

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

THROUGH; DEAD; AND ALIVE

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

Galatians 2:19

There is probably no greater area of confusion among the multitude of those who claim to be the followers of CHRIST, than the purpose, function, and nature of the Law as given by the LORD to the sons of men. When one mentions "the law" among most who would fancy themselves as being Bible scholars and students of one type or another, their mind is usually drawn to consider what have been come to be called the "Ten Commandments".

Now it is indeed true that the commandments given to Moses are surely "the law" in a codified form. Yet it is necessary to a proper understanding of "the law" that we do not define "the law" as simply and exclusively those decrees which were given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Most especially that we do not limit it to the "Ten Commandments". For the LORD gave to Moses a much more detailed and comprehensive expanse of directives than these ten. Then the LORD clearly revealed the far reaching expanse of the Law of the Kingdom of GOD, which more plainly manifests the utter impossibility of any man to find a place of comfort in his supposed ability to keep the law.

The codified form of the law was only given to the house of Israel, "*What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*" (Rom 3:1-2; see Acts 7:38) Yet it is clear from the scriptures that all men (Jew and Gentile alike) have transgressed the law of GOD, and thereby must be judged as sinners, under the law's condemnation of death. "*The scripture hath concluded all under sin.*" (Gal 3:22)

So we can be sure that the definition of "sin" is not simply the breaking of the Mosaic law, for all men are judged sinners whether they have ever heard or seen the law given to Moses. Paul sets forth this argument quite clearly saying, "*(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*" (Rom 5:13-14)

Sin is never laid to ones account apart from a broken law. Before the Mosaic law was ever given, Adam was under condemnation along with all of his posterity. Thus we can be certain that "the Law" did not come into existence on Mount Sinai but is a principle which is operable from the very beginning. Adam disobeyed GOD and brought death upon the human race in the exact keeping of the decree of GOD who said, "*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" (Gen 2:17)

Thus we see that "the Law" is a principle which men have rebelled against from the very beginning and which can do nothing to aid men except bring them into condemnation, regardless of their good intentions and the glib directives of religious men to instruct other religious men on how to be obedient to the precepts of "the Law." We see the effects of the unveiling of the law to "righteous men", in the illustration of the rich young ruler, who boasted of having kept the law from

his youth. When the LORD revealed “the Law” to him, he went away sorrowing. This is what Paul speaks of (in his own experience) when he says, *“For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.”* (Rom 7:9-11)

So we might ask, what is the purpose of the law? Simply put, I believe it’s main purpose is to reveal sin. Paul said, *“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.”* (Rom 7:7-8) Adam’s sin was revealed as he ate the fruit of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

We might also ask, what is the function of the law? Again, in simple terms we might say, its function is to set the stage for repentance. A man will not repent until he is shown the heinous nature of sin and the ONE against whom all crimes are committed. We see David describing this very truth as he is exercised by the law upon his conscience.. *“For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”* (Psa 51:3-4)

The SPIRIT of GOD uses the law to convince and convict HIS people of their sin. HE reveals to them by the law, their inability to measure up to the lofty standards which GOD demands. *“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. 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.”* (Rom 3:19-20) Only a fool can look at the law of GOD and consider himself in good standing with a HOLY GOD.

Then we ask, what is the nature of the law? Once more in simple terms, the nature of the law is “spiritual”. *“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.”* (Rom 7:14) It comes as no shock to us that carnal religious men look at the law as a “rule of life” or a check list to define “holiness”. However, we confess to being somewhat dismayed (as Paul was with the Galatians) when we see those who seem to have some spiritual “light”, regarding it in the same fashion, as if they can gauge their (or others) obedience by an outward adherence to selected codes and requirements. *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”* (Mat 23:23) *“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?”* (Gal 4:21)

It is with these things in mind that Paul writes to the Galatians, of the work of GOD’s grace to satisfy the law in every jot and tittle for HIS children, through the redemptive work of CHRIST in their behalf. If HE has made them free then they are free indeed.

He says, that he is “dead to the law”; which means that the law has no power to rule over him nor to condemn him, even as a man who is laid in his grave in the cemetery is not subject to the laws of this world. He said, *“I am crucified with CHRIST”*. CHRIST has fulfilled the law in the behalf of HIS elect. HE did so by obeying every precept of the law fully and imputing HIS righteousness to them. HE also did so by taking upon HIMSELF the sin debt owed by each one, and carrying it away for ever as their perfect sin SUBSTITUTE. Thus he says, that he is dead to the law “through the law”, not bypassing it or ignoring it, but by the complete satisfaction of it by CHRIST.

Then he said, “that I might live unto GOD.” The whole purpose of the redemption of the sons of GOD is to give them LIFE in CHRIST, which they could not have in these corruptible bodies. He says “nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Gal 2:20) HE dwells in the sons of GOD, and they walk in HIM by faith, not the law which *“is not of faith.”* mam