



MORAL VERSUS CEREMONIAL LAW

QUEST LESSON G-4

The Problem: Some interpreters of the Bible do not respect the Ten Commandments law given by God to Moses at Sinai. They argue that the law of the Ten Commandments, like the ceremonial laws, were abolished at the Cross. They apply the New Testament texts that speak of the ceremonial law being done away at the Cross to the moral law of the Ten Commandments, since Moses gave all these laws to the Jews, they were intended only for the nation Israel before the death of Jesus. Now we follow the teachings of Jesus and not the requirements that were specifically intended for Jews only.

The dispensationalists go a step further. They argue that before the Cross salvation was by obedience to law. Since then it has been by grace alone. We are living in the dispensation of grace, while the Jews were living in the dispensation of law. God used a different means of saving man before the Cross than he uses for us today. If we try to live by the laws of the Old Testament, we become legalists and cannot be saved by grace.

Many such interpreters take the view that, although the Ten Commandments were done away with at the Cross, nine of them were reinstituted by Christ and His apostles. It is possible to discover all of the commandments restated in the New Testament, except the fourth, the Sabbath commandment. Such interpreters reveal their true motive for arguing that the Ten Commandments were abolished at the Cross. They are not opposed to nine of those commands, but they are opposed to the Sabbath. Since they can find the rest of the moral law restated in the New Testament, they have no burden to oppose it. But since they think the Sabbath command is not repeated in the New Testament, they oppose it strenuously. Their dispensationalist theology provides a very handy method of doing away with the weekly seventh-day Sabbath.

Opposition to the keeping of God's law is called antinomianism (anti = against; nomos = law). The idea that salvation by grace alone rules out the importance of obeying the law of God fails to recognize the principle that the gift of salvation is the very thing that brings us into accord with the will of God. Of course, it is not true that salvation is by law-keeping. We receive saving grace from God when, by faith, we accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. But such faith always results in conformity to the will of God as expressed in His law. Paul wrote that Christ died "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:4). If we are not obeying the law of God, we cannot claim that its righteousness is fulfilled in us. Legalism is not obedience to God's law; it is the attempt to obey His law without first having received the gift of His grace. Legalism is the attempt to save oneself by lawkeeping instead of allowing Christ to save by the gift of His Spirit to the heart. Once having received His divine, saving presence in life, it is inevitable that the believer will want to follow all of Christ's commands. Obedience to the law of God is the certain result of the genuine new birth experience.

Let us turn now to the Scriptures and see what was done away with at the Cross and what still applies to Christian believers today.

Objectives

First, we note from Scripture that the moral law of the Ten Commandments was the standard of righteousness before the Cross.

Second, we discover from the New Testament that the moral law of the Ten Commandments remains the standard of righteousness for the Christian.

Third, we learn that the ceremonial law ceased at the Cross.

Fourth, it is important to understand that the "law of Moses" may mean the ceremonial law, the moral law, or both.

Fifth, the weekly Sabbath is part of God's unchanging moral law.

Sixth, we shall look at a few passages that are used by opponents of the ten commandments.

I. The Moral Law Of Ten Commandments Was A Standard Of Righteousness Before The Cross

The means of righteousness and salvation have always been faith-grace. Faith is man's belief and acceptance; grace is God's saving gift. This was just as true for Old Testament men as for believers today. The law of God was the standard of righteousness for Old Testament believers; grace was the means by which they were to arrive at the standard.

The Word

1. Was salvation by faith (grace), or by works of law for Old Testament man? Habakkuk 2:4; Deuteronomy 6:4-6; 30:11-14; compare Romans 10:6-8.
2. What did Abraham's faith-grace relationship with the Lord lead him to do? Genesis 26:5.
3. How important was it to God that Old Testament man should obey His law? 1 Kings 8:61; Exodus 19:5.

Explanation: The New Testament message that salvation by faith is a matter of having God's law written on the heart is just as much an Old Testament teaching. In fact, the New Testament writers underlined and reemphasized the Old Testament truth. Paul's teaching that "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17) was a reiteration of Habakkuk's message (2:4). In presenting his inspired teaching on righteousness by faith, Paul quotes Moses. Romans 10:6-8 quotes Deuteronomy 30:11-14. Paul adds, "That is, the word of faith, which we preach." Salvation by faith, not by works of law, was the Old Testament teaching. In fact, the message of circumcision of the heart, which is the new birth experience (Romans 2:28-29), is an Old Testament teaching (See for example: Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4)

Although salvation was always by faith-grace, it is also true to say that God's law has always been the standard of righteousness. The experience of being saved by grace produced in the heart of Old Testament believers the desire to obey God's law. Abraham is used in the New Testament as a great example of the life of faith (Romans 4; Galatians 3). Yet, in his own day, Abraham was praised by the Lord because he "obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Genesis 26:5).

Even though the Lord saved Old Testament believers in just the same way that he saves us today, He expected them to obey His law. In the preface to the Ten Commandments, the Lord instructed Moses to tell the people: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed..." (Exodus 19:5). And through Solomon the Lord presented His unchanging standard of righteousness: "Let your heart, therefore, be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day" (1 Kings 8:61). This was not legalism! To argue so is to accuse God of imposing a legalistic system upon His people. Quite the contrary, He offered to save them by coming into their hearts. Once that relationship was established, He expected them to obey His law because now they had the power. Grace came first; obedience followed as an inseparable result.

THE STANDARD IS PERFECT OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAW

The method = grace
Sinner

Relevance: Salvation by faith that results in obedience to God's law is an Old Testament teaching. The dispensationalist idea that between Sinai and the Cross man was saved by works of law is not Scriptural. In every age before the time of Jesus Christ, salvation was by faith-grace alone, with obedience to God's law being the result of the salvation experience.

II. The Moral Law Of Ten Commandments Remains The Standard Of Righteousness For The Christian

There is no contradiction between the Old Testament and the New on the question of salvation by faith that results in law-keeping. Indeed, the New Testament writers referred to "and quoted the Old Testament prophets in defense of their teaching regarding the law.

The Word

4. What does our faith in Christ lead us to do? Romans 3:31.
5. Which law did Paul identify as the one that pointed out his sin? Romans 7:7, 12, 14.
6. What set of laws is spoken of as "the law of liberty"? James 2:10-12.
7. What set of laws did Jesus teach is still binding for the Christian? Matthew 5:17-19, 21-22, 27-28.
8. What is written on our hearts when we enter into the new covenant relationship with Christ? Hebrews 8:10-12; compare Jeremiah 31:31-33.

Explanation: The moral law of the Ten Commandments remains the standard of righteousness, and the method of arriving at the standard remains the faith-grace relationship with the Lord. The experience of salvation by faith does not obviate the divine requirement that we obey God's law. Quite the contrary, Paul emphasizes that faith results in the law being established in the heart of the believer (Romans 3:31). Because the law is the standard of righteousness (although not the means), it pointed out Paul's sin (Romans 7:7). He saw the law as holy, just, good, and spiritual (verses 12, 14). Certainly, there is no suggestion that Paul rejected the law because it was nailed to the Cross.

James underlines the point by teaching that disobedience to any one of the ten commandments is tantamount to rejection of the total law of God. James leaves us in no doubt as to which laws he is speaking of; he quotes the Ten Commandments. Then he adds: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty" (James 2:12). Hence, the ten commandments are a law of liberty, not a burden. That is exactly what John wrote: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

Jesus left us in no doubt about His standard of righteousness. We are not even to think that He came to abolish the law (Matthew 5:17). | Anyone who dares to teach that one of God's established commandments is not binding will be rejected by heaven (verse 19). We know what set of laws Jesus was specifically referring to, because He quoted the Ten Commandments (verses 21, 27). Some have argued that His interpretation amounted to an abolition of the ten, because He stressed the importance of the spirit of the law rather than the letter. The fact is that Jesus interpreted the Ten Commandments very strictly. The spirit of the law does not exclude the letter; it goes beyond it to show what the commandments really mean. The command that says, "Thou shalt not kill," means that a Christian is not to lose his temper with his brother or cherish hatred in his heart. The command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," means that impure thoughts must not be cherished. Jesus exalted the standard far above what many of the Jews thought necessary. He did not abolish the Ten Commandments; He established them forever as God's standard of righteousness.

The New Testament teaching regarding the new covenant experience is based firmly on the Old Testament. Hebrews 8:10-12 quotes Jeremiah 31:31-33. The message is that, under the new covenant, the law of God is written on the believer's heart. There can be no doubt that the reference is to the Ten Commandment law, for this was the standard of righteousness accepted by Jeremiah (11:1-4).

Relevance: The New Testament message, like the Old, stresses salvation and righteousness by faith that results in obedience to the Ten Commandments. God's law does not comprise merely ten suggestions which may be lightly set aside. It is an established, immutable standard of righteousness, obedience to which is made possible by the free gift of His grace.

III. The Ceremonial Law Ceased At The Cross

By the ceremonial law we mean the animal sacrifices and ministry associated with the earthly sanctuary or temple. In the wilderness during the exodus, God gave through Moses instructions regarding the sanctuary and its services. These

were carried out at that time, and later on an even greater scale in the temple built by Solomon. In the time of Jesus, the sacrifices and services of the temple were still being regularly performed. This ceremonial system was the Gospel before the time of Christ. It comprised a series of ceremonies that pointed forward to the death and ministry of Jesus Christ. Once He had died on the cross and ascended to heaven, it was no longer necessary to have such a set of earthly ceremonies. Now the type had met its antitype, and the heavenly ministry of Jesus transcended the earthly ministry of priests in the sanctuary.

The Word

9. What sanctuary replaced the earthly sanctuary or temple?
10. What happened to the inner veil of the temple when Jesus died? Why? Matthew 27:50-51.
11. What law was abolished at the Cross? Ephesians 2:13-16.
12. What took the place of the earthly Jewish priesthood and the animal sacrifices? Hebrews 7:12-19, 24-28. Hebrews 8:1-2.
13. What heavenly ministry has taken the place of the priests' sprinkling of blood in the earthly sanctuary? Hebrews 9:11-14.

Explanation: For the sake of added clarity, we will comment on each of the passages above in order:

Matthew 27:50-51: Clearly the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom by a divine hand because the significance of the earthly ministry had come to an end. Jesus' death fulfilled the type or analogy that was every day worked out in the temple. Every animal sacrifice pointed to His death, every temple service typified some aspect of His ministry for sinful mankind, every item of sanctuary furniture represented an aspect of His work for us. When Jesus died on the cross, the penalty for sin was paid. When He ascended to the heavenly sanctuary, the ministry began to which service of the earthly priests had pointed.

Ephesians 2:13-16: This passage does not teach that Christ abolished the ten commandments at the Cross. It does not read as in the Revised Standard Version: "... by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances" (verse 15). The Greek reads: "... in his flesh having abolished the law of commandments in ordinances." What were the commandments in ordinances? If Paul, who wrote this epistle to the Ephesians, were arguing that the ten commandments were abolished by Christ, he would have been contradicting what he had written to the Roman Christians (Romans 3:31; 7:7, 12, 14; 8:3-4). Clearly, in his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul was referring to the ceremonial system that was a barrier separating Jew from Gentile. Once Christ had died on the cross, this barrier was abolished, and now Gentiles could join Jews in worshiping Christ without the hindrance of having to enter into a set of ceremonial observances.

Hebrews 7:12-19, 24-28: Jesus Christ belonged to the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi from which the priests were drawn. But He became the heavenly High Priest, whose work was typified by the ministry of every earthly Levitical priest. When Jesus began His heavenly priesthood after His death, resurrection, and ascension, it was no longer necessary for earthly priests to function. The ministry to which their ministry pointed forward had begun. Moreover, the animal sacrifices of the earthly sanctuary or temple no longer had any significance with the Lord, for the one sacrifice of Christ, to which they pointed, had occurred,

Hebrews 8:1-2: Chapter 8 of Hebrews emphasizes for us that there is a heavenly sanctuary in which the ascended Christ is the High Priest. This is the "more excellent ministry" (vs. 6) to which the earthly ministry pointed forward. Once Christ's ministry had begun, the earthly ministry no longer had significance.

Hebrews 9:11-14: This passage refers to two aspects of the earthly ministry which were abolished by Christ. First, the sacrifice itself on the cross took the place of earthly animal sacrifices. Second, the priests' sprinkling of blood in the earthly sanctuary typified Christ's intercessory ministry for believers in the heavenly sanctuary. The result is that the conscience (or consciousness) of the believer is purged "from dead works to serve the living God." The imperfect work of the earthly sanctuary or temple is now EES by the perfect ministry of Jesus in the heavenly temple.

Relevance: Not the moral law of Ten Commandments, but the temporary ceremonial law was abolished when Jesus died on Calvary.

IV. The "Law Of Moses" May Mean The Ceremonial Law, Or The Moral Law, Or Both

This point is important because some interpreters of the Bible wish to argue that, since the Ten Commandments were part of the law of Moses, which the apostles said need not be kept anymore (Acts 15), the Ten Commandments are not binding upon Christians. The simple answer is that, although the law of Moses included both ceremonial and moral laws because they were given by God through Moses, in some passages in the Bible the law of Moses means specifically the ceremonial aspects of the law. If I say that I am flying to Australia tomorrow, you might ask, "What part of Australia?" I would answer, "Sydney." Australia is a large country. When I speak of it, I do not mean the whole country. I mean one city to which I am traveling. Just so, when the Bible writers speak of the law of Moses they do not necessarily mean the whole complex of laws given through Moses. They sometimes mean ceremonial laws, sometimes moral laws, and sometimes both. Sometimes they mean the civil laws given by Moses. What is meant in Acts 15? First, let us look at some Bible passages that speak of the law of Moses.

The Word

14. Consider the following passages as evidence that the law of Moses included the Ten Commandments as well as the ceremonial law:
 - a. Deuteronomy 30:10.
 - b. Deuteronomy 33:2-4
 - c. 1 Kings 2:3
 - d. Nehemiah 8:1-3, 8, 14; 9:3, 13-14
 - e. John 7:19-23
 - f. Hebrews 10:28-29
15. What particular aspect of the law of Moses is referred to in the following passages? Luke 2:22; 5:14; John 7:23.
16. What part of the law of Moses was the concern of the apostles at the Jerusalem Council? Acts 15:1, 5, 24.

Explanation: The Law of Moses that was to be kept by the Jews before the Cross included moral, ceremonial, and civil laws that were given by God through Moses. The law of Moses, as it is referred to in Scripture, often includes the moral law of Ten Commandments. But it sometimes refers exclusively to the ceremonial law. (See the texts listed under question 15). In Acts 15 the problem was not the Ten Commandments. It was the problem of legalistic Jews demanding that Gentiles, who became Christians, should be circumcised and observe the ceremonial aspects of the law of Moses. The apostles' answer to the problem proves that the Ten Commandments were not under discussion. "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well" (Acts 15:28-29). Are we, therefore, to assume that it was quite acceptable for these Gentile Christians to lie, to dishonor their parents, to steal etc.? Of course not! The Ten Commandments were not the issue. The apostles were not telling the new Gentile believers that they did not have to keep the Ten Commandments. They were telling them that they did not need to observe the ceremonial laws that had significance before the death of Christ. The law of Moses, as referred to in Acts 15, means the ceremonial law, not the moral law of the Ten Commandments.

Relevance: It is not correct to contrast the law of Moses and the law of God, applying the former to the ceremonial law and the latter to the Ten Commandments. But nor is it true that the law of Moses, as spoken of in Scripture, always includes the ten commandments. Sometimes it refers specifically to the ceremonial aspects of the laws given by God through Moses. This is the meaning of "the law of Moses" as it is used in Acts chapter 15.

V. The Weekly Sabbath Is Part Of God's Unchanging Moral Law

When the New Testament writers exalt the Ten Commandments as the standard of righteousness for Christians, they never exclude the Sabbath command. They never say that nine of these commandments must be kept, but not the

Sabbath. In fact, we have very good evidence from the New Testament documents that the Sabbath, like the rest of the moral law, is to be observed by Christians.

The Word

17. In which set of laws was the Sabbath commandment included? Exodus 20:8-11.
18. How do we know that Jesus Christ expected His followers to keep the Sabbath day holy? Matthew 24:20.
19. Years after the Cross, when Luke wrote concerning the Sabbath day, did he give any indication that it had been abolished? What did Luke call the Seventh-day Sabbath? Luke 23:54-56.
20. Did the apostles observe the seventh-day Sabbath, according to the fourth commandment? Acts 16:13; (When you have time read all of Acts 13, 16, 17, and 18)

Explanation: The fourth commandment of the ten is just as binding upon Christians as the rest. Jesus said, "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19). Yet there are millions of Christians who are breaking the fourth commandment, and many who are telling people that it need not be kept. There is no Bible warrant for that! The spiritual and eternal danger to which these Christians are exposing themselves is very great indeed!

Jesus urged His disciples to pray that, at the time of Jerusalem's fall (A.D. 70), and later just before His second advent, they should pray that they would not have to flee from their enemies on the Sabbath day. Why did Jesus urge this if He did not intend His followers to keep the Sabbath? Matthew 24:20 is not referring merely to the events prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. Those events were types or examples of the events immediately preceding His second coming. In our era, just before Jesus returns, He commands us to keep holy His Sabbath day. His moral Law of ten commandments, of which the very center is the Sabbath command, is still to be obeyed, because we love Him and He has saved us from sin (John 14:15; 15:10). The disciples consistently observed the seventh-day Sabbath after Jesus' death, and we have the same privilege today.

Relevance: There is great blessing in obeying all of the commandments of God, and great misery in refusing to. One of the main characteristics of the last-day church is that its members observe all of God's commandments (Revelation 12:17; 14:12).

VI. A Few Passages Used By Opponents Of The Ten Commandments

There is not space in this study to deal with all of the arguments against the Ten Commandments used by antinomians. The evidence for the continual significance of the moral law for Christians, as presented above, is sufficient to prove the point. But we will take a brief look at a few passages misused by those who reject the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath.

The Word

21. According to Paul, what is Christ the end or conclusion? Why? Romans 10:4.
22. What did Jesus nail to the cross? Colossians 2:14-17.
23. What did Paul mean when he wrote that "we are no longer under a schoolmaster"? Galatians 3:19-25.
24. What did John mean when he wrote: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

Explanation: Let us consider these passages briefly in turn:

Romans 10:4: This verse does not read in the Greek original 'as it is paraphrased in the Revised Standard Version: "For Christ is the end of the law, that everyone who has faith may be justified." Rather the Greek reads literally: For Christ is the end of the law unto (for) righteousness to all who believe." Because the word for "end" (Greek telos) sometimes means "goal, outcome, or object," some interpreters explain the text to mean that Christ is the goal or object to whom the law points. This idea is obviously a truth that is elsewhere taught in the New Testament, but it is not the real meaning

of this passage. Telos often means "end" in the sense of "termination, cessation." Because of the context of Romans 10:4, we can conclude its meaning to be that Christ is the end, finish, and termination of the law for (as a means of attaining) righteousness. Christ does not abolish the Ten Commandments. Paul has already established that in 3:31; 7:7, 12, 14; 8:3-4. He is not contradicting himself here. Consistently with his discussion from Romans 9:30 through to 10:10, Paul is arguing that righteousness cannot be earned by law-keeping. Righteousness is God's gift to us by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9-10). Having received that gift by faith, the law is established in our hearts (Romans 3:31). Christ brings to an end righteousness by works, when, because of our faith, He is able to give us His righteousness. But the abolition of righteousness by works does not destroy the law. As established above, the law is to be kept by Christians as a result of their saving relationship with Christ.

Colossians 2:14-17: Verse 13 indicates that our sins are forgiven because of Christ's death and our acceptance of Him. The very next verse says that "the handwriting of ordinances" was nailed to the cross. What is this handwriting of ordinances? Since the discussion is forgiveness of our sins (vs. 13), we can conclude that what was nailed to the cross was the record of our guilt. Jesus took this away on Calvary. There is no indication here that the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross. It is the record of our having broken the Ten Commandments that was nailed to the cross. What then is meant by verses 16 and 17: "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holiday [feast], or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which is a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." The reference is to the ceremonial aspects of the Law, which were a shadow of the ministry that Jesus would perform for us. The phrase "feasts, new moons, sabbaths" in the Old Testament refers to those special occasions when ceremonial observances of various kinds were to be offered. (See Ezekiel 45:17; 2 Chronicles 2:3-4; 8:12-13; 31:3; 1 Chronicles 23:31; Nehemiah 10:33; Hosea 2:13). In Numbers 28 and 29 the feasts on which special burnt offerings were to be offered include daily, weekly (Sabbath), monthly, and yearly occasions of worship and sacrifice. These sacrifices no longer need to be offered on these occasions because Christ has died, and no longer is His coming foreshadowed by the offering of animal sacrifices. In addition to the weekly Sabbath, there were seven annual ceremonial sabbaths observed by the Jews. These occurred on different days of the week each year. The seven annual ceremonial sabbath days were: (i) The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:7); (ii) the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:8); (iii) the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, 50 days after the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:21); (iv) the Feast of Trumpets on the first day of the seventh month (Leviticus 23:24, 25); (v) the Day of Atonement on the 10th day of the 7th month (Leviticus 23:27-32); (vi) The first day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:35); (vii) the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:36). Paul's point in Colossians 2:16-17 is that animal sacrifices now do not have to be offered on any of these occasions, whether daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly, because they were a shadow of Christ sacrifice for us. Now the type has met antitype, and the ceremonial law has been abolished. Two things were done away with at the Cross: (i) our guilt; (ii) the temporary ceremonial law.

Galatians 3:19-25: Verse 19 tells why the Lord proclaimed the law from Sinai: "... because of transgressions." The law existed from creation until Sinai (Romans 5:13; 4:15), but not in the written form that was given there. In their slavery in Egypt, the Jews had largely forgotten God's law. At Sinai it was proclaimed and written by God "that the offense might abound" (Romans 5:20); that is, so that the people could be made aware of the seriousness of sin. (Compare Romans 7:13). "Till the seed should come" (Galatians 3:19). The Seed was Christ (verse 16). Christ's perfect life is a greater reflection of human sin than is the law (1 Peter 2:21-22; Philippians 2:5). Nevertheless, the Law still functions as a mirror of human sin (Romans 7:7; James 2:23-25). The word "till" does not limit the duration of the law; it does not mean that the law was abolished at the cross. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Timothy 4:13). This did not mean that when Paul arrived Timothy was to stop studying and exhorting. Christ's life points out our sin better than does the written law, because He is the personification of the principles of His own law. But His coming did not abolish the law. He was the greater light to whom the lesser light (the law) pointed. The Law was our "schoolmaster," or "attendant (slave), custodian, guide" (Greek pedagogues) until the coming of Christ (verse 24). We are no longer under the law in the sense that now Christ is a greater revelation of God to man than the law was before the cross. Paul is not saying that the Ten Commandments were abolished at the cross. Before the cross, law (moral, ceremonial, and civil) was the main means by which the love and character of God were revealed to man. When Jesus came, He provided a perfect revelation of the character of God. Moreover, the law could not justify us; Christ can, because of His death and our repentance of sin. Now we are no longer under law as the only means by which God is revealed to us, nor are we dependent solely upon the law to point out our sin, nor are we under the condemnation of

the law. Christ has superseded the law in all these respects. But, as we have seen from many other Scriptures, the law still functions as the divine standard of righteousness for Christians.

John 1:17: The law given by Moses included the moral law of Ten Commandments, the ceremonial law, and the civil laws. None of these laws were designed to save man from sin. The Ten Commandments are a standard of righteousness, but they do not provide the means of salvation (Romans 8:3). The ceremonial law pointed forward to Christ, but animal sacrifices could not save man (Hebrews 10:1-4). Christ was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8). His grace was the only means of salvation for Old Testament man, as it is for us today. Salvation has always been through Christ (Genesis 3:15), never by means of law. God's Law is the standard, Christ's grace is the means of reaching the standard.

Relevance: As we near the end of human history, the Lord appeals to the entire world to come to Him and be saved. He has grace abundant to save the most sin-stained soul. And He has grace to enable us to obey His law. As we come to Jesus, He fills us with His Spirit, and we are empowered to obey His divine will as it is expressed in His law.

Have you found Him as your Savior and Lord? Do you love Him sufficiently to keep His commandments?

Review Questions

1. True or False
 - a. The Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross.
 - b. The Sabbath is one of the ceremonial laws.
 - c. The Ten Commandments point out our sins.
 - d. The ceremonial law ceased to have significance when Jesus died on the cross.
2. Discuss: A man who really loves his wife, and who is loved by her, does kind things for her not so that he can earn her love, but because the shared love is already there. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Jesus' commandments are the same as His Father's commandments because they are One (John 10:30; 8:19). Do we need anything in addition to love for Christ to enable us to be overcomers?