

With the Law, or Without it...Why is it so important?

Romans 3:19 (KJV) *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

Romans 3:20 (KJV) *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

God had several important purposes for giving these laws. They were to be a *testimony* to all who “hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people...who hath God so nigh unto them” (**Deut. 4:5-8**).

It was intended *to draw lost souls back to God*, but it was never intended as a way to merit eternal life. Paul taught, “Ye could not be justified [from sin] by the Law of Moses” because it was given that “all the world may become guilty before God. ...for *by the law is the knowledge of sin*” (**Rom. 3:19,20**).

The law was a beautiful system for Israel, but even Peter acknowledged that it was a heavy “yoke...which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear” (**Acts 15:10**).

God’s ultimate purpose for the law was *to prove man’s guilt*, to prove his inability to be righteous through good works, and to become “our schoolmaster *to bring us unto Christ*, that we might be justified by faith” (**Gal. 3:24**).

The Law is absolutely not intended for the practice of believers today. Why?

Let's Look at: **1 Timothy 1:9-10** >

1 Timothy 1:9 (KJV) Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, **10** For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

So then Paul gives Timothy some understanding on how to live apart from the Law.

- **Romans 6:1 (KJV)** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? **2** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?
- **Romans 6:14 (KJV)** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. **15** What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.
- **Romans 6:23 (KJV)** For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

How many times have you heard, "You can't tell someone they are under grace, they'll live however they want to." However, as has well been said, grace changes our "want-to"! That is, grace changes how we want to live. The Lord told Bartimaeus, "Go thy way," but as we read on we see that "*immediately he followed Jesus in the way*" (Mark 10:52). **Was he being disobedient? No!** His way was now the Lord's way! And so it should be the desire of every blood-bought child of God to follow the Lord Jesus in the way.

How can we even think of continuing in sin after Christ *died* for our sins?

A Mafia hit man knows there is no way out of the syndicate other than dying. But what if such a man's twin brother volunteered to die in order to fool the mob into thinking that the hit man was dead? Such a noble sacrifice would be greatly dishonored if the brother then continued to serve organized crime. Similarly, the

noblest Sacrifice in history is equally dishonored when we continue in sin after the Lord died to save us from our sins.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16).

BUT NOW!

Romans 3:21 (KJV) But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

Paul refers to this as “my gospel” and refuses all works of righteousness, including circumcision, water baptism, tithing, or any other legalistic requirement.

(Rom. 3:21,28; 4:5; 10:4; Gal. 2:16; 3:11; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek (Rom. 10:12).

- ✓ No difference between Jew or Greek?
- ✓ The end of the Law?!
- ✓ Righteousness by faith without works?!

These truths which are so easily taken for granted today were nothing less than revolutionary when Paul first spoke them, and they turned the religious world of the first century upside down. They also cost Paul his reputation, his comfort, his freedom, and, ultimately, his life.

God commissioned this new apostle to proclaim a new message of eternal life, one which had no connection with a favored nation, human merit, or a promised land.

Romans 3:22 (KJV) Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

2 Corinthians 5:21 (KJV) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

It's good news for all mankind without distinctions: "all" people, including the Jews, are now equally "under sin" (**Rom. 3:9; see 3:23; 11:30-32**), Christ "***gave Himself a ransom***" equally "for all" (**1 Tim. 2:4-7**), and "all" who believe are equally blessed in Him (**Gal. 3:28**). It's good news of ***justification by grace through faith alone***: those who work not, but believe in Christ receive His righteousness as a gift, never to be taken away (**Rom. 4:5; see 3:24; 11:29**).

It's good news of an enduring, heavenly, not earthly, inheritance: believers will be taken home to heaven to share in their Lord's glory and enjoy His presence forever (**Phil. 3:20,21; 1 Thes. 4:13-18**).

These truths are not peripheral elements but the very essence of Paul's gospel, which he referred to as "**the gospel of the grace of God**" (Acts 20:24).

God kept this testimony of grace a secret in the past but made it known "**in due time**" through Paul (**1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 1:3**) as part of "**the dispensation of grace**" which He gave to him (**Eph. 3:2**).

The Bible plainly demonstrates that Paul is our God-ordained authority in all matters relating to the message of salvation for the present age. Though all of Scripture is equally inspired by God and equally necessary for us to learn everything that He wants us to know about Himself and His plan for the ages, Paul's writings in particular demand special attention. His proclamation of Christ "***according to the revelation of the mystery***" is what the Lord is using today to establish people (**Rom. 16:25**). And any deviation from it is under a curse (Gal. 1:8,9).

A well-respected Bible teacher of days gone by aptly commented,

"Throughout church history, to depart from Paul has been heresy. To receive Paul's gospel and hold it fast is salvation." He also remarked, "You can judge any man's preaching or teaching by this rule—is he Pauline? Does his doctrine start and finish according to those statements of Christian doctrine uttered by the Apostle Paul? No matter how wonderful a man may seem in his gifts and apparent consecration,

if his gospel is not Pauline, it is not the gospel.”

Only those who teach according to Paul’s standard will give accurate and authoritative answers to the myriad of questions surrounding God’s good news. Only they will be “**approved**” workers who not need be “ashamed” (**2 Tim. 2:15**). The gospel according to Paul is God’s good news for today. When we follow Paul, we’re truly following Christ.

Are you on the right road?