

20th Century Bible Course

LESSON 13

Dear Friend:

In 1895 there were only two cars in Ohio. Guess what happened? Right! They collided! Anytime you have two cars, each free to go its way without regard for the other, BAM! Collision. Pain. Suffering. Death. Like 13 million accidents every year. And 53,000 deaths.

Most of those accidents happened because someone broke a law. Went through a stop sign. Had "two for the road." Straddled the yellow line. Didn't give full attention to driving. (It's difficult with one arm otherwise occupied, isn't it?) Did 75 in a 50-mile-an-hour zone. Tried to out-drag the big brag down the block.

It probably won't come as a surprise to you to learn that God has a law guaranteed to keep us on the right side of the road-safe, secure, and happy. In fact, most of our unhappiness and problems come because we're running His stop signs.

When you've got a whole universe to keep running, you've got to have law. Law to keep suns from going out. Law to keep planets from banging into one another. And law to keep all the "people" on them living in peace and happiness.

Think of your home. A well-ordered household has rules. Usually they are not written out, but all the family knows what they are and what happens if a rule is violated. If a family had no regulations, how would mother know when to plan the meals? No one would know who was responsible to do which jobs, and Johnny and Mary could stay up until they felt like going to bed, and get up when they wanted to. No respect for the program of others.

God's rules are for the well-being of the human family. Surely those who have chosen to be members of His family will want to abide by the rules of His household. Have you ever associated God's law with the restriction of your happiness rather than the guarantee of it? Have you thought it was impossible to obey God's law? Is it possible to love God sincerely and at the same time reject His commandments? Can we get to heaven by keeping the law? Can we get to heaven by not keeping it?

And here's a rule for staying on the right side in this lesson as you search God's Word for the answers to these and other questions. Don't go at it with a radar-trap psychosis. God's law wasn't written to restrict the happiness of His children. Observe it and you've *got* happiness. It wasn't intended to infringe on your liberties. It is the only way to liberty. See if you don't agree after studying this lesson.

With best wishes,

Your Bible Instructor

LESSON 13

LAW AND GRACE

SCRIPTURE READING: EXODUS 19:10-24, 20:1-21; ROMANS 13:8-10

Traffic laws, tax laws, laws for this, laws for that! You name it and there's a law for it. And rising above all these codes and regulations is the great constitution itself.

In the Bible are found the laws of God's government. Some were temporary, such as a "Detour: 25-miles-per-hour" sign near highway construction. One law towering high above all others, was translated into ten thou-shalt-nots that even sinful man could not fail to understand. It is primarily about this law that

we shall study today.

Part 1-- THE KINDS OF LAWS

Four specific laws are described in the Bible, usually under the general term "law" or "statute." No distinction between them was necessary in Old Testament times, since they were all in force. By Christ's time, Roman civil laws had largely replaced the Jewish civil statutes, and after Christ's death the sacrificial laws became obsolete. Therefore, it is important for us to know which law is referred to in a given passage. Often this is obvious, but sometimes a careful study of the entire passage is needed, especially in Paul's writings.

The Moral, or Ten Commandment Law (Exodus 20:1-17, OT 72 [50,51])

1. **Who wrote the ten commandments?** Deuteronomy 10:1-5 _____ What were they written on _____
Where did Moses place them? _____

The Ceremonial, or Worship Laws (comprising most of the books of Exodus and Leviticus)

2. **Who wrote the laws which were kept in the side of the ark?** Deuteronomy 31:24-26

3. **By what three terms were these laws commonly known?** Deuteronomy 31:26

Malachi 4:4, Acts 15:5, Colossians 2:14 _____

4. **How long were they to last?** Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14-17

The ceremonial laws may be compared to the scaffolding of a building-to be removed when they have served their purpose. When the death of the real Lamb of God (Jesus) rendered the sacrificial laws pointless, they were replaced by ordinances and ceremonies Christ Himself commanded-baptism and the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion.

The Civil Laws (scattered throughout the books of Exodus and Leviticus)

These laws were set up when Israel became a nation and covered sanitation, crime, court procedures, et cetera. They ceased to exist when the Jews ceased to be a nation. An example of a civil statute is found in Exodus 21:33, 34.

The Health Laws (found throughout the Bible. (A future lesson will cover these more fully.)

Who better than the One who made us, knows how to keep the human body in top condition. The first health instruction, not surprisingly, dates back to Eden.

5. **What were the first health laws?** Genesis 1:29; 2:15,16

as to food: _____

as to exercise: _____

After man sinned he was no longer permitted to eat of the tree of life. This necessitated the first modification in his diet, and consisted of the addition of vegetables (Genesis 3:18). The principles of healthful living enjoined in God's Word, if followed, will still maintain optimum health, even in today's degenerated society.

Part 2-- THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSE

That many people are confused about the ten commandments, is evidenced by such questions as, Weren't the ten commandments for Old Testament times only? Didn't Jesus do away with the law at His death? Aren't we free from the law now? The answers are in His Word.

The Law from Adam to Moses

We know of no written ten commandments before Sinai, but there is much evidence that those who

lived back then knew God's law. No doubt it was passed from one to the other in oral form. The superior mental abilities of the first humans, together with their longevity, made it a simple matter to pass on God's commands to succeeding generations.

1. What is impossible without law? Romans 4:15 _____

If sin existed before Sinai, law also had to exist. Before Cain killed his brother, God said to him, "If thou doest not well, *sin* lieth at the door" (Genesis 4:7). There are recorded instances of every commandment being broken before Sinai.

2. What did God say of Abraham? Genesis 26:5 _____

The Law from Sinai to Christ

That the ten commandments were in effect from Sinai until Christ's day, no one disputes. David wrote the beautiful 119th Psalm as a song of praise to God for His law. "O how love I thy law!" he exclaimed (verse 97). Isaiah regarded the law as basic in testing all religious teaching. "To the law and to the testimony," he counseled; "if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). Solomon knew that it was impossible to please God while despising His law. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination" (Proverbs 28:9).

The Law in the Time of Christ and the Apostles

3. What was Christ's attitude toward the ten commandments?

John 15:10 _____

John 14:15; 15:14

Matthew 5:17 "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am _____, but to _____."

Some claim the law has been done away with, for Christ "fulfilled" it. They would make Christ to say: "I am not come to destroy the law, but to do away with it!" To learn what the word "fulfil" means, let us see how it is used elsewhere. In Matthew 3:15 Jesus pressed John to baptize Him, "for thus it becometh us to *fulfil* [give an example of] all righteousness." This thought would be consistent with Christ's words about the law: "I am not come to destroy the law, but to give an example of keeping it."

4. What was Paul's appraisal of the law? Romans 7:12 _____.

5. What did James say of the law? James 2:10-12 If we break one, we break _____.

6. What does John call a professed Christian who does not keep the law? 1 John 2:4 _____

The Law in Our Day

7. How does John characterize God's people in the last days? Revelation 12:17; 14:12 They will _____.

Nothing is more clearly taught in the Scriptures than the solemn truth that God will have a people on earth just before the second coming of Christ, who will uphold and obey His holy law. In spite of persecution, they will stand in defense of His truth.

Part 3-- THE PURPOSE OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. To whom does happiness come? Proverbs 29:18 _____

2. Why is the lawbreaker an unhappy person? Psalm 16:11

Since breaking God's law separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2, and only in His presence is there joy, it follows that the lawbreaker is the unhappy person. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Modern man seeks for the abundant life in a shorter work week and more "things." Apparently he is searching in the wrong direction.

3. What did Jesus say we should do if we want to enter into life? Matthew 19:17

4. What does James call the law? James 2:12

It is the lawbreaker who soon finds himself behind bars-his liberty taken away-not the person who keeps the law.

5. What fulfils the law? Romans 13:8-10

6. How did Christ summarize the ten commandments? Matthew 22:36-40

By keeping the first four commandments, we show that we love _____. By keeping the last six we show that we love _____.

Some people maintain that these "two commandments" replace the ten commandments. The fact is, Jesus was quoting an Old Testament passage known by every Jew-Deuteronomy 6:4, 5 and Leviticus 19:18. And He also stated in verse 40, "On these two commandments hang *all the law* and the prophets."

7. How can we abide in Christ's love? John 15:10

8. To what is the law likened? James 1:23-25

Although a mirror will reveal a smudge on my face, it cannot remove it. That takes soap and water. God's law, like a mirror, reveals sin, but only the cleansing blood of Christ can remove it (Romans 7:7; 3:20).

Part 4--DOES GRACE FREE US FROM KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS ?

"We are not under law, but grace," many people declare (Romans 6:14). We have already learned that Paul considered the law to be holy, just and good (Romans 7:12). He also stated, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (verse 22). Is Paul contradicting himself? Perhaps he anticipated this problem, for immediately he brings up this very question himself, and then provides the answer.

1. Does grace give us license to sin? Romans 6:15

"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? _____."

2. Does faith in Christ's redeeming work do away with the law? Romans 3:31

_____. What does it do? It _____ the law.

Could Paul have used stronger language? It is only the "curse of the law"-the death penalty, from which we are freed (Galatians 3:13)-not the keeping of it. Reread the story of Louis Slotin and the nuclear accident which took his life (Lesson 2, Section 7). Tell me, did that accident prove that now it is perfectly safe to fool around with uranium hemispheres-even with your bare hands? Or did it confirm the deadliness of nuclear radiation?

And what of Calvary? Did it demonstrate that now, since the cross, it is safe to toy with sin? Or does the fact that sin took the life of God's Son demonstrate for all time its deadly nature? Calvary stands before all the universe as irrefutable proof of how God feels about His law. To suggest that God could not change the law even to save the life of His own Son, but then would turn around and tell us that we need no longer keep it, is unthinkable. Indeed, if the law could have been changed or set aside, Jesus would never have needed to die, and Calvary was nothing more than a meaningless drama.

3. What is the secret to all Paul's teaching on law and grace? Hebrews 8:10

It is not the law *versus* grace, but the law *and* grace. Both are vital to the plan of salvation. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Notice that the "loving" comes before the "keeping." Only that obedience which is prompted by love is acceptable to God. And even that will never save us. Eternal life is, and always will be, a gift of God through Jesus Christ.

There may be good reason to fault a few of the laws on human statute books, but not the perfect law of God. No one has come up with a better one. Jesus' life and ministry was a human demonstration of the law in action, and He is willing to write the principles of His law in my heart and yours. Then we, too, can say, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart."

AN INTERESTING STORY

The story is told of a messenger who brought a princess a token of love from her fiancé. The

princess took the strange looking object, examined it briefly, and threw it to the floor! "An iron egg!" she screamed. "What good is an iron egg?"

Retrieving it, the messenger begged her not to be so hasty in rejecting the gift.

Suddenly she accidentally touched a spring and the iron casing clattered to the floor, leaving a smaller egg of burnished brass. It too, had a spring, and when it opened, there was an inner egg of sterling silver. Opening this, a gold egg glowed in the light. Finally, gasping with delight, she gazed upon the beauty of a large diamond hidden within the gold.

The Bible is like that. Many people, hardly glancing at it, cast it aside as irrelevant. A mere book-an old one at that. But if we open it carefully, we'll discover many precious promises and truths. Within these is God's law, reflecting His righteous character, and within the law we find the true essence of the law-love to God and love to man. Inside this golden case is the greatest treasure of all- God's love expressed in a person--Jesus Christ.