

Christ and the Law

Scripture Reading: Galatians 3:6-14, 21-26

Paul shows us what place the Law has in bringing us to Christ and a pure relationship with God. Salvation is free to us, but it cost Christ everything.

Galatians 3:6-9 – God established, through Abraham, the truth that we can only be justified by faith, not by works. Salvation is by grace through faith. This salvation blessing will extend from the descendants of Abraham to eventually, people from all families of the earth.

Galatians 3:10-12 – To depend on the works of the law for justification is to be under the law's curse. For all men fail to keep it.

Galatians 3:13-14 – Christ, who had no sin and had no curse, came to fulfill the law Himself and then receive our curse. Christ's substitutionary death on the cross redeemed us / bought us back from sin's curse. Now, by faith in Christ, we can be saved by grace through faith.

Galatians 3:21-24 – The law was never intended to give people a right standing with God. By showing us our sin, the law directed us to Christ, so that we would seek His mercy, grace, and forgiveness by faith.

Galatians 3:25-26 – Having a right standing with God by faith in Christ, we do not seek the law for justification. Rather, God's Spirit, living in us, will direct us to walk according to God's will. See Galatians 5:22-25; Romans 8:1-5; II Corinthians 5:17,21.

The 10 Commandments – Why were they given?

The ten commandments are more than rules to control us. The Law is one of God's ways of teaching us.

The story of Israel in bondage to Egypt.

The Egyptians were not only cruel masters, but they were also spiritually blind – not knowing God. They worshipped 3,000 gods (one for each city in Egypt).

When God delivered Israel out of Egypt, He not only delivered them from physical slavery, but also from spiritual slavery. Consider Satan's slavery of those who do not know Christ (Ephesians 2:1-3; II Timothy 2:24-26). God had to show Israel what He was like and how to live for Him – and not to live in service of false gods, or to the will of men who do not know or love God.

The 10 Commandments show us what God is like.

- God is Holy – different than other gods / religions / philosophies. He is eternal, perfect, all-powerful, all-knowing, and hates all sin.
- God is Good. – righteous and pure.
- God is Love – merciful, loving, and forgiving.

When God delivered Israel from Egypt, He was delivering them, not just from the hard lifestyle of slavery, He was delivering them from the influence of sin and spiritual darkness. See Deuteronomy 33:2b – 3a; John 8:34; Galatians 1:3-4; Romans 12:2; I John 2:15-17; 5:4-5,19-21.

The 10 Commandments show us what God wants.

- God wants us to be holy, like Him – different than others (I Peter 1:15-16).
- God wants us to be good / to speak and live well – to have godly, productive lives, not ruined by sin. Think of how important it is to identify poisonous berries, so that we don't eat them (Romans 3:20b; Psalm 19:7-11; 119:9,11,24,104-105,130; Romans 6:23). If we heed God's law, it will protect us from evil.
- God wants us to be filled with His love / controlled by His love – not selfish, but kind, caring, giving (Matthew 22:36-40).
- God wants us to come to His Son – Jesus Christ. The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:22-24; Romans 3:19-26).
- After that, God wants us to walk with His Son and to become like His Son (Romans 8:29; Matthew 11:28-30; II Corinthians 3:18; 5:17; Galatians 2:20).

This message was given on Palm Sunday, 2023, as an introduction to a children's presentation of The Ten Commandments.