra—December 25th. In addition, this celebration shows enormous respect to the ancient fire god Molech (Jer. 32:35). Over the centuries, we have combined these false gods into a fiery red suited figure named Santa Claus and presumptuously place God's stamp of approval on a pagan celebration (*The Truth about Christmas*, pp. 1-20).



But this is not the end of our transgression of the first commandment. In the spring we continue ancient worship of the pagan goddess Ishtar through Easter activities. Known as Ashtoreth in the Bible, she was a goddess of fertility (1Kin. 11:33). For this reason, today's Easter holiday still bears the marks of its origin. It is teeming with symbols of fertility such as eggs and bunnies. Form more on this subject please read our free booklet—*The Truth about Easter*.



In our society, we put material objects before the true God. We care more about money, cars, careers, electronic gadgets, and our favorite video programs than we do our Creator. We elevate pop stars, actors, rock musicians, athletes, and other celebrities as if they are they are the role models we should imitate

instead of Jesus Christ. We actually give men and women god-like status in our entertainment based culture.

2

You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.

~ Exodus 20:4-5 ~

God tells us the second way we are to show love toward Him. We must make no graven image or any representation of Him (Deu. 4:15-19). This means that we are not to have images of angels, animals, plants, fish, or anything found in heaven or earth in our worship. God requires this because human beings have an inherent tendency to become attached to, or fixated on, things that are material. We will bow down in reverence to these objects created from rock, wood, metal or plastic, just like the ancient pagans did to their idols.



At this point, many readers may likely object. They may think that they certainly do not mimic any of those primitive things. However, consider this command in the light of what many churches practice. Thousands of buildings are filled with marble, clay, wood or plastic statues of Christ, Mary, and various saints. Millions of adherents genuflect to honor these objects as if the graven images were sacred and holy.

In another example, people wear crosses around their necks with a tiny image of what they consider to be Jesus.

They will often clutch or kiss them as they pray. Ironically, the biblical evidence shows that Jesus was not crucified on a cross, but rather an upright stake. The † symbol was actually used long before Jesus walked the earth as a Pagan emblem reflecting the heathen god



Tammuz (*The Truth about the Cross*, pp. 4-5).



During the winter, many place statues of a baby Jesus on their lawns and in their homes. They erect an evergreen tree and it becomes the center of attention as they adorn it with tinsel and bright, colorful decorations. Some actually sing songs of praise before this motionless idol as they place gifts underneath its branches. However, Biblical history tells us that such behavior is identical to worship by the

ancient heathen which God condemns (Jer. 10:2).

In the spring, people think they are showing love towards Christ by observing the traditions of Easter celebrations that actually came from religious practices of ancient pagans. Colored eggs, bunnies, sunrise services, and many other activities are directly linked to the pagan goddesses Ashtoreth, Astarte, Ishtar, and Eostre.



In the fall, they turn around and erect demonic symbols of witches, ghouls, and goblins. Children dress-up in costumes that portray wicked creatures and go door to door asking for a “trick or treat” from neighbors. This “all hallows eve” was once an official church holiday, but it was derived from the heathen observance of Samhain—a celebration of death (*The Truth about Halloween*, pp. 2-3).



Who do people think they are kidding? Certainly not God! They make idols using artist's renditions of Jesus which represent Him as effeminate with long hair like that of a woman (1Cor. 11:14). They proudly display symbols of a fish which has its origin in the heathen fish god Dagon. The truth is that worship of God has become a massive religious marketing scheme in which the more trinkets, statues, symbols, or status an organization has; the more holy it is considered to be. This they do when the Almighty declares to have nothing to represent Him and to not use any likeness of anything in heaven or the earth in our worship (Deu. 4:15-19).



This is an immense irony. We actually do the opposite of what God commands and at the same time we think we are showing Him love. Instead, we have been deceived into committing acts of enormous disdain toward the Almighty.

3

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain,
for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless
who takes His name in vain.
~ Exodus 20:7 ~

The third command tells us that we are not to take God's name in vain. However, on any night of the week, television networks will abusively broadcast God's name all around the world. Hollywood cannot seem to make a movie without misusing His name. It has simply become accepted practice. Many attempt to make this abuse sound less flagrant by using terms like gosh, golly, gee whiz, jeepers-creepers, and cripes. The truth is that all of these are simply euphemistic slang words for the names God or Jesus Christ.

Christ also instructed us to not call anyone "Rabbi" or "Father" (Mat. 23:8-9). By this admonition, He warned us against referring to any human as our spiritual parent or teacher. He and the Father alone hold this status.

However, today Jewish religious leaders are called rabbi and Catholic adherents are instructed to call their priests Father.



Perhaps the pinnacle of breaking this commandment can be found in the self-proclaimed title of the pope who is referred to as "the most holy father."

Paradoxically, while objecting to the status and title claimed by the pope, Protestants disregard the third commandment and make the same mistake. Many in their ministry will adopt the title of reverend. Some actually go so far as to call themselves the right reverend. These honored titles that men bestow upon themselves are an

absolute abomination to our Creator! The Scriptures proclaim that “holy and reverend *is* HIS name” (Psa. 111:9). These religious leaders presumptuously call themselves by God’s holy name and by doing so they repeatedly and directly break the third commandment.

Perhaps the most ironic violation of this commandment comes from the fact that the majority of people who call themselves Christian do NOT obey God. In this, millions of supposed “believers” take God’s name in vain by professing to be followers of Christ while not keeping His commandments.

4

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates.

~ Exodus 20:8-11 ~

If there is any commandment forgotten the most it is one that God specifically told us to remember. Even among the few sects of Christianity that are willing to admit the Ten Commandments are obligatory, most still disregard God's seventh day Sabbath.

Consider that the Creator did not create the Sabbath when He declared the commandments to Israel at Mt. Sinai. As was previously proven, the commandments have always existed. Thus, we see that God set aside the seventh day at the end of creation week (Gen. 2:2-3). He instructed Israel to do no work on the Sabbath before sending manna and before writing the Ten Commandments in stone. The seventh day has always been designated as a time for people to stop their regular activities and direct our attention wholly toward God (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath is God's mark or sign. It directs people to the true God while also indicating who His people are (Exo. 31:13).

The Sabbath was kept by Christ. It was observed by His apostles, the New Testament Church and by gentile converts (Luke 4:16; Acts 15:19-21; 17:2). In the Old Covenant, as well as the New Testament, the seventh day is the only day ever called the Sabbath and it has always been the day we know as Saturday. In fact, there is not a single shred of evidence that there was any deviation regarding the doctrine of the Sabbath in the entire Bible. It was hundreds of years after Christ's death that the day was officially moved to Sunday. But this change

was made by the hand of man—not the command of God! It was the sun worshiping Roman Emperor Constantine who decreed this new law in 321 A.D., saying:

On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed (Codex Justinianus lib. 3, tit. 12, 3; trans. in Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 3, p. 380, note 1).

It must be understood that keeping Sunday is a different day than the Eternal designated for man. Sunday worship does not show respect or love toward God. Instead, it shows respect for a pagan Roman emperor and the apostate church that propagated this change. As Peter Kraemer wrote in the *Catholic Extension Society* magazine:

We Catholics do not accept the Bible as the only rule of faith. Besides the Bible we have the living Church, the authority of the Church, as a rule to guide us. We say this Church, instituted by Christ to teach, and guide man through life, has the right to change the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament and hence, we accept her change of the Sabbath to Sunday. We frankly say, yes, the Church made this change, made this law, as she made many other laws, for instance, the Friday abstinence, the unmarried priesthood, the laws concerning mixed marriages, the regulation of Catholic marriages and a thousand other laws (1975, Chicago, Illinois).

As this church admits, it has made up many laws that are not Biblical. The change from the Sabbath to Sunday is just one of many. However, it must be understood that no man has the authority to make changes to God's Word and God's Sabbath has always been, and will always be, kept by His true people.

Furthermore, the weekly cycle has never been lost. Israel kept a record of the Sabbath for thousands of years. This record was meticulously preserved through the Jews (Rom. 3:1-2).

The Sabbath has always begun on Friday at sunset and ended Saturday at sunset (Lev. 23:32). Take a look at any calendar and it will display the correct order of days in the week. The first day is Sunday and the seventh day is Saturday.

It is only recently that a few corporations have begun to produce calendars showing Sunday as the seventh day of the week. However, this has NEVER been the weekly cycle since the time of creation.



Despite this truth, most professing Christians ignore God's Sabbath. They have been taught the old time worn Gnostic heresy that people can worship God any way they please as long as they have love for Him in their heart.

However, it must be understood that such a belief is terribly flawed. Our emotional feelings are not the most important part of our worship. The Almighty is the only one who can define love for Him and He plainly stated that it is expressed by keeping His commandments (John 14:15, 21; 15:10; 2John 1:6). The Apostle John made this clear when he stated:

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3).

Any kind of love for God that we might think we have is empty and vain if we do not keep His commandments. You

may have been told that obeying the Ten Commandments is not required, but what you have been told is a lie! (Rev. 12:9)

The Last Six Commandments - Loving our Neighbor

As stated earlier, numbers have symbolic meaning in the Scriptures. Six is the number of man. For example, Adam was created on the sixth day of creation. There are six days of the week for man to do all his work and 666 is the epitome of the worst that a man can be. Therefore, it is appropriate that the last six commandments deal with love toward our fellow man.

These describe the way we are to treat one another with love and respect. As Jesus pointed out earlier, these six laws all fit under the umbrella of loving our neighbor as ourselves (Mat. 22:39). Notice how the Apostle Paul reiterated this truth as he wrote to the brethren in Rome:

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not covet,” and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as thyself.” Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:8-10).

This statement blatantly reveals that the Apostle Paul did not teach or believe that the Ten Commandments were null and void. The commandments are expressions of Christian love. However, contrary to what God declared, many people have their own ideas about how to show love for others. Societies around the world are filled with ungodly ideas regarding love.

For example, some think that it is love not to punish our children when they misbehave. As a result, we have created a self-centered, rebellious youth that oppress their

elders, and harbor disrespect for authority. As the prophet Isaiah foretold of our generation:

As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths (Isaiah 3:12).

In a similar manner, many seem to believe that we are showing compassion by not strictly punishing criminals. However, by this lax approach to justice, we penalize the victims and cause crime rates to escalate.

We also conclude that it is love to reduce the requirements for certain segments of society to qualify for various positions. As a result, we undermine the very people we wish to help. We disable them by limiting their prerequisites and end up causing further resentments within our society.

We are no longer the law-abiding people we once were. Instead, we are looking more and more like the people Paul prophesied would be living in the last days:

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

These verses describe a large portion of our society today. People are more concerned with how much money they have and the comfort they enjoy, than having love for God and one another. How did we become like this? The answer is

plain and simple. We refuse to submit to the power of God. We don't obey Him!

The state of our world makes this truth absolutely clear. Mankind does not have the innate moral capacity to decide what love is. Only God Almighty can define it. Only He has the divine wisdom and knowledge necessary to know what will produce long lasting peace and prosperity in His physical creation. Therefore, to help mankind, the Eternal has graciously given us the following six commandments.

5

Honor your father and your mother,
that your days may be long upon the land
which the LORD your God is giving you.
~ Exodus 20:12 ~

The fifth commandment tells us to honor our father and mother; however, in large measure, our present society dishonors them. Our public schools teach students that there are many different lifestyles to choose from and they are all acceptable. Therefore, any difference between right and wrong which parents might try to instill in their children ends up being just another opinion in the child's mind.



In addition to the influence of public schools, young people are under more pressure than ever to conform to the degrading values of our crumbling society. This too turns their behavior against parental teaching and causes a multitude of other problems. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse found:

Teens between 12 and 17... (find it) easier to get marijuana than buy cigarettes, beer or prescription drugs... at least one-fourth of all U.S. teenage girls are suffering from self-mutilation, eating disorders, significant depression, consideration of suicide— or are perpetrating acts of physical violence (<http://parentingmyteen.com/2009/some-teen-statistics-that-may-shock-you/>).

In addition, over seventy percent of teens have experienced intercourse and/or oral sex by the age of 19. (<http://www.familyfirstaid.org/sexually-active-teens.html>). Thirty four percent of young women become pregnant at least once before the age of 20 (<http://www.familyfirstaid.org/teen-pregnancy.html>).

Another major influence on youth today is music. Consider that much of the music young people listen to today has changed radically over the last 60 years. At one time the air waves rang with what were primarily the words of love songs. Today, much of the music contains lyrics expressing emotions of hatred and promiscuity.

For example, in decades past we sang songs whose lyrics said, “Oh my papa, to me he was so wonderful” (Eddie Fisher, Oh My Papa, LP, *Thinking of You*, 1950). Today millionaire rap artists like Eminem pound out lyrics of raging



hatred that fantasize of raping and strangling his own mother (Kill You, LP, *Marshall Mathers*, 2001). Shockingly, respected music industry professionals gave this album of filth a Grammy award in 2001 for the best rap album of

the year. Another rebellious band named, No Cash, has produced one song whose chorus states, “Kill your parents, burn their bodies, bury the ashes, find out what you want” (*Team Spider*, 2002). Many others have words that are too obscene to print here. Tragically many of these “musicians” have more influence over young people today than their own parents.

Children are confused and as a result of rearing them without biblical standards they tend to rely on the values of their peers. They grow up feeling that their parents are out of touch with the real world. Later, these immoral youth become adults and further dishonor their parents by abandoning them to nursing homes during what can be the most difficult time of their lives!

6

You shall not murder.
~ Exodus 20:13 ~

In this commandment God instructs us not to kill the innocent. On the contrary, people glorify such acts in movies and we watch them with a kind of sick fascination. Whether people want to believe it or not, the evidence strongly suggests that violent entertainment is actually leading many to perform wicked acts.

The United States Bureau of Justice reports that 14,000 murders and 1½ million violent crimes occur in America every year (http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2008/offenses/expanded_information/homicide.html). In the larger cities, 3-5 murders are committed every day. These statistics do not include thousands of deaths in which homicide cannot be proven.

Today, children and young adults go on killing sprees in our schools. We read of deranged individuals who abduct others in order to fulfill their sick pleasures and then leave them for dead. Perhaps the highest insult to God, as well as to the victims of violent crime, is when we allow such criminals to live out their lives as they go through years of appeal in our so-called justice system. Then, in many cases, we set them free for “good behavior” when their victims were not allowed such an opportunity.

By this process, we are sending criminals a clear message that they can commit murder and our government will protect them! Such injustice generates more criminal activity as we see this violation of God’s law minimized in court rooms everyday:

Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

If we would take swift and just action against the lawless, many would think twice before doing wrong. But, because we allow them to receive the equivalent of a mere slap on the wrist, evildoers take little thought before inflicting great harm on the innocent.

In addition to breaking the letter of the sixth commandment, today we live in a world that is seething with hatred. Christ warned us that such emotion breaks the spirit and intent of the sixth commandment, saying:

You have heard that it was said to those of old, “you shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.” But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, “Raca!” shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, “You fool!” shall be in danger of hell fire (Matthew 5:21-22).

The reason Christ gave us this warning is because hatred is a spiritual type of murder. Anger is the first step to insult which can lead to injury. Hatred often results in disrespectful and unlawful actions against others. It may start as unkind words, but untamed people will eventually cause harm to our believed enemy as we seek to discredit, defame, and carry out their own form of judgment.

Anger and resentment have frequently led to intense hostility causing violence that has been passed down through generations. Today, we see firsthand that the animosity between the children of Ishmael and Isaac is still being exhibited between many Arabs and the Jews (Gen. 16:12). Even in America we are no longer the melting pot this country once was. It seems that every nationality feels that they are superior and they will try to establish their own values within our “free” society. However, instead of encouraging solidarity, today we are more divided than ever before in our history.

7

You shall not commit adultery.
~ Exodus 20:14 ~

Because of our twisted perspective of freedom today, promiscuous behavior has spun completely out of control. For many, adultery has almost become a way of life. There are literally millions of adults, teenagers, and even children, breaking the spirit of this commandment every day by their acts of fornication.

In addition, married couples are cheating on their spouses in extraordinary numbers. In a survey of more than 70,000 men and women conducted by MSNBC, nearly half stated that they have previously cheated, or are currently cheating, on their spouses (*Lust, Love & Loyalty* survey, 4/19/2007, msnbc.msn.com/id/18055526/ns/health-sexual_health/).

Of those who may not have had sexual relations outside of marriage, millions are still breaking the seventh commandment through pornographic fantasy. Jesus made it clear that this spiritual form of adultery is absolutely wrong when He stated:

You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not commit adultery.” But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:27-28).

Despite God’s instruction, a monstrous pornography industry has grown up in America. We accept this virtual adultery and many have become addicted to it. In fact, many consider it healthy to have sexual fantasies involving any person, of any gender, or even with anything one might wish. This sick and twisted view is expressed by *Psychology Today* in an article regarding a “healthy” sex life where they stated:

The association between fantasies and a healthy sex life is so strong, in fact, that it's now considered pathological not to have sexual fantasies... Your fantasy partner can be a celebrity, the guy who works down the hall, or your best friend's mate. You enjoy complete choice of venue: a tropical island, an elevator, a tree swing. And the activity in question can range from romantic, longing glances to sexual gymnastics that would strain a circus contortionist (Peter Daskoch, published on September 01, 1995, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/199509/the-safest-sex>).

Sexual immorality has become an accepted and expected behavior. The internet has made it possible for men and women of all ages to break the seventh commandment at the click of a button. As



Christ explained, harboring images and fantasizing about others are the first steps to committing adultery. Such thoughts



lead to a desire for actual fulfillment (Jam. 1:13-15). This is why Christ warned us against such thinking. We do not have to commit the physical act in order to transgress this law. It is not the act alone, but the intention of the heart that can also define sin. When our mind focuses on, and finds pleasure

in, that which is unlawful, we have broken the commandment.

8

You shall not steal.
~ Exodus 20:15 ~

When it comes to stealing, our society excels at it as a way of life. In 2008, U.S. crime rates climbed to 10,209,770 cases of robbery, car theft, larceny, and burglary (<http://www.disastercenter.com/crime/uscrime.htm>). However, this is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the spirit of this commandment.

Besides the blatant acts of theft, there are millions who break the 8th commandment on a regular basis not considering that their behavior is by any means wrong. In fact, many people believe their transgression to be good because it is in their best interest.

For example, we always strive to get the better deal from others. We want to pay the least for someone else's product or services while charging top dollar for ours. Many will take things from their employers without giving it a thought. Further, we don't always give a full day of work for our pay. Today, people expect to be paid—even if their work is not up to par.

File “sharing” on the World Wide Web has become a common practice. This cyber thievery boasts an army of participants who exchange illegal copies of music, movies, and computer programs without paying a cent to the rightful distributors. Even many churchgoers have no problem copying CDs, DVDs, or MP3s from their friends. Others repeatedly cheat on taxes and tithes.

Dishonest businessmen devise schemes to deceive the elderly and take what little money they might have. Even high profile corporations bend the rules and corrupt the market so that they can squeeze every possible dollar from the public. Government officials steal everyday as they allow lobbyist contributions to influence both who they will tax and how the money will be spent.

At the same time, identity theft has left thousands in ruin. Fraud is at an all-time high. Ponzi schemes have utterly destroyed the financial future of countless numbers. Tragically, we have twisted our moral reasoning in order to justify ourselves for such abominations.

Even those who will admit that these things are wrong do little or nothing to correct the transgression. The vast majority of society has actually compromised their morality. Many believe that, since everybody steals in one way or another, they should be able to do it to. This kind of reasoning is completely out of line with the standards set by God and is a clear violation of the eighth commandment.

9

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
~ Exodus 20:16 ~

When it comes to the ninth commandment, America has again reached new heights in breaking God’s law. Our “justice” system rarely prosecutes perjury, but lawyers who spend vast amounts of their time in court are acutely aware that it is a constant issue. Andrew Chivinski, an associate lawyer at offices of Neil Dymott, wrote:

As a practical matter, civil attorneys should not really need statistical data to convince them of perjury in civil proceedings. Our experiences likely speak for themselves, and there are no doubt few among us who have not come across their fair share of false testimony. After all, much of what we do in the litigation arena is related to impeaching the credibility and veracity of adverse witnesses with prior inconsistent statements or contradictory testimony. We are by nature distrusting, and rightfully so. With few real remedies, and faced with a burdensome “materiality” element in criminal prosecutions, it would seem perjury is a problem we must simply accept (<http://www.neildymott.com/truth-steroids-how-pro-sports-doping-scandal-may-help-enforce-forgotten-offense-perjury>, retr. 5/21/2012).

Courts can easily be swayed by high-cost lawyers. In addition, supposed professional witnesses are paid for their so-called “expertise.” Those who are able to prevaricate most convincingly often win.

Misrepresentation and deceit have evolved into a marketing science. Lying is so common that we now expect advertisers to stretch the truth about their product.

We also anticipate dishonesty among politicians and accept the fact that most promises made during elections are

simply hyperbole and will never be realized. Even when we find that leading officials have lied under oath, we casually dismiss it.



We have witnessed numerous public cases where ministers have taught their congregations to tell the truth and then these members of the clergy have found themselves in court on criminal charges. Caught in lies, they attempt to avoid prosecution.

While many may consider all of this to be wrong, instead of being horrified and correcting the evil, we teach our children that an occasional “white” lie is not only acceptable, but in some cases people believe it is good to lie. Such abominable practices condone and promote breaking the ninth commandment, and then people wonder why the world is so corrupt.

10

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor's.

~ Exodus 20:17 ~

When it comes to coveting, we have created an enormous advertising industry that virtually feeds on this sin. Men and women study intently in order to receive degrees in sociology and psychology. They learn all about our human needs and desires. Then they carefully craft ways to make the public feel dissatisfied with what they have.

As masters of discontent, these men and women have contributed greatly to the creation of our current materialistic culture. They infuse our citizenry with a message of dissatisfaction and envy that fills most advertisements. In every form of media, this theme is constantly repeated with the intent of driving us to covet and ultimately purchase as many products as possible.



Ironically, with all of our modern conveniences, most people live better than the kings of ancient times and yet we are still not satisfied with all that we have. Instead, we feel that we need more—newer, bigger, and better things.



Coveting is a primary source of evil. In fact, breaking this law is the first step that leads to the breaking of every other commandment. Allowed to fester in the human mind, envy can lead to lying, stealing, adultery, and even murder. It can cause children to dishonor their parents and is also a form of idolatry (Col. 3:5). It has led some to live a life of crime—all to fulfill their lust to acquire what others have.

Living in a World that does not Obey God

God and His law no longer seem real to most people. As a result, while we might possess an unprecedented number of modern conveniences, we are still unhappy. Millions lack a sense of real purpose and fulfillment in their lives. There is a continual increase in stress as we are encouraged to strive to attain more material possessions while having less regard for the welfare of others.

It seems that nothing shocks us and little is morally unacceptable anymore. There has become a tragic breakdown in the family as the wonderful, loving, wholesome institution that God created is being redefined to include same sex marriage. Children are encouraged to choose their gender and are given literature that encourages sexual behavior with at nearly any age with whatever gender you desire.

Where will this perversion end? There seems to be an almost pervasive movement toward more and more deviancy and with it there comes an accompanying escalation of violence, sickness, disaster, and suffering.

We face enormous corruption in politics. Corporate scandals have become commonplace. Appalling pollution is absolutely ruining our planet. Mankind's history has become a long parade of terrible abuses against the earth and the people who inhabit it.

In every aspect of our society, this phenomenon is occurring. Throughout the nation, we are thoughtlessly breaking God's Ten Commandments and we are beginning to reap dire consequences for doing so.

We are nearing a pinnacle of self-destructive debauchery from which there is nowhere to go but down. Many news agencies suppress the truth, but it is not difficult to see that violence, corruption and all kinds of evil have spread to nearly every aspect of society and the level of wicked behavior is getting worse. It is shocking that, in the light of blatant wicked behavior, most of the religious community would still try to tell us that the Ten Commandments are no longer required.

Do not let such false teachers fool you. The vast problems in the world are a direct result of the fact that we have abandoned God's law. It could not be said any better than the psalmist who wrote:

The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the

LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes... Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward (Psalm 19:7-8, 11).

We would be so much healthier, safer, happier, and prosperous if we were to live God's way. If we obeyed His law, the Almighty would bless us immeasurably. In fact, the Eternal states that His blessing is a direct result of keeping the commandments (Deu. 5:29). However, because we have abandoned Him, He will ultimately abandon us!

Devastating wrath and punishment will soon come as a result of our disobedience. Millions of professing Christians will be terribly shocked to find that they have worshiped God in vain by not keeping His law. As Christ's words reveal:

These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men (Matthew 15:8-9).

Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:21-23).

The people that Jesus speaks of call Him Lord while violating God's commandments. They were deceived into believing the lie that these laws God no longer apply and the Christ kept them so that we don't have to.

Don't let this happen to you. If you claim to be a Christian you must realize that the Bible repeatedly tells us to keep the commandments! Those who teach otherwise are liars! As the Apostle John wrote:

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 (1 John 2:3-4).

Misunderstood Scriptures

As we have seen, the Scriptures clearly state that the Ten Commandments are a gift and a manual showing us how to express love. They are a blessing—an aspect of God’s grace that is designed to motivate us to transform the way we live. They are the way to success and the solution to the world’s problems.

Despite the good that obedience to God produces, our human nature has a predilection to reject His law (Rom. 8:7-9). As a result of an anti-law bias, Bible students, scholars, and theologians have twisted the meaning of various scriptures in an attempt do away with the Ten Commandments (2Pet. 3:15-16).

For example, some religious teachers quote the following verse believing that it invalidates the need to keep the commandments:

For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Romans 10:4).

Many read this verse and assume that it is saying that the law has come to an end with the appearance of Jesus Christ. However, this verse is actually saying the exact opposite. The word translated “end” is the Greek word *telos* and is defined as:

(to *set out* for a definite point or *goal*); properly the point aimed at as a *limit*, that is, (by implication) the *conclusion* of an act or state... specifically an *impost* of *levy* (as paid). (*Strong’s*, G5056).

This word tells us what the end of the law truly means. Christ’s life pointed to the way we are to keep God’s law. Therefore, we are to live the way He lived. This is the

aim, goal, or purpose of the commandments. He was the perfect reflection of God's love for us—the ultimate expression of how we are to behave. Using the example of His life, as role model by which to live, it shows us the conclusion, or end result, of what a law-abiding Christian is to be like. As John wrote:

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked (1 John 2:6).

Christ is the aim of the law. Becoming like Jesus is the result of keeping the law. He did not come to do away with it, but to fulfill every aspect of the Law as an example for us to follow. Therefore, true Christians are to strive to become like Jesus and live by the same set of rules He observed. These rules are none other than the Ten Commandments.

Did Christ Abolish the Commandments?

Another verse that is often misconstrued is found in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Speaking of Christ:

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Casual students of the Bible will often read these verses and set them apart from their proper context—ascribing it to the Ten Commandments. They interpret Paul to say that the commandments were against us and Christ abolished them. While this verse certainly speaks of Christ abolishing ordinances, what was Paul referring to?

Jesus clearly stated that He did not come to abolish God's great moral code (Mat. 5:17). Therefore, the Apostle

Paul could not have possibly been writing about the Ten Commandments. Instead, he was addressing a law regarding the status of gentiles who were uncircumcised and therefore not physically part of Israel.

In Christ's time, gentiles could not be admitted to the Temple unless they were circumcised and converted to Judaism. Later, some Christians thought this practice should be continued in the Church. Because of this mistaken belief, Paul had to correct this thinking. Consider the context of His words as he first wrote:

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:11-12).

This passage referred to a Jewish law that separated gentiles from Jews in the temple courtyard. It was an ordinance the religious leaders had made, creating a barrier between these two groups of people—the uncircumcised and the circumcised.

At the time that this epistle was written, the temple consisted of two parts. There were the literal temple buildings and walled courtyards surrounding them. Radiating out from this hub of worship were four courts extending from the temple itself. Each decreased in importance as the areas spread out from the center.

First there was the courtyard of the priests. This was where the sacrificial altar and brazen laver were located. Next was the courtyard for the Israelite men—a huge area where the worshipers would bring their offerings to the priests. Next, there was a courtyard exclusively for Jewish women and finally, outside that, one for the gentiles.

The Jews had created a law regarding these courtyards. Gentiles were only allowed to come within a certain distance

to the temple. In fact, there was a walled barrier between them and the Israelites. If any gentile went past this wall, they would face severe punishment. This is the law that was contained in human ordinances. As William Barclay wrote in his commentary:

Only into the first of them could a gentile come. Between it and the Court of the Women there was a wall, or rather a kind of screen of marble, beautifully wrought, and let into it at intervals were tablets which announced that if a gentile proceeded any farther he was liable to instant death.... In 1871 one of these prohibiting tablets was actually discovered, and the inscription on it reads: 'Let no one of any other nation come within the fence and barrier around the Holy Place. Whosoever will be taken doing so will himself be responsible for the fact that his death will ensue' (*Letters to the Ephesians*, p. 111).

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul explained that Christ broke down the spiritual wall of separation between Jew and gentile. This truth is declared numerous times throughout New Testament writings. The gentiles now had full access to God. In this context, Paul's statement becomes obvious. As the apostle continued to encourage the gentiles, he wrote:

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone* (Ephesians 2:19-20).

There can be no question. Paul was NOT speaking of the everlasting Ten Commandments. These laws were never abrogated. It was only the wall separating two sets of believers that was abolished.

As a result of this partition being spiritually dissolved, the gentiles could now be incorporated as part of God's people. They were included in the household of God and built upon the apostles, prophets, and Jesus Christ. Gentiles would now become spiritual Israel and an important part of the New Testament Church.

Paul wrote of this truth on a number of occasions. In Galatians 3:28-29, Paul stated that the gentiles could now be considered part of Abraham's seed. This means that, like Abraham, they would obey God and keep the Ten Commandments (Gen. 26:5).

Are We Under a Curse if We Keep the Law?

Because human nature desires to do that which pleases the flesh, many view the commandments as a burden. They feel that God's law limits our behavior and puts constraints on pleasurable activities. This thinking stems from the fact that the carnal mind is enmity with our Creator (Rom. 8:7). Our human reasoning actually opposes the way of God. Because of this, many use the following statement by Paul to reinforce the mistaken idea that we are cursed for keeping God's Ten Commandments:

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10).

First, we must understand that Paul is quoting Deuteronomy 27:26. This verse is not referring to the Ten Commandments for they are the law of love toward God and neighbor and not a curse. They were designed to be a blessing to all who keep them. They were written by the finger of God on two tablets of stone and are the basis for divine judgment. These were given to the people from Mount Sinai by God Himself and later placed inside the Ark of the Covenant (Deu. 10:1-2).

Before entering the Promised Land, Moses reminded the Israelites that God had personally delivered these commandments to them—first by His thundering voice from atop the mount and then in writing (Exo. 20:1-19; 34:1). After this astounding and transcendent event, God did not personally add anything more. As Moses documented:

These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me (Deuteronomy 5:22).

Following the sin of the golden calf, and a full year after Israel had left Egypt, God instituted the sacrificial laws for sin and cleansing which were only to be performed by the Levitical priesthood. These were not given as a part of the Ten Commandments. They were ADDED because of transgression (Exo. 32:8), and were delivered to Israel through the mouth of Moses. As God stated:

For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices (Jeremiah 7:22).

The sacrifices were a part of what has been called the Mosaic Law. This term simply refers to the laws given at a later time by God, but through the hand and mouth of Moses. As God instructed His servant:

Go and say to them, “Return to your tents.” But as for you, stand here by Me, and I will speak to you all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe *them* in the land which I am giving them to possess (Deuteronomy 5:30-31).

Thus, we see that God created categories of law and all of them fall under the Ten Commandments that were put inside the Ark:

And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you... 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 (Exodus 25:16, 21).

There were also civil and priestly laws given to Israel that were to be kept by those who entered the Promised Land. These laws were put on the outside of the ark as a testimony against the people. As the book of Deuteronomy states:

So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying: "Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness against you" (Deuteronomy 31:24-26).

This second set of laws which were placed on the side of the Ark included the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (Deu. 27-28). The Israelites were also instructed to write them on stones, erect them on Mount Ebal, and whitewash them with lime so that anyone entering into the land would see them. Upon viewing them, travelers would realize they were now entering the land of God's people and would be bound by these laws (Deu. 27:4).

At the time of their installment on the mount, the Almighty required half of the tribes to stand on Mount Gerizim while the rest stood on Mount Ebal. These two groups then took turns chanting these laws of blessings and then the curses (Deu. 27:12-13). At the end of the list, the tribes shouted the very words that Paul quotes in Galatians 3:

Cursed *is* the one who does not confirm *all* the words of this law.’ “And all the people shall say, “Amen!” (Deuteronomy 27:26).

Compare the verse above, with Paul’s words in Galatians 3:10. They are one in the same. It was this book of civil laws set on the side of the ark—the one containing the curses which applied to Judah that Paul spoke of. The central issue in being discussed in the book of Galatians is circumcision and laws specific to Judah as a nation. The Ten Commandments were for ALL people and obedience to them was never questioned.

A number of years after the beginning of the New Testament Church, many still thought that a gentile must first be circumcised and become a proselyte in order to become a Christian. A number of prestigious individuals continued to propagate this belief. Consequently, many in the Church expected gentile converts to be bound to the laws that applied to the land of Judah (Acts 15:1; Gal. 2:12). To combat this error, Paul wrote to the Galatians speaking of these laws that were applicable to the people of Judah stating that if anyone intended to rely on these “works of the law,” they must keep them all. He was NOT speaking of the Ten Commandments.

It must also be understood that these verses, in which Paul plainly quotes from the Old Covenant, associate a curse for NOT keeping the law. Throughout the entire Bible there is never a statement associating a curse FOR keeping the law—only for NOT observing it. It is this curse that Christ redeemed us from by taking our transgressions on Himself. As the Apostle Paul continues:

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”) (Galatians 3:13).

The Messiah saved us from the curse of death that we earned by NOT obeying God’s law. Thus, we must rely on Jesus Christ’s monumental sacrifice—not our ability to keep

these laws that applied to the land and people of Judah. However, this does not mean that we are no longer required to live by both the letter and intent of God's great law of love found in the Ten Commandments.

Was the Law Nailed to a Cross?

Another commonly misunderstood verse is found in the book of Colossians. From the following passage, many infer that the Ten Commandments were done away when Christ was crucified. Speaking to the brethren about the Savior, Paul wrote:

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross (Colossians 2:11-14).

Many have assumed that this is another verse proving that we don't have to keep the commandments. They believe that God's holy law is too difficult to keep, that it was a burden, and perished with Jesus when He died on the stake. However, this is not what Paul meant at all. To understand the truth, we must realize what the "handwriting of requirements" is.

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament stated that the word "handwriting" means that which is written with one's own hand—not by the finger of God. According to *Vines Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, "handwriting" specifically refers to a handwritten note of debt

(p. 1475) and the word “requirements” refers to a law or decree. What then is the note of debt that man has written with his own hand? It certainly is not the Ten Commandments. Those were engraved in stone by the finger of God.

The note that we have written is the list of our offenses against God’s law. The wages of sin earned us the death penalty (Rom. 6:23). This debt is spiritually penned by us in the way we have lived our lives.

The sacrifices of the Old Covenant were to teach us this vital truth. There is a penalty for sin. The wages of sin are death (Rom. 6:23). Transgression of the law requires a sacrifice and it was Christ that ultimately paid the debt we owe for our sins. It is this note of debt written by each of us that has been taken away. It was placed on Jesus Christ as He hung on the stake, finally dying for us. By His supreme sacrificial act, our personal list of offenses—the debt we owe God—can be taken away. As Paul wrote:

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).

Some of the more modern translations provide an accurate sense of the meaning of the Scripture in question. For example, the *English Standard Version* and the *Good News Bible* state:

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross (ESV, Colossians 2:13-14).

You were at one time spiritually dead because of your sins and because you were gentiles without the Law. But God has now brought you to life with Christ. God forgave us all our sins; he canceled

the unfavorable record of our debts with its binding rules and did away with it completely by nailing it to the cross (GNB, Colossians 2:13-14).

It is also important to realize that this Scripture tells us that these ordinances were against us and contrary to us. In stark contrast, there is absolutely nothing in the Ten Commandments that is against us. In fact, they are for us and a way of protecting our welfare. Each one of the commandments shows us the Almighty's rules for living an abundant life. They were given to us so our days might be prosperous and our lives long upon the earth. They are for our guidance—a roadmap for life—handed to us for our own good.

Thus, it is clear that the Ten Commandments are not being spoken of in these verses. As the Savior said, the Ten Commandments are valid until the earth no longer exists. If they are no longer required today, and there is no harm in willingly breaking them, why did Paul write the following?

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness? (Romans 6:16).

Are the Commandments Only a School Master?

An additional verse that is often taken out of context is another statement Paul made in his epistle to the churches located in Galatia. He wrote:

Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor (Galatians 3:24-25).

Some read this verse and mistakenly conclude that the Ten Commandments only existed as a teacher until Christ came. This leads them to believe that, once the Savior appeared, there was no longer a need for these laws to instruct

us. However, consider the definition of the term “tutor.” This is the Greek word *paidagogos*. Figuratively it means a teacher but specifically it refers to a servant whose responsibility included taking the children to school. It was the tutor’s duty to guard the children while they traveled to school to receive further instruction.

Consider that most of us have gone to school to learn how to be productive and successful in life. Should we jettison all we have learned once we graduate? Of course not! That would be ridiculous. This simple comparison should make the truth clear to everyone. There is, and always will be, a place for God’s law as the foundation of our lives. Understanding this, the question must be asked, what law was Paul addressing as our schoolmaster in this verse?

First, consider the question: How could Paul be speaking of the law contained in the Ten Commandments? Those laws were clearly in effect before Adam and Eve, and Christ made it clear that they still act as a guide throughout life! No legitimate preacher would consider suggesting that worshiping idols, committing murder, stealing, breaking the Sabbath or that act of adultery was acceptable Christian conduct. So, what law is Paul speaking of? Notice his words just five verses earlier:

What purpose then *does* the law *serve*? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator (Galatians 3:19).

This verse is speaking of the very law that Paul said was a tutor. These were laws added as a result of transgression. After the sin of Adam and Eve, there became a need for sacrifice. The author of Hebrews explains:

And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22).

From the time of the first transgression, sacrifice was required as an object lesson to teach man the terrible cost of sin. It has even been suggested that God Himself sacrificed two lambs in order to provide the clothing to cover our first parents (Gen. 3:21). After that first sin, there were always sacrifices made to expiate sin.

When the children of Abraham went into Egypt and became slaves, the sacrificial practice became lost. However, when God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, He reinstated these laws. First, God restored the Ten Commandments. Then, the sacrificial laws were re-established a year after the incident of the golden calf.

When God brought His people out of Egypt, it was His desire that each head of household act as a priest to the family. As the Almighty plainly stated:

And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel (Exodus 19:6).

God stated His intention before He restored the Ten Commandments in chapter 20. However, while Moses was up on the mountain receiving the tablets of stone, Aaron allowed the people to build a golden calf and celebrate as they worshiped before this idol. This transgression caused God to add the priesthood consisting of only Levites and the corresponding laws pertaining to washings, trespass offerings, peace offerings and sacrifices in addition to the daily sacrifices already in place.

When God wrote the Ten Commandments in stone and gave them to Moses on Mount Sinai, He did not require the Levitical priesthood and the priestly laws. As the prophet Jeremiah wrote:

For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God,

and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’ Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels *and* the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward (Jeremiah 7:22-24).

After the people of Israel transgressed by building a golden calf, God required them to construct a tabernacle with all its furniture and instruments (Exo. 25-27, 40). The Almighty then ordained the Levites in that same month (Exo. 40:12-15). With this ordination came the priestly duties which were the laws added from heaven and given to the people through the mediator—Moses.

Due to Israel’s sin, and because their stiff-necked attitude would lead to similar sins, God gave the law of the offerings and washings. These additional laws were to be a constant reminder of the need for spiritual cleanliness and the terrible cost of sin. Thus, Paul’s statements in Galatians are not speaking of the Ten Commandments, but are referring to the sacrifices and offerings administered by the Levitical priesthood.

Not Justified by Works of the Law

There exists another important distinction regarding the various laws that Paul speaks of throughout the New Testament. In his writings, the apostle often uses the unique phrase, “the works of the law.” For example:

We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified (Galatians 2:15-16).

Paul is the only writer in the entire Bible that uses this unique term. *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*

states that the actual Greek is *ergon namou*. These words refer to works that are parceled out, just as grain might be parceled out from a silo (G2041, G3551). Thus, Paul is not talking about the Ten Commandments which are the core of the law. Rather it is speaking of laws extending from God's fundamental code. This being the case, which specific laws was Paul speaking of.

Because scholars had no other writings by which to compare its usage, they have argued over the meaning of this phrase for centuries. Finally, with the unearthing of the Dead Sea Scrolls, a manuscript was found that used this term. In an article in the *Biblical Archeology Review*, the author explains:

The connection lies in the very title given to this obscure Dead Sea Scroll. MMT, as noted earlier, stands for *Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah*... In short, *ma'ase ha-torah* is equivalent to what we know in English from Paul's letters as "works of the law." This Dead Sea Scroll and Paul use the very same phrase. The connection is emphasized by the fact that this phrase appears nowhere in rabbinic literature of the first and second centuries A.D.—only in Paul and in MMT.

The works of the law that the Qumran text refers to are obviously typified by the 20 or so religious precepts (*halakhot*) detailed in the body of the text. For the first time we can really understand what Paul is writing about... the aim of the work, however, as seen by its composer, was clearly to call attention to matters that trespass the boundaries between the pure and impure. The topic of the work is reflected in the phrase *tohorat haqodesh*, "the purity of the holy." Stated simply; "Do not allow the holy to be profaned by what is impure."

The issues include bringing gentile corn into the Temple, the presentation of gentile offerings, and the cooking of sacrificial meat in unfit (impure) vessels. Other rulings concern cleansing of lepers, admitting the blind and the deaf into the Temple; and permitting intermarriage with Ammonite and Moabite converts, long forbidden to enter the congregation of Israel (Deuteronomy

23:3). Other issues involve the transmission of impurity by a flow of water (musaq), the intermixture of wool and linen (sha'atnez), plowing with diverse animals (qilayyim) and... the climax of the discussion: the intermarriage of priests with the common people (November—December 1993, p. 48).



The discovery of this manuscript helps to make it perfectly clear which laws Paul was speaking of. *Ergon namou* does not refer to the Ten Commandments. Instead, it refers to works designed for a specific reason. Their purpose was to ensure purity regarding the mixing of various religious articles such as animals for plowing, the mixing of fabrics and even which people were allowed to attend the temple for worship.

In the historical context of Paul's time, it is understandable why the apostle would use this unique phrase. The issue he was combating at that time was opposition to the mixing of gentiles with Jews as the people of God. Gentiles were no longer to be considered impure. The wall separating them from Israel was broken down. God had revealed this vital truth to Peter, who later explained it to the church, saying:

Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean (Acts 10:28).

When Paul used the term “works of the law,” it had no relation to the Ten Commandments. Instead, it had everything to do with circumcision and Jews affiliating with gentiles. Paul was delivering this message to the Church by using a specific term. By it, he made the point that a gentile who was called by God, repented, and was baptized would be cleansed. The gentiles did not have to sacrifice animals, do ritualistic washings, and be circumcised to be legitimate Christians and receive the gift of salvation.

These works of the law are no longer required, but the Ten Commandments have always been obligatory. Paul’s statements regarding the works of the law do not mean that the Ten Commandments are no longer binding. Instead, they show us that circumcision and animal sacrifices are no longer necessary and that gentiles are to be included in the Israel of God—His Church. The Ten Commandments were never in question.

Paul’s Teaching Regarding God’s Law

Many have taken certain verses by Paul out of context in an attempt to make it appear as if the apostle opposed keeping the Ten Commandments and the annual holy days. In stark contrast to what many have been taught, Paul’s epistles contain numerous statements advocating adherence to God’s holy law.

Consider that Paul’s religious training began as a Pharisee (Acts 23:6; 26:5). This means that he was well educated in the writings that we call the “Old Testament.” However, calling those books written prior to Christ’s ministry “old” is a misnomer. The same is true when we categorize the epistles written afterward as “new.” Such classification is one reason why hundreds of millions falsely believe that the law and the prophets are superseded by the writings of Paul. This could never be the case. As will be demonstrated, the first books of the Bible are equally important to our salvation as those written after Christ’s death.

Consider the instructions that Paul gave to Timothy. While writing an extensive letter to the young evangelist, the apostle unequivocally stated:

But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:14-17).

Paul instructed Timothy to continue practicing those things he had learned from an early age in the “Holy Scriptures.” What most do not realize is that Paul was speaking of the books now called the Old Testament. This fact is certain when we realize that the gospels and letters that now comprise the books of the New Testament did not exist when Timothy was young. Those writings began to be circulated during Paul’s lifetime, but were not widely known until they were assembled into a single volume late in the first century AD.

Therefore, the books that Paul considered to be holy writ during the time of the apostles were those of the Law, the Prophets and other writings such as Psalms and Proverbs. With those Holy Scriptures in mind, Paul clearly understood that everything a person needed to know for salvation, including the faith of the Messiah, could be found in the books of the Old Testament!

The Apostle Paul amplified this saying that those early books were given “by the inspiration of God.” He expounded on this truth by writing that those books are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” This further indicates that God’s laws are not limited to a basic application of the Ten Commandments.

There are additional laws that must be kept in order to be considered faithful Christians. There is the dietary law of unclean meats as well as cleanliness instructions when it comes to illness, carcasses and contaminated culinary utensils (Lev. 11). There is the ordinance of annual holy day observance (Lev. 23, Deu. 16). There are instructions for the Passover ceremony (Luke 22:19-20; 1Cor. 11:24-25). There is the law of tithing on all of our increase (Gen. 14:20; 28:22; Lev. 27; Mal. 3:8; Mat. 22:21; Heb. 7). We need to understand the necessity to keep all of those laws that fall within the framework of the Ten Commandments. These also must be kept, not just in part or only when it is convenient, but in the way that God prescribed. It necessary in order to worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

As Paul said of the laws found in the Old Testament books, through them “the man of God you may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Do his words sound like they came from a someone who believed that the holy law of God contained in the Holy Scriptures are null and void? Certainly not!

Further evidence is displayed on the following charts. The first chart shows various scriptures that reflect the teachings of Paul regarding God’s law. The second chart demonstrates that, contrary to the opinion of those who reject God’s law according to the Old Testament, each one of the Ten Commandments is confirmed in the New Testament.

Paul's Witness Regarding God's Law

Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? (Romans 7:1).

Therefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good (Romans 7:12).

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" (Romans 7:7).

Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God *is what matters* (1 Corinthians 7:19).

For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 20:16).

For not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified (Romans 2:13).

For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man (Romans 7:22).

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:8).

But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets (Acts 24:14).

The Ten Commandments in the New Testament

<p>You shall have no other gods before Me (Exodus 20:3).</p>	<p>Thou shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve (Matthew 4:10).</p>
<p>You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of <i>anything</i> that <i>is</i> in heaven above, or that <i>is</i> in the earth beneath, or that <i>is</i> in the water under the earth (Exodus 20:4).</p>	<p>Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising (Acts 17:29).</p>
<p>You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold <i>him</i> guiltless who takes His name in vain (Exodus 20:7).</p>	<p>Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and <i>His</i> doctrine may not be blasphemed (1 Timothy 6:1).</p>
<p>Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day <i>is</i> the Sabbath of the LORD your God. <i>In it</i> you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who <i>is</i> within your gates. For <i>in</i> six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that <i>is</i> in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it (Exodus 20:8-11).</p>	<p>For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8).</p> <p>The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27).</p> <p>There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God <i>did</i> from His (Hebrews 4:9-10).</p> <p>So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath... On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God (Acts 13:42-44).</p>

The Ten Commandments in the New Testament

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you (Exodus 20:12).	Honor your father and your mother (Matthew 19:19).
You shall not murder (Exodus 20:13).	You shall not Murder (Matthew 19:18).
You shall not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14).	You shall not commit adultery (Matthew 19:18).
You shall not steal (Exodus 20:15).	Do not steal (Matthew 19:18).
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor (Exodus 20:16).	You shall not bear false witness (Matthew 19:18).
You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that <i>is</i> your neighbor's (Exodus 20:17).	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" (Romans 7:7).

The Last Writings of the New Testament

While scholars may argue over the exact dates of the New Testament writings, it is understood that the books were penned over an approximate 50-year period with the writings of John being completed somewhere between 90 and 100 A.D. Therefore, if there were any changes regarding the Ten Commandments, these epistles written at a later date would certainly address something as monumental as the abolition of God's moral code. Instead, they repeatedly confirm our obligation to obey the commandments.

The last writer to record Scripture was the Apostle John. Throughout his letters, he repeatedly states that the commandments are binding upon Christians. In fact, the

following verses confirm that he was already battling an attack on God's law:

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8).

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us (1 John 1:10).

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. (1 John 2:3-4).

Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning (1 John 2:7).

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4).

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:2-3).

And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another. This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it (2 John 1:5-6).

Finally, in some of the last words of holy writ, we see God continuing to advocate adherence to His commandments. The Apostle John recorded the words of Christ to say:

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last.” Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. ”I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star” (Revelation 22:12-16).

Obviously, John did not believe, like so many religious leaders do today, that the commandments are no longer valid. John was the last author of the Bible and he addressed those living at the end of the age—admonishing them by the authority of Jesus Christ—to faithfully keep the commandments!

A Lesson from History

Today, many professing Christians have a form of godliness, but deny the Almighty’s authority in their lives (2Tim. 3:5). They build ornate, mega churches. Their pastors wear beautiful flowing robes as they preach from a gilded stage. Some will make a display of sobbing and crying before the pulpit while the congregation is swayed into ecstatic emotions by music and atmosphere. They will say things like, “Praise you Jesus” over and over again, but they will still deny His authority by not keeping His commandments. Such ministers do not fear to disobey God and their converts become infected with this same spiritual disease—rebellion.

Many have concocted tortured arguments in an attempt to convince their parishioners to by-pass the law. Some attempt to make the Bible appear to be filled with contradictions. They imply that the Father is harsh and

demanding, while Christ is loving, kind, and forgiving. They interject false gods in the worship of the Messiah. They have perverted the gospel of the Kingdom of God by making it a euphoric state, or a message of personal prosperity. As a result, millions feel that they can break the Creator's holy law with impunity and then they wonder why the world is crumbling around us.

Our nation is losing its way. An anti-God movement has developed and it is spreading through the liberal media. The mention of God's name and the promotion of His way of life have become unacceptable as these individuals work diligently to push the God of the Bible out of the lives of Americans. At the same time, Atheism, Islam, witchcraft, and pagan religions are being accepted as legitimate forms of worship—enveloping our people as they attempt to fill the spiritual void. As a result, our once great nation is crumbling before our eyes.

If the people of this country would repent and keep the Ten Commandments, the Eternal would save us. He would heal our bodies. He would heal our land and we would be united in prosperity again. However, if we allow this trend to continue, even more catastrophic tragedies will befall us.

We will no longer receive the rain in due season. Destructive earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, floods, drought, and hurricanes will continue to increase in both intensity and frequency until our nation is destroyed. The Almighty changes not and His warnings to Israel after giving them the Ten Commandments are just as true for us today. As God boldly declared:

You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who *are* all around you (for the LORD your God *is* a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth (Deuteronomy 6:13-15).

Israel rejected God's law and ultimately they were torn away from the promised-land. They lost their land, their freedom, and even God's divine protection. These northern ten tribes were taken captive by Assyria and, because they quit observing the Ten Commandments, they were eventually lost to secular history. In the south, Judah was also taken into captivity about 100 years later for the same offenses.

Tragically, this same fate awaits any nation rejecting God's way. As Daniel Webster stated, if we do not keep the morals and commandments of God, "...no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us that shall bury all our glory in profound obscurity."

The great men and women who sacrificed so much to create this nation understood this vital truth. They knew that the future of America was directly connected to keeping God's commandments. As our second President John Adams powerfully stated:

The law given from Sinai was a civil and municipal code as well as a moral and religious code. These are laws essential to the existence of men in society and most of which have been enacted by every Nation which ever professed any code of laws. Vain indeed would be the search among the writings of secular history to find so broad, so complete and so solid a basis of morality as the Ten Commandments lay down (*Letters of John Quincy Adams, to His Son, on the Bible and Its Teachings*, Auburn: James M. Alden, 1850, 61).

Today, we are doing just the opposite. We are searching for other laws among ancient failed pagan practices. We bend the truth, believe situational ethics are acceptable, and blatantly break God's Ten Commandments. Similar to Adam and Eve, we somehow think that we know better—that we have a moral code within ourselves that can be trusted. At the same time, we propagate the idea that right and wrong are a matter of perspective. In our courts, corporations, schools,

and government institutions, sin is being given respect as if it were an acceptable and moral way of life.

The truth is that human beings don't have a moral guide built into us. Without the reinforcement of biblical values, the conscience of man can be influenced to believe any lie. As history has proven, man is capable of doing untold hurt and damage to others, all the while, thinking he is doing what is right.

The history of ancient Israel, and the testimony of our founding fathers, is a witness for us today. We are following the same path of apostasy that Israel followed. And because Americans have failed to keep God's commandments, we are beginning to reap dire consequences. We desperately need to repent and we must have the Decalogue as our guide.

A Prerequisite to the Gospel

Ancient Israel was taken captive by Assyria for breaking the Ten Commandments. Judah remained faithful for nearly one hundred years and then sinned even worse. As a result, they were also taken captive by Babylon. Judah was eventually allowed to return to their land, but they were no longer a great nation. Their homecoming was only for the purpose of fulfilling the prophecies of the Messiah (Gen. 49). In 70 A.D. their meager nation was destroyed and the Jews were scattered around the world. However, before their destruction they were given a chance for reform.

Approximately 40 years prior, Jesus began preaching a powerful message of repentance. By this He gave Judah, and everyone who would hear His message, a chance to turn from iniquity before the Kingdom of God is established. This message of obedience to the Ten Commandments is inextricably connected to the gospel. Jesus not only told us to believe in the good news of His coming Kingdom, but He also commanded us to change:

Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the

kingdom of God is at hand. **Repent**, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:14-15).

As Jesus stated in this verse, the gospel is intimately connected to a vital requirement. His message to mankind is that we turn from our lawlessness and keep His commandments. This is the same message of the Old Covenant’s law, its prophets and the writings. It is the proclamation of Jesus Christ and the apostles and it must be declared by God’s Church today. As Jesus commanded:

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14).

This verse boldly states that the good news of the soon coming Kingdom of God is to be preached at the end time AS A WITNESS. This term “witness” is important to understand. It is the Greek word *marturion* meaning:

Something *evidential* that is, (generally) *evidence* given or (specifically) **the Decalogue** (in the sacred Tabernacle): - to be testified, testimony, witness (*Strong’s*, G3142).

This term is a legal prosecutorial expression. It means to hold up the Ten Commandments and point a finger of accusation toward all those who break them. They are to be proclaimed as an official witness and testimony against the lawless. In other words, Jesus is telling us that, before the end of the age, and prior to the terrifyingly devastating plagues God will bring upon mankind, the Ten Commandments are to be held up as a standard. They are God’s code for living and His ministers are to indict humanity for not keeping them.

Right now, this booklet is your testimony and you have been given a chance to repent—to change and keep God’s commandments. As one of the wisest men to ever live said:

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is
man's all. For God will bring every work into
judgment, including every secret thing, whether
good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

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