

Part Seven –

Six Reasons For The Laws Of The Old Testament

Last time we having been led by Paul to the depths of despair by realising what we are sinners, and **how hopeless are all our efforts to be right with God**; He then gave us a glimpse of the light at the end of this dark tunnel.

Law keeping is **not** the way to being justified by God neither to being glorified by God but faith in what God has already done for us through Jesus Christ.

I now personally feel that legalism is the greatest single problem in the Christian church, and the cause of much of the presumptuous sin in the church.

Psalms 19:13-14 [King James] *“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”*

Lots of sincere and honest people have embraced this set of “do nots”, focusing their attention on them and become enslaved by them.

The way to be pure is **not** to keep resisting lust, **the more we resist a thing, the more it dominates our thinking.**

There is a totally different way of becoming righteous, which is a righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

In this study I want to devote to explaining six reasons why God gave the law; and why it is not the way to gain righteousness.

1 Timothy 1:8-10 [NIV] *“We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made **not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels**, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine”*

This will help us answer future questions which will arise as we continue to study Romans (and other letters that Paul wrote).

When we read “the law” in the New Testament we should **not** limit the term to the Ten Commandments.

Both Christ and the Jews extend “the law” to encompass the writings of Moses and other prophets as well as the Psalms.

Luke 24:25-27, 44-48 [NIV] *“He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” ... “He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: **Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.**” Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is*

what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

Everything written about Christ in the law prophets and psalms, Jesus had to fulfil in His birth, life, death and resurrection.

Matthew 5:17-20 [NIV] ***“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practises and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”***

“fulfil” – bring to an end.

End of what?

The means of becoming righteous or Holy.

The Old Covenant laws and statutes were referred to as the laws of holiness.

Holiness was designated of places, things, seasons and official people [priests], under Old Covenant.

When Christ spoke of fulfilling the law in **Matthew 5:17-20** He was referring to His fulfilling all that was spoken of Him in prophets and Psalms confirming He was the Messiah and the Son of God, as well as fulfilling it in living a perfect sin-free holy life.

Holiness under the New Covenant is being credited with some of Christ's holiness, through faith in Him and the active presence of the Holy Spirit in us.

How then do we use the law correctly?

1. To show us the reality and power of sin

First the diagnosis then the medicine.

It is no good trying to explain to people God's way of salvation unless they have realised they have the disease of sin.

We don't go to a doctor until we realise we are ill.

God works in the same way.

He shows us first that we are sick with an incurable disease, which is sin, and there is only one remedy.

Romans 3:20 [NIV] ***“Therefore no-one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.”***

The law shows us the disease of sin.

The law is God's diagnostic to make us aware of the terminal condition we are in.

The Christian Bible is the only book in the world that can reveal this to us.

This is one of the priceless benefits of the Christian Bible.

Romans 7:7, 12-13 [NIV] *“What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! **Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law.** For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.” ... “So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognised as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, **so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.**”*

Without the law we would **not** know sin, the terminal disease all humanity has.

2. To show us we are unable to achieve righteousness by our own efforts

Paul gives to us his own experience.

Romans 7:18-19 [NIV] *“**I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.** For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do, this I keep on doing.”*

“flesh” [King James] (sarx) “*what is under the skin*” – by implication our human nature – frailties and passions [NIV – “*lives in me*”] inherited from Adam our fleshly father at the same time we have a nature inherited from our heavenly father – [Holy Spirit] each emanating from us in our thoughts and actions.

If we are honest we can all relate to these words of Paul.

Romans 7:20-22 [NIV] *“Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is **sin living in me that does it.** So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law;”*

Sin, a power working within us contrary to our own will and intention.

Romans 7:23 [NIV] *“but I see **another law** at work in the members of my body, waging war against the **law of my mind** and making me a prisoner of the **law of sin** at work within my members.”*

“*captivity*” [King James] a prisoner of war – one who is made to fight against his own side.

From one point of view this passage might be called a demonstration of inadequacies.

a) **Inadequacy of human knowledge** – If to know the right thing was to do the right thing life would be easy, but this is the difference between knowing and doing, morality and true religion.

Morality is knowledge of what to do; a code.

Religion is to know Jesus Christ; a person, and the power He has to make us Holy or righteous.

Romans 7:24-25 [NIV] *“What a wretched man I am! **Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!** So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.”*

It is only when we know, have an intimate relationship with Christ that we are able to do what we know we should.

b) **Inadequacy of human resolution** – To resolve to do is far from doing.

There is in human nature an essential weakness of will, that when faced with facts, problems, difficulties or opposition, fails us, **in accomplishing what we resolve to do.**

c) **Limitations of diagnosis** – Paul quite clearly knew what was wrong, by the law, but was quite unable to put it right.

Hebrews 4:14-15 [NIV] *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin.**”*

Jesus Christ is the only one who not only knows the problem, but can also solve the problem.

Christ offers help **not** criticism.

3. To foretell, foreshadow and lead us to the Saviour [Messiah]

Lead us to the Saviour.

Galatians 3:24-25 [NIV] *“**So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.** Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.”*

Galatians 3:24-25 [Living Bible] *“Let me put it another way, the **Jewish laws were our teacher and guide until Christ came to give us right standing with God through our faith.** But now that Christ has come, we don’t need those laws any longer to guard us and lead us to Him.”*

In this context Paul calls the law a “schoolmaster” [King James].

Greek word used for “schoolmaster” [“tutor” – Message Bible] is Paidagogos [Pahee-dag-o-gos].

This was usually an old and trusted slave who had been with the family a long time and whose character was good.

It was his duty to see that the child ran into no temptation or danger and acquired the basic qualities essential for true manhood.

He had one particular duty, every day he took the child to and from school but had **no** direct part in the child’s education.

Galatians 3:26-28 [NIV] *“**You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.** There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

Paul said this was the job of the law, lead us to Christ the real teacher, where we can “put on Jesus Christ” [King James] “clothed yourselves with Christ” [NIV].

Clothed in Christ’s righteousness not our own.

Example of foretelling

Deuteronomy 18:18-19 [NIV] *“**I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.** If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account.”*

Clear prediction that God was going to raise up in Israel a prophet who would speak His words like Moses did. (There are many parallels between Moses and Jesus).

Example of foreshadowing

Exodus 12:21-23 [NIV] *“Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go at once and select the animals for your families and **slaughter the Passover lamb**. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the door-frame. Not one of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the door-frame and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.”*”

The Passover Lamb

Note: There was here **no** distinction between Israelites or Gentiles, all that was needed was the blood of the lamb on the door post for protection from death angel.

John 1:29 [NIV] *“The next day **John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”***”

Christ fulfils the foreshadowed Passover Lamb.

1 Corinthians 5:7 [NIV] *“Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast, as you really are. **For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.**”*

Christ our Passover in measure all sacrificial laws foreshadowed Christ’s sacrifice.

4. Keep Israel as a separate nation to which the Messiah could come

Galatians 3:23 [NIV] *“Before this faith came, we were **held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.**”*

Jews “shut up” or “locked up” by the law in a special situation ready for the Messiah.

Numbers 23:9 [NIV] *“From the rocky peaks I see them, from the heights I view them. **I see people who live apart and do not consider themselves one of the nations.**”*

Prophetic vision of Israel.

The Jews although scattered among many Gentile nations have never melded into any nation to the extent of losing their identity, for the law (especially the Sabbath and Holy Days) has always set them apart, often causing persecution – this can only be said of Jews.

God had to have a people who were still under the old covenant for Christ to come to as the Messiah and fulfil the law.

Matthew 5:17-18 [NIV] *“**Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them.** I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”*

For example, Christ could **not** have come to a nation like China who practice ancestor worship or else he would have had in order to obey his parents worship a false God.

So God had to prepare a nation where the Messiah could grow up obeying his parents and still fulfil all the ordinances of the law.

5. To provide mankind with an example nation governed by just and humane laws

Nehemiah 9:13 [NIV] *“You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right, and decrees and commands that are good.”*

In our world today all nations that have a code of law that preserves human integrity and morality can trace those laws back to the law given by God through Moses to Israel.

The law established a pattern to which all other nations could look to see what it would be like to be a nation governed by just laws.

6. Provide mankind with inexhaustible material for spiritual meditation

Psalms 1:1-2 [Living Bible] *“Oh the joys of those who do not follow evil men’s advice, who do not hang around with sinners, scoffing at the things of God. But the delight in doing everything God wants them to, and day and night are always meditating on His laws and thinking about ways to follow Him more closely.”*

Meditate on Jesus Christ’s words day and night the result of this meditation is a fruitful and profitable life.

Psalms 1:3 [Living Bible] *“They are like trees along a river bank bearing luscious fruit each season without fail. Their leaves shall never wither, and all they do shall prosper.”*

The key to success is what you meditate on.

Phillipians 4:4-8 [NIV] *“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, **think about such things.**”*

“Think about such things” – referring to the Holy Spirit inspired teaching of the apostle Paul.

When we know who the Passover Lamb is the meditation on Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the law becomes profitable to us, for it has guided us to Jesus Christ.

This is how we use the law properly.