



Different ways the word "Law" is used in the New Testament.

- All the regulations of the Old Covenant. Generally, these could be divided into 3 broad categories:
 - ① Moral laws. These are a reflection of God's character, and can be summarized by the two greatest commands: Love God and love neighbor (including foreigners) – Deuteronomy 6:4; Leviticus 19:18, 34).
 - Civil laws. Regulations for governing Israel, these were a reflection of the moral law within the Old Covenant context. In Jesus' day, the Romans were in control, so most of these regulations could not be followed. (Actually, the Jews rarely followed them throughout their history.) When understood in context, these regulations illustrate the nature of *righteous* laws of government. (Today, they are normally ignored, or else taken out of context, criticized and mocked.)
 - ③ Ceremonial (religious) laws. Regulations and sacrifices pertaining to Israel's relationship with God. Many of these things were a picture of what Jesus would accomplish under the New Covenant.

- The laws of love for God and neighbor. In both Old and New Testaments, we learn that these two commands *summarize* all our obligations toward God and other people – all the other commands.
- The moral law. Under the New Covenant, the focus is on the moral law – the 10 Commandments, summarized in the laws of love for God and neighbor. The 10 Commandments teach us how this love is to be expressed toward God and neighbor. (Love is not undefined or distorted, as the world often does.)

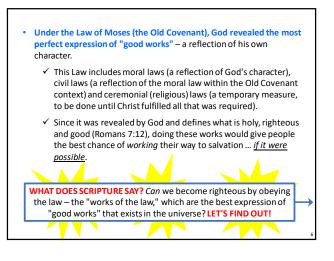
[What about the rest of the Law of Moses? ① The sacrifices are no longer needed; and ② governments tend to invent their own arbitrary laws, ignoring Scripture's guidelines for justice.]

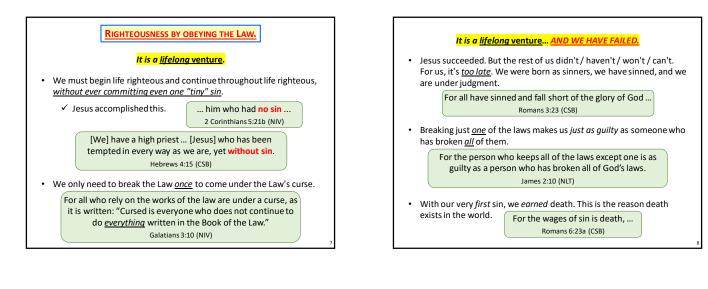
- Human tradition. The Jews had come up with their own regulations, which often distorted or nullified the Law of God. Jesus and the apostles *always* condemned these "laws."
- "Law" (as a general term). Occasionally, it refers to the *concept* of regulations, principles, or rules that govern people.

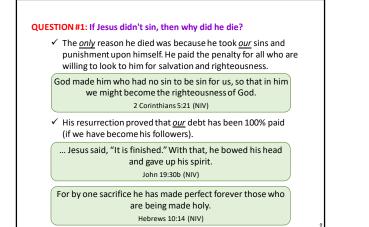
★ <u>NONE</u> of these can *earn* us salvation. ★

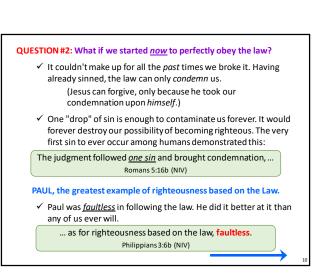
How do we identify good works?

- Without the Bible, there is no objective standard to define which works are "good."
 - ✓ NOT from creation People can learn from nature, because it reveals some things about God. But they suppress what they can learn, because they don't like the fact that it *does* reveal some things about God (Romans 1:18-20+).
 - NOT from conscience People can learn from their consciences, because God embedded that conscience within them. But because of our sin, what the conscience says tends to be suppressed and corrupted (Romans 1:14-15; Titus 1:15-16). Even a clear conscience is imperfect, and does not prove a person innocent of sin (1 Corinthians 4:4).
 - NOT from religion Religion may restrain some sin and promote some good things. But being the invention of humans, it is part of their rebellion against the true God, and blinds people with a distortion of the truth.

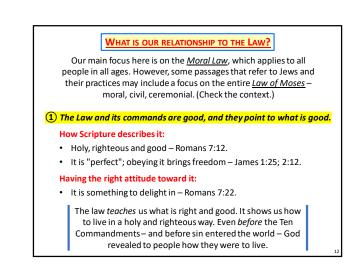








Yet compared to what Christ's righteousness accomplishes, his own righteousness was garbage. So he chose to rely on Christ's righteousness, instead. But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. Philippians 3:7-9 (NIV) He once viewed his *self*-made righteousness as a treasure – a great gain. Once he met Christ, he began to view it as trash a complete loss, wasted effort. It could not save.



The "royal law": Love for neighbor. In what way is it "royal"?

Indeed, if you fulfill the royal law prescribed in the Scripture, Love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well. Jas 2:8 (CSB)

- It's the law of the King (God).
- This specific law represents and summarizes the other laws (some of which are mentioned in the context – see v. 11).
- It is the "king" of the laws, being #1 in greatness (along with the command about love for God).

Psalm 119

- This psalm describes the greatness and goodness of the Law, as well as the attitude of one who loves it.
- This follower of God had such a high regard for God's Law, that it took him 176 verses to express it!

2 Sin is evil, and has destroyed our relationship to the Law (and to God).

Sin uses the Law in ways contrary to the Law's original life-giving purpose.

- The Law was weakened by the flesh (our sinful nature) Romans 8:3.
- Sin uses the Law to "kill" us Romans 7:11, 13. We may have thought we were "alive"; but now we are made aware of our *real* condition (= dead).

The Law now condemns.

- It makes us aware of sin Romans 3:20.
- It brings wrath Romans 4:15.
- It brings death Romans 7:10-11.

We now need the Law to *restrain* our sin.

 In this sense, the law is for evildoers, as an external restraint – 1 Timothy 1:9-10.

The Law <u>cannot</u> SAVE us (not even the sacrifices and rituals).

- It cannot impart life Galatians 3:21.
- The rituals can make nobody perfect Hebrews 7:19; 10:1. (Sin has already ruined that possibility.)
- It cannot clear the conscience of the worshippers Hebrews 9:9.
- It cannot take away sin Hebrews 10:4, 11.
- Those who pursue the Law's righteousness will fail to attain it Romans 9:31.

The "works of the Law" <u>cannot</u> JUSTIFY us (i.e., change sinners into righteous people).

- They cannot justify us Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16.
- They can only make us aware of sin Romans 3:20.

Even so, the Law <u>can</u> point us to JESUS, who can save/justify us.

- The Law's "end" (goal) is to point to Christ Romans 10:4. (The sacrifices and rituals have accomplished their purpose!)
- The "works of the Law" can't make us righteous; but they can point to our need to trust Jesus for righteousness – Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16.
- The Law and the Prophets testify to a righteousness that is apart from Law – Romans 3:21.
- The Law leads us to Christ (so that we can be justified by faith) – Galatians 3:24.

God saves us so that we can do good works (Ephesians 2:10). He also gives us his law, so that we can learn what good works are!

If we turn to God for salvation, the original purpose of the Law can once again take effect in our lives!

Jesus accomplishes what the Old Covenant sacrifices can't accomplish.

- Through Jesus, we can be justified from everything the Law couldn't justify us from Acts 13:39.
- Jesus *can* make us perfect... forever Hebrews 10:14. (This is a perfection that is related to holiness.)

It requires trusting God (instead of our own efforts) to save us.

- We need to live by *faith*, trusting God to save us Galatians 3:11.
- Those who do this will inherit the earth (just like Abraham) Romans 4:13.
- Choosing to try "justification by the Law" is equivalent to abandoning God's saving grace Galatians 5:21.

THE PURSUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS: IT'S STILL AN OBLIGATION.

Faith in Jesus does NOT remove the obligation; but makes fulfilling it possible.

It's an obligation.

- We are to pursue it (as Paul instructed Timothy) 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22.
- Those who don't do what is righteous are NOT from God 1 John 4:6.

God makes it possible.

- Trying to establish our own righteousness won't work Romans 10:3.
- It requires faith in Jesus Christ Galatians 2:16.

Our attitude toward the law changes.

 God embeds his law within our hearts/minds; he gives us both the ability and the desire to do it – Hebrews 10:16; Philippians 2:13.

Anyone who is NOT living for righteousness is living for sin.

Our actions are a response of <u>obedience</u> – and we are a slave to the one we obey.

- One master leads to death; the other to righteousness-Romans 6:16.
- We are to respond as people who have been brought into <u>life</u> not as spiritually *dead* people. This means offering ourselves as instruments of *righteousness* – Romans 6:13.
- If we are saved, then we must live as <u>saved</u> (not dead) people!

This obedience to righteousness *doesn't* mean we are "getting saved by works."

• We have already seen that salvation is by grace, through faith, not works... – Ephesians 2:8-9 ... and that, in salvation, we were created for good works – Ephesians 2:10.

Our righteousness is to be <u>lived-out</u>, not merely "believed."

We must not only "hear" the Law... we must "do" it!

- If we want to be righteous Romans 2:13.
- If we want to be blessed James 1:25.

Bad examples (knowing truth is not enough):

- Cain He even had direct communication with God (see Genesis 4); but his actions were evil 1 John 3:12.
- Demons They believe the facts about God; but do not live based on those facts James 2:19.

Good examples (knowing and living the truth):

- Abraham He was righteous, because he trusted God apart from works – Romans 4:3 (applied to us – Romans 4:4-5). He also lived, based on that fact – James 2:21-23.
- Also, Rahab *lived*-out her new-found faith by protecting the spies – James 2:25.

Obedience to <u>attain salvation</u>... or obedience <u>because of salvation</u>? They are incompatible OPPOSITES!

Obeying the law to earn salvation: A guaranteed failure.

 It requires us to *live* by those laws – Romans 10:5. Our opportunity to *live* by the law <u>ended</u> when we first sinned.

IF it had been possible ...

- ✓ Then righteousness would come through the law [which it doesn't and can't] – Galatians 3:21.
- AND Christ's death would NOT have been necessary – Galatians 2:21.

Living by faith, resulting in obedience: We can do it!

- It requires us to *live* by faith Romans 1:17.
- Obedience is now possible, as the *result* of *living* by faith.
- ✓ Paul calls it the "obedience of faith" Romans 1:5; 16:26.

< Your MISSION >

Pursue the righteousness that comes through <u>faith</u> and results in good works.

That is what God saves and empowers us for!

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Explosions 2:10 (NIV)

Credits

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