

God said to Abraham:
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.
Genesis 26:4-5

GOD'S LAW ETERNAL-2

Credit must go to appreciatively to Pastor Jim Staley for providing many of the insights that will be passed along to you in this chapter. This is a discussion of Christ's grace the concept of which requires familiarity with Old Testament writings & Mosaic Law. More specifically, it requires an understanding of God's divorce from the northern 10 tribes along with the legal ramifications of that event.

And I saw,
when for all the causes
whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery
I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce;
yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not,
but went and played the harlot also.
Jeremiah 3:8

This is the biblical law regarding divorce as spoken by Moses:

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her,
and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes,
because he hath found some uncleanness in her:
then let him write her a bill of divorcement,
and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.
2 And when she is departed out of his house,
she may go and be another man's wife.
3 And if the latter husband hate her,
and write her a bill of divorcement,
and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house;
or if the latter husband die,
which took her to be his wife;
4 Her former husband, which sent her away,
may **NOT** take her again to be his wife,
after that she is defiled;
for that is abomination before the Lord:
and thou shalt not cause the land to sin,
which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.
Deuteronomy 24:1-4

In spite of the stipulation that re-marriage is not possible, God made the following promise to Israel:

They say,
If a man put away his wife,
and she go from him,
and become another man's,
shall he return unto her again?
shall not that land be greatly polluted?
but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers;
yet return again to me, saith the Lord.
Jeremiah 3:1

For centuries the question remained unresolved as to just how it was possible for this promise to be fulfilled given the fact that God would never break the conditions of divine law. Yet, neither does He break His promises. Upon divorce from God, Israel was branded a sinful, cursed adultress. How could God remarry her while continuing to observe the stipulations of Mosaic law? Paul explained the caveat:

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth;
but if her husband be dead,
she is at liberty to be married to whom she will;
only in the Lord.
1Corinthians 7:39

The husband must die for the wife to no longer be classified an adultress & to be at liberty to remarry 'whomever she will'. This was in fact a significant reason Christ sacrificed his life, to allow Israel to once again be restored to her position as the bride of Christ.

According to Mosaic law, marriage unites twain into one flesh. Therefore, imperfect Israel could now acquire justification before God on the basis of her husband's perfect record. Throughout his writings Paul consistently referred to the resolution of this great legal quandary as the 'mystery solved'. This also explains why Christ instructed his disciples to seek out the lost children of Israel to give them the ***good news*** that through his sacrifice they were finally granted the opportunity to become justified before God once again. ***THIS is the grace of Christ.***

Clearly, no amount of law-keeping could have purchased the redemption of the house of Israel, only the love of the Messiah. As you can see, it simply does not logically follow that the grace of Christ brought Mosaic law into obsolescence.

Those who claim that Christ's first mission granted us freedom from God's Old Testament laws base their doctrinal reasoning on scriptures taken from letters of the apostle Paul. However, the reality is that Paul himself never meant to suggest that Mosaic Law had lost its relevance following the crucifixion. What Pastor Staley teaches is that the source of confusion can be traced to the fact that many of the Jews to whom Paul was in correspondence were observing

another set of rules known as the 'Oral Laws'. These were a set of ordinances that had been developed over a period of many years throughout the period of the diaspora & were compensatory to the Mosaic statutes.

When Assyria dispersed the people of Samaria &, later, when Babylon dispersed the Judeans throughout foreign territories, believing Israelites could no longer properly observe Mosaic rituals & holy days. The Judean priesthood responded to this predicament by establishing their own set of compensatory regulations. Over time these man-made regulations were characteristically inconsistent with, if not wholly antithetical to, Mosaic law. The dispensers of this brand of law at the time of Christ were of course the Edomic Pharisees. Today they are called Rabbinic Jews & the rabbinic laws themselves are documented in their Talmud.

When Christ expressed anger that the 'traditions of men' had replaced the commandments of God he was in fact saying that the oral contrivances had usurped preeminence over Mosaic law. The oral law in Christ's assessment was not merely inferior to God's vision, but placed unnecessary 'grievous' & fear-provoking burdens on the people that tried to observe them. The 'heart' of God to teach mercy & compassion & to transform the human spirit through law was wholly omitted in the petty & burdensome compensatory requirements of Pharisaic teachings. When discussing God's law, this is what Paul had to say:

For we know that the law is spiritual....
Romans 7:14

In Psalms we read:

The law of the LORD is perfect,
converting the soul:
the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple.
Psalm 19:7

Many of our institutions interpret the writings of Paul, & sometimes even the words of Christ, as suggesting that Mosaic law had outlived its usefulness because of the sacrifice Christ made. They commonly cite the fact that legal observance alone could never reconcile Israel to God. While it is unequivocally correct that dead works cannot evoke justification, it simply does not logically follow that Mosaic law has no viable function outside of the justification process. I'm going to try to explain several commonly quoted passages from the Word that have often been misrepresented to support the view that Mosaic law no longer serves as a necessary plumbline to elucidate this point.

For the law was given by Moses,
but grace & truth came by Jesus Christ.
John 1:17

This scripture is often used to make the claim that Christ's gift was the replacement of the law. Allow me to switch out a couple of nouns here to illustrate that this just isn't so:

For the coffee was given by Jane,
but the cake & cookies came by her sister Sara.

Does this help you to understand that possibly John was suggesting a completion of the salvation scenario as opposed to the replacement of one of its aspects for another? Let's move on.

19-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.
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.
Romans 3:19-20

What Paul was stating here about law is very limited in scope & we can all be in agreement about it--the fact that try as we might, we are not capable of fulfilling the law perfectly & therefore we can never be justified before God through our legal observances.

What it does NOT say is that the law has no role to play in the salvation process. It simply says that we can never be justified through the law alone. How can we know that Paul did not abandon all functional application of Mosaic law. Well for one thing, he said it!

30 Seeing it is one God,
which shall justify the circumcision by faith,
and uncircumcision through faith.
31 **Do we then make void the law through faith?**
God forbid : yea, we establish the law.
Romans 3:30-31

The reality is that Paul 'established the law' consistently throughout his writings. How? Through his extensive discussions on sin. Whenever Paul was speaking about sin, he was applying God's legal plumbline to determine what was sinful & what was not.

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.
Romans 7:7

For this ye know, that **no** whoremonger, nor unclean person,
nor covetous man, who is an idolater,
hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ
and of God.
Ephesians 5:5

Grace made salvation attainable to Israel, God's elect, when it wasn't attainable before. By sacrificing his life, Christ set Israel free from the sin of adultery so that she would once again be worthy to become his bride. But there is more to this story. It has to do with the fact that Israel had 'sold' herself into bondage when she betrayed God by serving other gods & had to somehow be 'redeemed'. Again, we must look at Old Testament law to understand the situation correctly:

Laws Of The Kinsman Redeemer

47 “If a stranger or sojourner with you becomes rich,
and your brother beside him becomes poor
and sells himself to the stranger
or sojourner with you
or to a member of the stranger's clan,
48 then after he is sold he may be redeemed.
One of his brothers may redeem him,
49 or his uncle or his cousin may redeem him,
or a close relative from his clan may redeem him.
Or if he grows rich he may redeem himself.
Leviticus 25:47-49

The story of Ruth provides an important review of just how the rules of the kinsman redeemer operated. While Ruth was not indentured to any one person, she was a slave of poverty. Boaz 'bought' her to be his wife-to love, protect & care for her. This beautiful story is recorded in the bible for us to understand the desire of God in our lives.

For thus saith the LORD,
Ye have sold yourselves for nought;
and **ye shall be redeemed without money.**
Isaiah 52:3

In whom we have **redemption through his blood,**
the forgiveness of sins,
according to the riches of his grace....
Ephesians 1:7

But wait! There's more! Prior to the coming of Christ to the earth to assume his role of husband-high priest-legal advocate & king, humankind only had an accuser in the courtroom of heavenly justice, a prosecuting District Attorney. Today we have an advocate-intercessor to fight on our behalf. Yet, for all this evidence of his love & grace, Mosaic law continues to remain humanity's

plumbline. It should be obvious that if Christ himself operated within the parameters of divine law so must we.

On so many levels Christ raised human aspiration as opposed to weakening the standard. If he had simply observed Mosaic Law he would have rid himself of treasonous Israel, but in his love & compassion he chose to save a remnant. Remember what he said to the apostles the evening of his arrest?

A new commandment I give unto you,
That ye love one another;
as I have loved you,
that ye also love one another.
John 13:34

This is the standard of the New Covenant-that we love as he loved us, that we be willing to lay down our lives for one another. Now we graduate from milk to meat. Instead of enacting God's spiritual laws as dead works, we are to etch them in our hearts & perform them out of a mature brand of love. Now, instead of not committing adultery because *you* would be cursed, you wouldn't commit adultery because *someone else* would be hurt.

For this is the covenant
that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,
saith the Lord;
I will put my LAWS into their mind,
and write them in their hearts:
and I will be to them a God,
and they shall be to me a people:
Hebrews 8:10

But now we are delivered from the law,
that being dead wherein we were held;
that **we should serve in newness of spirit,**
and not in the oldness of the letter.
Romans 7:6

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13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats,
and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean,
sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:
14 How much more shall the blood of Christ,
who through the eternal Spirit
offered himself without spot to God,
purge your conscience from dead works
to serve the living God?

Hebrews 9:13-14

I have heard many Christians claim that the law of Moses is no longer necessary because God is now somehow counting on us to have so much love in our hearts that we will simply *want* to enact the laws without having to be commanded to do so. That's very American of God! Certainly He is a little too savvy to leave that kind of decision making to us!

Try thinking of the law as a fail-safe mechanism. Human beings are highly emotional creatures. You may love your society one day & on that day implement community law out of a full heart. The next day, however, you may not 'feel' the love. Thank goodness the law is the law &, no, for everyone's sake you may not pass through the red light.