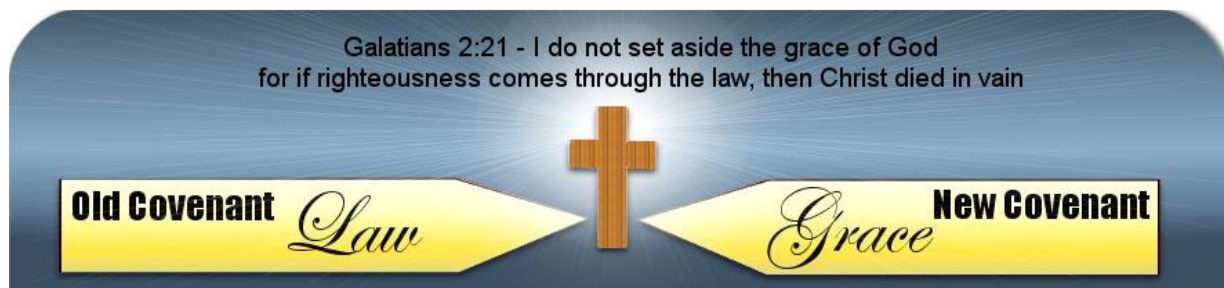


# How the Law was Given and Taken Away

Galatians 2:21 - I do not set aside the grace of God  
for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain



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# How the Law Came Into Existence

From the time of Adam and Eve until the time when the law was given to Moses and the Israelites, there was no law in the world. God treated all those *who believed in Him* with love and grace, regardless of their obedience or disobedience. Mankind did however still suffer the consequences of their own actions, because the law of death reigned in the world:

*Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. (Rom 5:14 NKJV)*

The main difference between this period and the period after the law had been given, was that God did not punish people for their sins back then.

But what about Adam and Eve who were chased out of the Garden after they had eaten from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? In this instance God was actually protecting Adam and Eve, because if they had continued to stay in the Garden and eaten from the Tree of Life as well, they would have continued to live forever, but in an everlasting state of sinfulness!

## Abraham Not Under the Law

In Abraham's time the nation of Israel did not yet even exist – remember Abraham was the father of Isaac, who was the father of Jacob, who later became known as Israel.

*God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob; your name will be Israel." So he named him Israel. (Gen 35:10 NKJV)*

Israel had twelve sons who became the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel. And to these twelve tribes God gave the law, but only 430 years after Abraham lived:

*Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. (Gal 3:16-17 NKJV, emphasis added)*

Let's look at a few more examples of how God treated people *before* the law was given:

After Cain killed his brother Abel, God *still* put a mark on Cain to prevent anybody from killing him and God even said that if anybody tried to kill Cain, that Cain would be avenged seven fold! Cain's actions caused him to be cursed *from the earth*:

*So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. (Gen 4:11 NKJV)*

Perhaps he was even hated by people, *but he wasn't cursed by God*. Look again: he was cursed from the EARTH. God still loved him the same.

In Genesis 12 Abraham lied to Pharaoh about his wife Sarah to save his own neck because he thought that the Egyptians would kill him due to the fact that Sarah was a very beautiful woman. Here we see that even though Abraham was clearly in the wrong, God rebuked the Pharaoh! And what's even more, afterwards Abraham left Egypt laden with slaves and cattle and wealth! So Abraham lied but became rich. Does this look like God was punishing him?

## **How Israel Landed Up in Egypt**

So how did Israel end up in Egypt? Joseph was betrayed by his brothers who sold him to slave dealers and he was taken to Egypt. He later interpreted the Pharaoh's dreams and was appointed to the highest position in the whole of Egypt, except for Pharaoh himself. The whole region suffered an extreme famine and Joseph's eleven brothers and their father (Jacob) came to live with him in Egypt.

*So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. (Gen 50:22 NKJV)*

And that's how the twelve tribes of Israel came to be in Egypt. They then began to multiply exceedingly because God was with them. And after a couple of hundred years we see the following:

*And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them. Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. (Ex 1:6-13 NKJV)*

## **Israel in the Desert**

We can follow this thread of God's grace to those who believed in Him, right up to the time where the law was given (Exodus 19-20). Despite Israel's murmuring and

complaining in the desert, God always provided for them (manna, water out of a rock, a pillar of fire, etc). He never punished nor killed even one single person that believed in Him. But after Israel had received the law, we see a drastic change. They now had to obey its requirements perfectly in order to be blessed and accepted by God, for they now had to relate to God on the basis of their own level of obedience to the law. If they failed to hold up their end of the bargain, God could not fail to hold up His end (by punishing them) because that would make Him a liar.

Israel were the ones who *agreed* to this covenant and said in their pride that they would obey *all* that God commanded them to do, as if they were ever going to manage that!

*And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness. (Deut 6:25 NIV, emphasis added).*

They were trusting that their own righteousness would be good enough to measure up to the standards of the law, but sadly through history the story of Israel's demise has been clear for all the world to see, as they have fallen short of the standards of the law again and again. Let's now take an in depth look at what the consequences are of trying to live under the law. We'll look at several examples of how Israel came up short of its requirements and the dire results it had for them. This might also help to shed some light as to how a loving, kind God can punish and almost destroy an entire nation – and it must have ripped His loving heart apart...

## **Blessings and Curses**

One of the most shocking chapters of the Bible is Deuteronomy 28, where God gave Israel the promises of blessing for obedience or of curse for disobedience. Israel would receive the promises of blessing only if they obeyed ALL God's commandments. Remember it was not only just the 10 Commandments but also the 613 commandments and principles of law and ethics contained in the Torah or Five Books of Moses. That meant that Israel had to keep *all* these commandments if they wanted to be blessed by God and the same goes for any person today that expects God to bless them on the basis of obeying the law - it's not just the 10 Commandments but *all* these other laws as well. Let's look at the first 14 verses of the chapter, which stipulates the blessings they would receive for obedience:

*“Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God: “Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. “Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. “Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. “Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. “The LORD will*

*cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. "The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the Heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them. (Deut 28:1-14 NKJV)*

And then in Deuteronomy 28:15-68 God set before them the curses for disobedience, which are too numerous to list here. Now right there a warning light should have begun to flicker to Israel: This covenant had only 15 verses of blessings but it had 52 verses of curses! Something wasn't right! Doesn't this serve as even more proof that this covenant was an inferior covenant and not God's best plan for mankind? No right minded person would have agreed to the conditions of this agreement if they had thought about it properly. Remember that the curses for disobedience were to befall them if they disobeyed *any* of the 613 commandments of the Mosaic Law! The "Mosaic" Law was derived from "Moses" who was Israel's chosen leader at the time.

Too many people who still choose to live according to the Old Covenant Law today have very conveniently decided that they can choose which commandments they want to obey and which ones they don't like. The trend is to write off the parts of the law, which according to these people, are not applicable because they are merely ceremonies and rituals. However the Bible tells us that the law is a composite unity:

*For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. (Jam 2:10 NKJV)*

The Bible is a shockingly visual book in certain parts, but we often prefer to skip to the parts that we like or that we're most familiar with. Take a deep breath as we read about a few of the consequences that Israel had to face if they failed in *one single* aspect of the law:

*"But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you*

today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: (Deut 28:15 NKJV)

*“The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me. The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish. And your Heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron. The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the Heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. (Deut 28:16, 21-24 NKJV)*

*Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away. The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you. “You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes. (Deut 28:26-30 NKJV)*

Remember how Israel was carried away in captivity by their enemies? Ever wondered why God allowed this to happen? Because they had a covenant with Him and when they didn't uphold their part, God still had to uphold His part because He cannot be unfaithful:

*Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all day long; and there shall be no strength in your hand. A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see. The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head. “The LORD will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods—wood and stone. And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you. You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity. Therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you. (Deut 28:32-37, 41, 48 NKJV)*

## Plagues in the Desert

So let's go back to Israel in the desert, after God had given them the law. Because of their failure to hold up their end of the covenant, God started sending plagues and calamities upon them, because He had to remain faithful to His side of the agreement due to the fact that He cannot lie. Let's read about a few of these plagues.

Under the Old Covenant Law, God had appointed Aaron and the Levites as the only people who were allowed to minister to Him. Now certain men rose up against them and Moses, claiming that they too had the right to be priests, thereby breaking the law:

*Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face; and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who is His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him. Do this: Take censers, Korah and all your company; put fire in them and put incense in them before the LORD tomorrow, and it shall be that the man whom the LORD chooses is the holy one. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!" Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; and that He has brought you near to Himself, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also? Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD. And what is Aaron that you complain against him?" And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, but they said, "We will not come up! Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us? Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!" (Num 16:1-14 NKJV)*

Then the next day 250 men brought their censers before God and were standing in front of the tabernacle, and they gathered the entire congregation against Moses and Aaron.

*And Moses said: "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit,*



*then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD.” Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly. Then all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, “Lest the earth swallow us up also!” And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense. (Num 16:28-35 NKJV)*

Now one would think that the congregation would have learnt a lesson from this, but look what happened the very next day:

*On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, “You have killed the people of the LORD.” Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting. And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.” And they fell on their faces. So Moses said to Aaron, “Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the LORD. The plague has begun.” Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped. Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident. So Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped. (Num 16:41-50 NKJV)*

Here is another example:

*Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel. Then the LORD said to Moses, “Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the LORD, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel.” So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor.” And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand; and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them*

*through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand. (Num 25:1-9 NKJV)*

Later we read about Israel being exiled to Babylon by king Nebuchadnezzar and being stricken by all sorts of calamities due to their inability to live up to the standards of the law, thereby bringing into fulfillment the promise that they would be captured and taken to another country in Deuteronomy 28:36 (above).

## **Still Living According to the Law?**

Now after just reading how people were treated under that Old Covenant, the saddest part is that the majority of the church today still tries to live according to the Old Covenant Law and then they wonder why they are sick, poor, depressed, unhappy and dying? The reality is that Jesus died on the cross to carry the curses of the law for us:

*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") that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Gal 3:13-14 NKJV)*

The following are examples of how the law can creep up on the church today:

- Sitting in a "Christian" meeting where the 10 Commandments or some of the other laws in the Bible are read and we are told this is what we have to do to be blessed or accepted by God.
- Feeling guilty or condemned that we don't do enough for God or that we don't go to church, pray or read the Bible enough.
- Feeling that God doesn't hear our prayers because we have sinned in some way.
- Lacking boldness to approach God with confidence when we pray because we think He may be angry at us for something we've done.
- Trying in our own efforts to be a "better person" or be "more holy" so that God can be pleased with us.

All of the above symptoms are signs that the law is trying to creep up on us. The Bible says there is now no more law and where there is no law, there is no transgression of that law.

*...because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. (Rom 4:15 NKJV)*

Remember how Israel's failure to comply with the law brought about the wrath of God? That's exactly what this verse is talking about, namely that the law brought about God's wrath.

## No Law... Again

At the beginning of this chapter we talked about how God didn't punish people for their transgressions, from Adam up to when He gave Israel the law, because during that period there was nothing to measure their level of obedience against. Just like it was back then, so there is now no law for God to measure our performance against. He can therefore not punish us or count our sins against us anymore, because the law was crucified with Jesus!

*...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. (Col 2:14 NKJV)*

No human being has ever been able to live up to the requirements of the law and no one ever will. God knew this and therefore He sent His Son Jesus in the form of a human to accomplish this feat on our behalf:

*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. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. (Rom 8:3-4, 9 NKJV)*

These first two verses say that the righteous requirements of the law (in other words 100% obedience ALL of the time) were met by Jesus. And Jesus then also took upon Himself the full punishment for the sin of the entire world (because according to the law, sin *had* to be punished) even though He didn't deserve it. Thereby the punishment of sin was served once and for all! Jesus justified all of those who put their faith in Him, bringing peace between God and mankind once again:

*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 5:1 NKJV)*

The following verse clenches it:

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

This verse says that before the law had been given, even though people sinned, God didn't count their sins against them because in essence there was no law to break. And now since there is now no more law to keep or to break either, we can approach God with boldness, even if we have just messed up! Because where there is no law there is

no transgression of the law. And where there is no transgression, there is no punishment.

# Divorced from the Law

*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. (Rom 7:4 NKJV)*

This verse says that we have to die to the law in order for us to bear fruit. This implies that if we have not yet died to the law, we cannot actually bear fruit. But what is fruit? It is the result of the Holy Spirit living through us (Galatians 5:22-23), the very manifestations of His character and not our own efforts to try and live holy. That's why it is called "fruit". But instead of letting the Holy Spirit live through us, we suppress Him when we try to do enough stuff for God so that He can approve of us.

This is a pattern in the life of most Christians who live under the law: One week they'd have a good week, feeling that they didn't make too many mistakes and that God is pleased with them. But then they'd find themselves doing that one thing they swore they'd never do again and they're back to square one.

The law demands a level of obedience that no human being is able to achieve and failure to comply is punishable by death. But that's where Jesus comes in: He lived a perfect sinless life, fulfilling *all* the requirements of the law (Matthew 5:17-18) thereby effectively *ending* it:

*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Rom 10:4 NKJV, emphasis added)*

He destroyed the hold of sin (which was strengthened by the law) by removing the punishment for sin completely:

*The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. (1 Cor 15:56 NKJV, emphasis added)*

He set us at liberty to live free from the fear of judgment (1 John 4:17-18) and the power of sin:

*For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Rom 6:14 NKJV)*

This explains why so many people are struggling with sin in their lives - because they are trying to live under the law and not under grace!

## God Made a Vow

When two people marry they make a vow to stay true to each other until death should part them. Now back in the old days when a person's vow still actually meant something, a vow could not be broken except through death by one of the parties involved. Now the same goes for vows / covenants / oaths made by God. When God makes a vow, it will come to pass! So when God made a covenant with Israel and gave them the 10 Commandments and the Old Covenant Law, the only way for them to be able to get out of that covenant was to fulfill it or to die for violating it.

Now watch this: Jesus Christ fulfilled the law as a man, thereby upholding man's side of the covenant and earning all the blessings on our behalf. But because we couldn't uphold our part, He then went even further and tasted death for us as well, carrying all the curses and punishment for disobedience on our behalf. Now if that isn't love, what is?

Now by simply putting our faith in Jesus we also die to the law and consequently to all the curses for disobeying the law. We become alive to God and through Christ are given *all* the blessings for His obedience:

*Blessed (be) the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenly (places) in Christ. (Eph 1:3 NKJV)*

We have died to the law and we are now married to another husband, namely Jesus Christ!

*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. (Rom 7:1-4 NKJV)*

*For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. (Gal 2:19 NKJV)*

Once we realize that we are actually dead to the Old Covenant Law, we will stop trying to relate to God on the basis of our own good or bad behavior and simply love Him because He is a good Dad. Gone are the days of do's and don'ts; of running around like slaves to try and live up to the demands of the old husband of the law, that slaps us around and always demands more! Here are the days of being married to our new husband, Jesus Christ, who loves us because we are His glorious bride, His beloved church. Yay God!

# Watered Down Law

In all honesty, those who still choose to live under the Old Covenant Law are actually living according to a “watered down” version. This pertains to *everybody* on the planet who is trying to live according to the law, including even the Jews. The reason for this is because the Old Testament Law, recorded in the first five books of the Bible, contained very specific instructions concerning ritual sacrifices and moral living as well as the punishments for non-compliance.

Even if the Jewish temple were to be rebuilt and the ritual animal sacrifices to be reinstated, no person on the planet would ever be justified through their own level of law keeping according to the Bible:

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

*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. (Rom 3:28 NKJV, emphasis added)*

The requirements of the law are actually far more stringent than believed by those who still try to live by it. The biggest problem with trying to live according to the law, is that a person cannot pick and choose which laws they want to obey and which ones not. The law is a composite unity - breaking even the smallest one makes a person guilty of all:

*For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. (Jam 2:10-11 NKJV)*

Therefore the person found guilty of breaking even the smallest law, like telling a lie, is actually liable for the same punishment as someone who has committed an act of horrific magnitude (like murdering someone). Now who in their right mind wishes to be judged by those standards?

## The REAL Standard of the Law

The Mosaic Law was not limited to just the 10 Commandments. After presenting Israel with the two tablets of stone at Mount Sinai, God continued to give Israel a total of 613 laws which they had to keep to the last letter or stand in danger of severe punishment.

Let’s take a quick look at some of these laws with the following in mind: Anybody who still argues that Christians have to live according to the Old Testament Laws, but do not practice these things to the last letter themselves, are guilty of disobeying the entire law.

Let's take a look at those laws, bearing in mind once again that the Bible is quite a visual book:

*'If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening. And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening. Also, when a woman lies with a man, and there is an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 'If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. (Lev 15:16-20 NKJV)*

Now if people, who claim we still have to live according to the law, don't isolate themselves for seven days during the above circumstances or wash themselves in water after having intercourse, they are guilty of breaking the law and are thereby punishable by death. Here's another one:

*Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud - that you may eat. Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. (Lev 11:2b, 4, 7 NKJV)*

There goes that nice English breakfast with crispy fried bacon.

*'These you may eat of all that are in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers - that you may eat. But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which is in the water, they are an abomination to you. (Lev 11:9-10 NKJV)*

There goes calamari out the window!

*And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. (Lev 24:16a NKJV)*

When last did we see someone stoned for using the Lord's name in vain? Our movies are full of it!

*"And if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering." (Num 15:27 NKJV)*

What about all those times we forgot to give to the poor, neglected to give our tithes (because we forgot to bring money to church), washed dishes on the Sabbath, etc? If we didn't go out afterwards, bought a year old female goat and took it to a priest (remember



the priest had to be from the correct Jewish lineage) who slaughtered it and made a sin offering for those sins, we've transgressed the law and became guilty of transgressing the entire law. If we were still under the Old Covenant Law, we would be liable for receiving the punishments as per Deuteronomy 28 from verse 15 onwards.

*Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp". (Num 15:32-33, 35 NKJV)*

Still want to do those dishes? How about going shopping on the Sabbath?

## **Ceremonial Law**

Another belief doing the rounds among some believers (especially those who believe in tracing back their "Jewish Roots") is that only the ceremonial aspects of the law have ended, but that the legal demands of the law still stand. They argue that all the prescribed rituals in the law have become redundant, but that the law is apparently *still* to be used as a moral guideline to direct our lives and failure to uphold its stipulations will cause us to fall short of God's standards.

Jesus made it clear however that we cannot delete a single letter from the law:

*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. (Matt 5:18 NKJV)*

Another problem with this viewpoint is that none of the ceremonial aspects of the law were *against* us. And the apostle Paul wrote that all the requirements that stood *against* us were cancelled:

*...by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. (Col 2:14 ESV, emphasis added)*

Failing to adhere to a ceremony or a feast can't cause somebody to be accused of anything. However when the law says "don't do this" or "do that" and we fail to comply, then we *can* be found guilty! It is therefore clear to see that not only were the ceremonial aspects of the law cancelled, but also the entire penal side which stood *against* us!

## **Christ, the End of the Law**

The truth is that for a believer the law has ended. Paul wrote how his heart yearned for the Israelites who still tried to live according to the law after Christ had died to set us free from it (and the same applies to us today):

*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness [by still trying to live up to the requirements of the law], have not submitted to the righteousness of God [received by simply believing in Christ]. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes [we receive salvation and God's righteousness not by living under the law, but through believing in Christ!]. (Rom 10:1-4 NKJV, annotations added)*

*...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Rom 10:9-10 NKJV)*