

The Law of Christ

"The perfect law of liberty" vs. Religious legalism

1. Salvation is purely by grace not works: (We establish the Law.)

Rom.3:21-31 - A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (also see Romans 1:17, 9:30)

Eph.2:8,9 - By grace (undeserved mercy) are ye saved through faith; it is the gift of God: Not of works

Tit.3:5a - Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us

A. Salvation is not partly by grace & partly by good works:

Rom.11:6 - If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace

B. Salvation was always by grace, even in the Old Testament:

Gen.6:8 - But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord

Gen.15:6 - (Abraham) believed in the Lord; & He counted it to him for righteousness (See also Rom.4:3,5-8,21,22)

Hab.2:4 - The just shall live by his faith

Heb.11:13 - [Old Testament saints] all died in faith...having seen (the promises) afar off...& were persuaded of them

C. Scrupulously keeping the Mosaic law never saved anyone:

Jn.1:17 - Law given by Moses, but grace & truth came by Jesus

Rom.3:20 - By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified

Rom.9:31 - Israel, which followed after the law...hath not attained unto the law of righteousness

Gal.2:16 - A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ (See also Gal.3:11)

Heb.7:19 - The law made nothing perfect, but...a better hope did

2. What was the Mosaic Law?

A. It was a legal code that God gave Moses upon Mt. Sinai:

Exo.24:12 - The Lord said unto Moses, Come up to Me into the mount...& I will give thee a law...[to] teach them

(See also Exo.31:18; 32:15,16,19; 34:1,28.)

B. It was a strict code of justice & retribution:

Exo.21:23-25 - Thou shalt give life for life...eye for eye, tooth for tooth, and hand for hand...burning for burning

Heb.10:28 - He that despised (broke) Moses' law died without mercy

C. The Ten Commandments were not merely "helpful moral guidelines", but strict laws carrying the death penalty:

Exo.20:2,3 - (1) Thou shalt have no other gods before Me [Death penalty: Exo.22:20; Deut.13:1-18.]

Exo.20:4,5 - (2) Thou shalt not make any graven image (Death penalty same as (1). See also Lev.26:1,30; Deut.4:23-26.)

Exo.20:7 - (3) Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain [Death penalty: Lev.24:10-16]

Exo.20:8-10 - (4) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy [Death penalty: Exo.31:14,15; 35:2.]

Exo.20:12 - (5) Honour thy father & thy mother [Death penalty: Exo.21:15,17; Lev.20:9; Deut.21:18-21.]

Exo.20:13 - (6) Thou shalt not kill (murder) [Death penalty: Exo. 21:12; Lev.24:17,21; Num.35:16-31.]

Exo.20:14 - (7) Thou shalt not commit adultery [Death penalty: Lev. 20:10; Deut.22:22.]

Exo.20:15 - (8) Thou shalt not steal [Punishment: Exo.22:7; Pro. 6:30; death penalty: Exo.21:16.]

Exo.20:16 - (9) Thou shalt not bear false witness [Punishment &/or death penalty: Deut.19:16-21]

Exo.20:17 - (10) Thou shalt not covet anything (of) thy neighbours'

Gal.4:21 - Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

D. The Ten Commandments were only the beginning; Moses' law contained hundreds of other commandments:

Deut.27:26 - Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them (See also Gal.3:10) (See also Deut.4:13,14a)

E. It was impossible to avoid guilt or to keep the whole law:

Jam.2:10 - Whosoever shall keep the whole law, & yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

3. The law served a purpose only for a time:

Gal.3:19 - Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions till the Seed (Jesus) came

Gal.3:23 - Before faith came, we were kept under the law

Heb.9:10 - Carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation

A. It was merely a copy, a shadow, of the real thing:

Col.2:16,17 - Sabbath days...are a shadow of things to come; but the body [the reality that casts the shadow] is Christ

Heb.8:5 - The example & shadow of Heavenly things

Heb.9:8b,9 - First tabernacle...a figure for the time then present

Heb.10:1 - The law (had) a shadow of good things to come, & not the very image of the things

1Jn.2:8 - A new commandment...because the darkness is past, & the true light now shineth

B. The law was impossible to keep:

Jn.7:19 - Did not Moses give you the law, & yet none of you keepeth the law? (See also Acts 7:53)

Acts 15:10 - A yoke upon the neck...which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear

Rom.7:14-19 - The law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. How to perform that which is good I find not

C. This showed man he was a sinner in need of grace:

Rom.3:20b - By the law is the knowledge of sin

Rom.7:7 - I had not known sin, but by the law

Rom.3:19 - That...all the world may become guilty before God

Gal.3:24 - The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ
(See also Rom.4:15)

D. The old law was unprofitable & eventually to be replaced:

Rom.8:3 - What the law could not do, in that it was weak

Heb.7:18 - There is verily a disannulling of the [Mosaic law]...for the weakness & unprofitableness thereof

4. Atonement (payment) for breaking the law:

A. Because men constantly broke the law, forgiveness was needed, & a blood sacrifice was required:

Lev.4:1-4 - If a soul shall sin...against the commandments of Lord...bring a (bull)...kill the (bull) before the Lord

Lev.17:11 - It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul

Heb.9:22 - Without shedding of blood is no remission

(See also Lev.6:2,3,6,7; 16:3,5-11,15-22.)

B. But this never permanently freed man from sin:

Heb.10:1-4,11 - It is not possible that the blood of bulls & of goats should take away sins...can never take away sins

C. But Jesus made a perfect & permanent sacrifice:

Mat.26:28 - This is My blood...which is shed for remission of sins

Heb.9:7-14 - By His Own blood...obtained eternal redemption for us

Heb.9:25-28a - Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many

Heb.10:10-12 - We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all

1Pet.1:18,19 - Ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ

1Jn.1:7b - The blood of Jesus Christ...cleanseth us from all sin

(See also Jn.1:29; Rom.5:9.)

5. The new law, the law of Christ:

A. God promised a new law to replace the old Mosaic law:

Jer.31:31-33 - The days come that I will make a new covenant...I will...write (My law) in their hearts

Heb.8:7-10 - Finding fault with (that first covenant), He saith, I will make a new covenant

B. Names of the new law:

A new covenant(Jer.31:31); the law of faith(Rom.3:27); the law of the Spirit of life(Rom.8:2); the law of righteousness(Rom.9:31); the law of Christ(Gal.6:2); the new testament(Heb.9:15); the perfect law of liberty(Jam.1:25); the royal law(Jam.2:8); the holy commandment(2Pet.2:21).

C. Jesus' death on the cross fulfilled & ended the law:

Mat.5:17 - I am not come to destroy (the law), but to fulfil

Jn.19:30 - (Jesus) said, It is finished [When He died for our sins, the Mosaic law ended for believers]

Rom.10:4 - For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth

Col.2:14 - Blotting out [wiping the slate completely clean of] the ordinances (the law)...nailing it to His cross

D. The old Mosaic law is now discarded (for believers in Jesus):

Heb.8:13 - He hath made the first (covenant) old. That which decayeth & waxeth old is ready to vanish away

Heb.10:9 - He taketh away first (law), that He may establish second

Heb.8:6 - A better covenant...established upon better promises

E. True believers are no longer bound by the rigid Mosaic law:

Rom.6:14b - Ye are not under the law, but under grace

Gal.3:24,25 - The law was our schoolmaster. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster

1Tim.1:9 - The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless...ungodly...profane...murderers

F. Jesus has liberated us from the Mosaic law:

Rom.7:4 - Ye...are become dead to the law by the body of Christ

Rom.7:6 - Now we are delivered from the law

Rom.8:1,2 - The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin & death

Gal.3:13 - Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law

G. Jesus' Spirit & truth gives us freedom:

Jn.8:36 - If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed

2Cor.3:17 - Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty

Gal.5:1 - The liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free

Gal.5:5 - Through the Spirit...hope of righteousness by faith

Gal.5:18 - If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law

H. Read Jesus' liberating Words to be set free:

Jn.8:31,32 - Ye shall know the truth, & truth shall make you free

Rom.10:17 - Faith cometh by hearing...the Word of God

Jam.1:25 - Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, & continueth therein...shall be blessed in his deed

6. Now the commandment is to love God & our neighbour:

A. This fulfils the law, & fulfils your only obligation:

Mat.7:12 - All things...ye would that men should do to you, do...to them: for this is the law (See Lk.6:31)

Mat.22:36-40 - Thou shalt love God...thou shalt love thy neighbour. On these two commandments (depend) all the law

Rom.13:8 - He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law

Rom.13:10 - Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law

Gal.5:14 - All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself

Jam.2:8 - If ye fulfil the royal law... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well (See also Mk.12:29-31)

B. Deeds done in pure, unselfish love are lawful:

Gal.5:22,23 - Fruit of the Spirit is love...against such there is no law
1Cor.6:12 - All things are lawful unto me (See also 1Cor.10:23)
Tit.1:15a - Unto the pure, all things are pure
Lk.11:41b - Behold, all things are clean unto you

C. But you have to have faith for your actions:

Rom.14:14 - To him that esteemeth (thinks) any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean
Rom.14:22 - Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth
Rom.14:23 - He that doubteth is damned (judged)...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin
Tit.1:15b - Unto (the) defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure

7. Living the new law:

A. In some ways, the law of Christ is stricter than Moses' law:

Mat.5:38-42 - [Exo.21:24 - said:] An eye for an eye, & a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, resist not evil
Mat.5:43-45 - [The law] said, Love thy neighbour, & hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies
Lk.10:25-37 - Thou shalt love...thy neighbour as thyself. Who is my neighbour? [Even those you'd normally dislike]
Jam.4:17 - Him that knoweth to do good & doeth it not...it is sin

B. Only Jesus can give you the power to live His law:

Phi.2:13 - For it is God which worketh in you both to will & to do of His good pleasure
Phi.4:13 - I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me
2Cor.5:14a - The love of Christ constraineth (compels) us
2Cor.12:9 - My (God's) grace is sufficient for thee

8. Warnings against misusing the new law:

A. Selfish, unloving liberties:

Rom.14:15 - If thy brother be grieved...now walkest thou not (in love). Destroy not him with thy [liberty]
Rom.14:20 - All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence
1Cor.6:12 - All things are lawful...but all things not expedient
1Cor.8:9,12 - Take heed lest...this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak (See 1Cor.8:all)
1Cor.10:23 - All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not

B. Walk in love, not in lust & sin:

Rom.6:1,2 - Shall we...sin, that grace may abound? God forbid

Gal.5:13 - Use not liberty as an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another

1Pet.2:16 - As free, & not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God

(See also Rom.3:8; 14:all; 15:1,2.)

9. Beware of falling into religious legalism:

A. The concision: Believers still bound by the law:

Acts 21:20 - Many thousands of Jews...which believe (in Jesus); & they are all zealous of the (Mosaic) law

Phi.3:2,3 - Beware of evil workers, beware of the concision

(See also Acts 15:1,24; Gal.6:12,13; Rom.2:28,29.)

B. Don't be entangled again by the law:

Gal.3:1,3 - Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Gal.5:1 - Stand fast therefore in the liberty...& be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage [to the law]

Col.2:20-22 - If ye be dead with Christ... why are ye subject to ordinances...the commandments & doctrines of men?

C. Legalism is self-righteousness & denies Jesus' sacrifice:

Rom.10:3 - Going about to establish their righteousness, have not submitted unto the righteousness of God

Gal.2:21 - If righteousness come by the law, then Christ (died) in vain (for no reason)

(See also Gal.5:4)

D. The law can't save you or make you righteous:

Acts 13:39 - By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law

Rom.9:31,32 - Israel, which followed after the law...hath not attained to the law of righteousness

Phi.3:3-9 - Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ

E. Those who attempt to obey the law are under bondage:

Gal.3:10 - Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things

Gal.4:21-31 - [The allegory of the two covenants, one of freedom, the other of bondage]

Gal.5:2-4 - [Who tries to keep the law]...is a debtor to do whole law

Jam.2:10 - Whosoever shall keep the whole law, & yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all

10. Trying to legalistically keep the law is not God's will:

A. Legalists completely miss the main issue:

Mat.15:2-6 - Why do Thy disciples transgress tradition of elders? Ye transgress commandment of God by your tradition

Mat.23:23 - Woe! For ye pay tithe of [tiny spices but] have omitted weightier (more important) matters...mercy & faith

Mat.23:24 - Ye...strain at a gnat, & swallow a camel

Mk.7:6-8 - Their heart is far from Me...ye hold the tradition of men, [such] as the washing of pots & cups

Jn.5:8-11 - [Jesus told a lame man, Take up thy bed & walk. The legalists ignored the miraculous healing & told him it was not lawful to carry his bed on the Sabbath]

B. Legalism is a crushing weight to those it is imposed upon:

Mat.23:4 - They bind heavy burdens & grievous to be borne, & lay them on men's shoulders

2Cor.3:6b - The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life

C. The solution: Walk in God's love & Spirit:

Mic.6:8 - What doth the Lord require of thee, but to...love mercy, & to walk humbly with thy God?

Jn.6:63a - It is the Spirit that quickeneth (makes alive); the flesh profiteth nothing

Rom.7:6 - We should serve in newness of spirit, & not in the oldness of the letter [of the law]

2Cor.3:6a - Not...the letter [of the law], but of the Spirit

Gal.6:2 - Bear one another's burdens, & so fulfil law of Christ

11. Even under the Mosaic law, God's love & mercy prevailed:

A. God always wanted love & mercy more than legalism:

Hos.6:6 - I desired mercy, & not sacrifice; & the knowledge of God more than [sacrifices] (See also Mat.12:7)

Mic.6:6-8 - Shall I come before Him with...offerings? What doth the Lord require of thee, but to...love mercy

Mk.12:33 - To love Him with all the heart...& to love his neighbour... is more than all...offerings & sacrifices

(See also Deut.10:12; 1Sam.15:22; Psa.40:6; 51:16,17; 69:30,31; Isa.1:11-16; Jer.7:22,23.)

B. He allowed exceptions & the Mosaic law to be broken:

2Chr.30:1-3 - [King Hezekiah celebrated the passover in second month, in stead of first Exo.12] (Also Num.9:1-11)

2Chr.30:16-18a - Many in the congregation were not sanctified...yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written

2Chr.30:18b-20 - Hezekiah prayed, The Lord pardon every one...though he be not cleansed. The Lord hearkened to Hezekiah

Mat.12:5 - On the Sabbath days the priests...profane the Sabbath, & are blameless (See also Jn.7:22,23)

Mat.12:1-4 - David...did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat (See 1Sam.21:6)

C. Even the highly religious, those bound by the law, broke it:

Exo.31:14,15 - [The Mosaic law:] Whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death

Mat.12:11 - [They pulled their sheep out of a pit on the Sabbath]

Lk.13:15 - [All of them led their ox or ass away to watering then]

Jn.7:22,23 - Ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man

D. Certainly then, we who are not bound by it, can break it:

Mat.12:10-13 - It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days [even if it means breaking the Mosaic law]

Lk.13:11-16 - Ought not this woman...be [freed] on the Sabbath day?

Jn.7:22-24 - [If ye break the Sabbath, why] are ye angry at Me, because I have made a man whole on the Sabbath day?

(See also Jn.9:14-16)

Key chapters: Rom.3,4,5,7,9,10,14; Gal.2-5; Heb.3-11.