

THE TWO WAYS **“The Laws of God”¹**

Exodus 19:16-20

- 16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.
- 17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.
- 18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.
- 19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.
- 20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. KJV

Exodus 20:1-20

- 1 And God spake all these words, saying,
- 2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
- 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:
- 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;
- 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
- 7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
- 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
- 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
- 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.
- 12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
- 13 Thou shalt not kill.
- 14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- 15 Thou shalt not steal.
- 16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

¹ For a fuller treatment of the laws of God, see our resource *The Ten Commandments*.

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.
18 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.
19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.
20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. KJV

These are the Ten Commandments and they are the root of what is referred to as the Old Covenant. They were originally spoken by God from Mount Sinai. Direct relation with God scared the people so badly that they asked Moses to intercede for them. They could not bear the voice of God.

Even though this is the first time we see them in codified fashion in Scripture, God's requirements were well known to the patriarchs.

Genesis 26:4-5

4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;
5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. KJV

Abraham obeyed God and kept His commandments, statutes, and laws. The word translated "commandments" is the Hebrew word mitzvah. Mitzvah is a major foundational ideal of Judaism.

"An act performed in agreement with God's will is called a *mitzvah*. Its definition cannot be accurately conveyed in any other language because it combines so many different shades of meaning. It includes not only the commandment, but also the *law*, the *obligation* to fulfill the law as well as the *act* of fulfilling it. Next to *Torah*, it is the most basic term in the language of Judaism, serving as the general name for both positive (*mitzvot aseh*) and negative commandments (*mitzvot lo taaseh*).²

We know from Romans 4 that the promise came to Abraham by faith. And yet we read here in Genesis that it was because of Abraham's observance of God's laws that Isaac stood to receive the blessing.

Hosea 4:6

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children. KJV

Abraham did not ignore the law of God, so God did not ignore the children of Abraham.

² Simon Glustrom, *The Language of Judaism*, Jonathan David Publishers, New York, © 1966 by Simon Glustrom, p. 2. Emphasis in original.

Exodus 31:18

And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God. KJV

God inscribed the words of the covenant with His own finger. He had already spoken this word to the children of Israel. These laws were meant to guard them and teach them the fear of the Lord that they might prosper in their way. What happened?

Exodus 32:1-10

- 1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.
- 2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.
- 3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.
- 4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.
- 5 And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD.
- 6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.
- 7 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:
- 8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.
- 9 And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:
- 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. KJV

*Have you ever turned to your spouse and said, "Do you know what your kid did today?" God says to Moses, "**Your** people, whom **you** brought out of Egypt." Then He basically tells Moses to get out of the way so that He can destroy them. "Forget all of them," God said, "I'll wipe them out and start all over with you."*

Exodus 32:11-16

- 11 And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?
- 12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.

- 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.
- 14 And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.
- 15 And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.
- 16 And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. KJV

These tablets were not as we generally see them represented. They were small enough to fit in the hand of Moses. And they were not written half on one tablet and half on the other. Each tablet had a full copy of the Ten Commandments in accordance with the custom of the day. Each party of a covenant would receive a copy of the language of the covenant (we do the same today with contracts though covenants are more serious in nature than contracts). One tablet was God's copy, the other Israel's.

Exodus 32:19-28

- 19 And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.
- 20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.
- 21 And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?
- 22 And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief.
- 23 For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.
- 24 And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.
- 25 And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:)
- 26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.
- 27 And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.
- 28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. KJV

Though Pentecost was a harvest feast, it also was seen by the Jews as a commemoration of the handing down of the Law from Mount Sinai. This Law being handed down resulted in the death of about three thousand people. For this reason, among others, Romans 8:2³ refers to this law as "the law of sin and death." But sin and death are not all that God associates with His law.

³ Rom. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. KJV

Psalms 1:1-3

- 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
- 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
- 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. KJV

Psalms 19:7-11

- 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.
- 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.
- 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
- 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. KJV

Psalms 78:1-4

- 1 Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
- 2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:
- 3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.
- 4 We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. KJV

Psalms 119:29 “Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.” KJV

Ps 119:165 “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” KJV

Psalms 119:96-100

- 96 I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.
- 97 O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.
- 98 Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.
- 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.
- 100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. KJV

Psalms 119:127-128

- 127 Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.
- 128 Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way. KJV

But we move in the prophetic, you may protest

Prov 29:18 NIV

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.

Lamentations 2:9

Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the LORD. KJV

Ezek 7:26

Calamity upon calamity will come, and rumor upon rumor. They will try to get a vision from the prophet; the teaching of the law by the priest will be lost, as will the counsel of the elders. NIV

An understanding of the law will deepen our prophetic insight. Much of the call of prophets is to call God's people back to Him and His holiness. How are we to understand His holiness without an appreciation of the Law?

With all the testimony we have of the blessings of the law in the Old Testament, why does it seem to have such a bad reputation in the New Testament? If it is the law of sin and death, do I need to read it? Should I teach it to my children? These are all good questions.

We know that a vast majority of the New Testament was penned by the Apostle Paul. Many have postulated that he was influenced by Greek thought and that it led him astray from the precepts he was brought up with. The cultural amalgamation resulted in what we call the New Testament, some would argue. I beg to differ. Much of what you will read in the New Testament about no longer being under the Law was written by Paul. But we need a correct perspective on what the Law meant to him.

Acts 22:3

I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. KJV

Acts 22:12-16

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. KJV

Acts 24:14-16

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. KJV

Acts 25:8

While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all. KJV

Acts 28:23

And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. KJV

Clearly, the Law was important to the Apostle Paul. The question is not the veracity of the Law. The question is its application. What was God's intent for the Law?

Matthew 22:36-40

36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. KJV

Loving God is the great commandment. Thus, to love God is the commandment's purpose. We are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. This is what John tells us.

1 John 5:3

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. KJV

What is the problem with the law? It is a question of conscience.

Romans 2:14-15

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) KJV

Even without a codified law, because we are made in the image of God, our conscience speaks out. But with the codified law, we become conscious of sin.

Romans 3:20

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. KJV

Hebrews 10:1-2

1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. KJV

Because the Law prescribed and proscribed actions for the flesh, it could not clear the conscience of the worshipper. The more man followed the law, the more he became aware of his sins. The more sinful he became, the more he died. But what was God's intent for the covenant He wrote in stone?

Jeremiah 31:33-34

33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. KJV

Hebrews 10:16

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; KJV

1 John 2:27

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. KJV

Romans 2:29

But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. KJV

2 Corinthians 3:3

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. KJV

God's desire was to have this law written in our hearts that we might not sin against Him (Ps. 119:11). Remember, to love God is to keep His commandments. And we are to love God with all our heart, soul, and strength.

Romans 7:21-8:2 KJV

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

- 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.
- 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?
- 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.
- 1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.
- 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:7-10

- 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.
- 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
- 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.
- 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. KJV

God desires us to have the law in our spirit bolster our mind in order that we do not obey the law of sin in our flesh. By the Holy Spirit, we work from the spirit out, not the flesh in.

Acts 2:36-41

- 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.
- 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?
- 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.
- 40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.
- 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. KJV

On the day of Pentecost, God got His about three thousand back. The law was written in their hearts and men and women were empowered by the cross to no longer live after the flesh.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

- 13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.
- 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. KJV