

Free to Obey God

Central Highlands Church of God

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Jesus says:

“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

John 14:21

**15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments,
16 “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you
another Helper, that He may abide with you forever,
17 “the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive,
because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you
know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.**

John 14:15-17

**“Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those
keeping the commandments of God and the faith of
Jesus”.**

Rev 14:12

What changes does God make to our hearts when His Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside us? What is the new Freedom that we receive as the Children of God? This booklet reveals what the Bible teaches about these questions.

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Introduction

Jesus says: “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” John 14:21

Even in the End Times God wants us to keep His commandments: “Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus”. Rev 14:12

These passages clearly teach that to have a deep and loving relationship with God we need both the faith of Jesus and obedience to the commandments of God. Yet the Bible also reveals that our covenant relationship to God’s commandments changes when we accept Christ as our Saviour. What is this change and how does it affect our life in Christ? We need to carefully examine what God’s Word teaches us about these issues, having an attitude like the Bereans:

These [*the Bereans*] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* if these things were so. 12 Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. Acts 17:11

Jesus has freed us from the body of sin and has given us His Spirit to enable us to walk through the Narrow Gate and on the way that leads to eternal life. This narrow way is positioned between legalism (only law-keeping required) and lawlessness (law-keeping not required). Jesus teaches that lawlessness cuts much deeper than many think:

“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing,

but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

Even so, every good tree produces excellent fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce excellent fruit. Every tree that does not produce excellent fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, in Your name did we not prophesy, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many powerful works?'

And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" Mat 7:12-23

Do you see that Jesus declares that if we are not keep his laws we are practicing lawlessness? If so, we have never truly known him and He will reject us unless we repent¹.

The Good News is twofold. First, we are set free from our sins through the sacrifice of Jesus who took our sins and died the death penalty for us. Then we are given God's Spirit, making us free to obey God and keep His laws.

Let's examine what the Bible teaches about these two extremes and then see what God really gives to us and expects from us as His children.

Legalism

Legalism ignores the need for the sacrifice of Christ and the indwelling of God's spirit. It claims that we can earn our own salvation by meticulously keeping laws, whether commandments of men or even God's Laws. But is this possible?

¹ Taken to its final extreme, lawlessness rejects any semblance of Christian faith as well as rejecting God's Law.

God makes it crystal clear that he does not want us to obey the commandments of men if they conflict with His laws, even those of pious sounding religionists:

Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.” But He answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, ‘Honour your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me has been dedicated to the temple”; is released from honouring his father or mother.’ Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honour Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrine the commandments of men.’²

Mat 15:1-9

The Pharisees created their own set of ‘laws’, claiming these would stop people from breaking God’s Law. The religion that resulted from this is now called Judaism³. Jesus makes it very clear that their approach (man-made laws) will not lead to salvation!

Nor does He want us to follow the laws (or gods) of pagan religions:

² The CHC Publications translation is used throughout this article. It can be downloaded free from our website at www.chcpublications.net

³ The ‘orthodox churches’ such as Roman Catholicism, Greek, Russian, etc have likewise corrupted Christianity, ignoring large segments of God’s Word so they can replace it with their own traditions and ceremonies, often derived from pagan religions.

You shall totally destroy all the places where the nations which you are dispossessing served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. And you shall smash their altars, shatter their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden pillars with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place.

You shall not do these things *which are* against Jehovah your God. Deu 12:2-4

And again:

Take heed to yourself lest you are snared *and* follow them after they are destroyed from before you; and lest you inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I, even I, will do so too.'

You shall not do this to Jehovah your God; for everything Jehovah hates and which He detests they have done unto their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. All the things I command you, be careful to observe; you shall not add to it nor take away from it⁴. Deu 12:30 to 32

So, now we see that God has commanded us to observe only His Laws and no one else's. Does this mean that we can indeed earn eternal life on our own through keeping God's Laws?

The Perfect Law of God

Jehovah, being a perfect God, gave us His Laws, which came from the heart of His being and which were perfect:

The law of Jehovah is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple;

The statutes of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes;

The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of

⁴ See also Acts 14:8 to 18 for a New Covenant rejection of paganism.

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Jehovah are true and righteous altogether.
 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold;
 sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them
 there is great reward. Psm 19:7 to 11

The sure foundation of all of God's Laws are love:

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is *the* great commandment in the law?"

Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love Jehovah your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment.

And the second *is* like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Mat 22:35 to 40

God's Law is so important to Him that He personally came down and spoke to us the framework of His Law as recorded in Exodus 20:1-17:

And God spoke all these words, saying:

"I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"You shall have no other gods before Me.

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, Jehovah your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

"You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain, for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath

of Jehovah your God. You shall do no work in it: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.

“Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which Jehovah your God is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not testify a false witness against your neighbour.

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s house; you shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbour’s.”

These are literally called the Ten Words in the Hebrew Scriptures, though commonly called the Ten Commandments. The rest of God’s law is built on this framework.

Why did God give us His Law?

“And now, Israel, what does Jehovah your God require of you, but to fear Jehovah your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of Jehovah and His statutes which I command you today for your good?

Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to Jehovah your God, also the earth with all that is in it. Deu 10:12 to 14

“Therefore you shall love Jehovah your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always. Deu 11:1

“And it shall be that if you diligently obey My commandments which I command you today, to love Jehovah your God and serve

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Him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.

Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the Lord's anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which Jehovah is giving you.

Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” Deu 11:13 to 19

Verse 10:13 makes it clear: God gave us His Laws for our good. They are true and teach us a righteous way of life. If we keep God's laws, He will bless us. And have another read of Deu 11:18 - God wants us to put His Words into our hearts where they will become a sign on our hands and forehead. These marks surely signify what we do and think. If we are following what God teaches us, the marks are His. If instead we follow Satan (even via his beast) the marks are Satan's.

So God wants everyone to keep His Law. Everyone that is not in a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ is under law, which means they have an obligation to keep God's law through their own efforts. But is that what everyone does? Perhaps the most controversial of the Ten Words is the Sabbath commandment, as that is the one which few people even attempt to keep. Where did it come from and what does it require of us?

The Fourth Word

The fourth of the Ten Words is the Sabbath command. The basics of the entire Ten Words came into existence when God created the Sabbath and made it holy at the end of Creation Week as recorded in Genesis:

Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished.

And on the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Gen 2:1 to 3

Jehovah will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

Those from among you shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; and you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, the Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

“If you turn your foot away from the Sabbath, from doing your own pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, honourable to the holiness of Jehovah, and shall honour it, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking *your own* words, then you shall delight yourself in Jehovah; and I will ride *with* you on the heights of the earth, and provide for you *of* the inheritance of your father Jacob. The mouth of Jehovah has spoken.”

Isa 58:11 to 14

Have you been taught that the Sabbath is a delight and honourable? That God will lift up those who keep it and reveal to them the best things that can be experienced on earth? Are you being taught that the New Covenant commands us to keep it?

For if Jesus had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after this. Therefore there remains the keeping of Sabbaths for the people of God⁵.

For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Heb 4:8 to 12

The command to keep God's Sabbath in Hebrews 4:9 completes the restatement of all ten of the Ten Words in the New Covenant (see Mr 12:32, 1 Jn 5:21, Mat 23:18-23 & Rom 13:8-10).

There is nowhere in Scripture where God transfers the blessings He placed on the Sabbath to another day of the week⁶. And there is every reason to believe that God spent that first Sabbath in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, teaching them and fellowshiping with them. Further evidence that the Sabbath was given to man before Mt. Sinai is given in Exodus 16:1-30. Especially note vs 28: "Jehovah said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?," referring to their disregard for God's Sabbath. Please read the larger context: God asked this question weeks before the covenant was made at Mt Sinai.

God gave His law to humanity two and a half thousand years earlier. Only

⁵ The Greek word hidden in most translations is σαββατισμος (sabbatismos sab-bat-is-mos' (Strong's #4520)) which means "keeping of Sabbaths". The English Standard Version (ESV) does a good translation of this verse.

⁶ The supposed transfer of the Sabbath to the first day of the week was made by the Roman Catholic "church", and has no Biblical support. RC Cardinal Gibbons makes this crystal clear in "Rome's Challenge", available on our website. This article confirms that they are the 'different' power of Dan 7:23 to 25 who try to change God's times (weekly and annual Sabbaths) and law.

parts of it have been recorded for us in Scripture before it was re-given at Mt. Sinai along with the Mosaic Covenant (see Gen 4:4-11, 7:1-3, 26:5, Exo 15:26, etc). Be absolutely clear on this: God first gave His Sabbath to Adam and Eve, and through them to all of humanity. Before they fell, Adam and Eve rejoiced in keeping the Sabbaths with Jehovah. God requires everyone to keep His Sabbath. Defiling God's Sabbath is sin.⁷ God even says that defiling His Sabbaths actually profanes Him:

“The conspiracy of her prophets in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst.

Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.

Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy souls, and to get dishonest gain.”

Ezek 22:25 to 27

Have your prophets and ‘priests’ made these things known to you?

Has anyone tried to use Romans 14:5 and the first half of verse 6 to ‘prove’ that ‘everyday can be a Sabbath’ or ‘all days are the same’ for them? If so, please read these verses in the proper context of all of Romans chapter 14. There was no dispute about whether someone should keep the Sabbath holy. The disputes were about whether a Christian should be a vegetarian and whether they should eat their normal food, a special diet or fast on the Sabbath.

⁷ A detailed study of God's Sabbath (The Sabbath in Scripture) and how it applies to Christians is available at www.chcppublication.net. There are also articles which explain why the Sabbaths begin in Israel and move eastward around the world from there. This results in the seventh-day Sabbath in countries such as Australia and China beginning at dusk Saturday evening rather than dusk Friday as in Israel, Europe, Africa and the Americas.

As the Bible does not specify what they should do in regard to these minor dietary issues, Paul simply advises them to each do what they believe to be right in God's sight and also accept each other's decision in what is really just a personal choice. Again: there is no dispute about actually observing the Sabbath as a day of fellowship with God and fellow believers and a day of rest from our normal work because God clearly requires this. Not keeping God's Sabbath is sin and therefore is not something Paul approves (Rom 6:11-18).

Who Gave us the Law and Covenant at Mt Sinai?

There is also every reason to believe that it was actually Jesus Christ who appeared to Moses and gave him the Mt Sinai covenant:

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were immersed into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink.

For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 1 Cor 10:1 to 4

God had the tablets He engraved with His Ten Words placed inside the ark of the covenant. This shows the importance of the Ten Words to God and symbolizes the placement of them inside our hearts when we become the living temples of God:

“At that time Jehovah said to me, ‘Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain and make yourself an ark of wood. And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke; and you shall put them in the ark.’

So I made an ark of acacia wood, cut two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand.

And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten Words, which Jehovah had spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and Jehovah gave them to me.

Then I turned and came down from the mountain, and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they are, just as Jehovah commanded me.”
Deu 10:1 to 5

Jesus also makes it clear that God’s Law will not come to an end before God’s entire plan of salvation prophesied in the Bible is completed. This will not be complete until the new Jerusalem comes down to earth after the Last Great Judgement:

“Do not think that I came to pull down the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to pull *them* down but to fulfill. Truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, *there* is no way one letter or one dot will pass from the law until all is implemented.”
Mat 5:17-18

Indeed every word of God is vital:

But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
2 Tim 3:14 to 17

So indeed God’s Law is good, but what happens if we fail to keep it?

What is the Curse of the Law?

Some people claim that Galatians 3:13 tells us that God’s Law is a curse. That claim shows a complete misunderstanding of God, the Bible and God’s Laws. Let us read it in context:

For as many as are of works of law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things

which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” But that no one is justified by law in the sight of God is evident, for “The just shall live by faith.”

Yet the Law is not of faith, but “The man who does them shall live by them.”

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Gal 3:10 to 14

If Galatians 3:13 says that God’s Law is a curse it also says that Christ is a curse. Obviously neither of these things are true. Galatians 3:10, only three verses earlier, refutes these claims. It clearly shows that the curse is what people bring onto themselves when they disobey God’s Law. The curse of the law is the sentence of punishment for disobedience (See Deu 27:26, Exo 21:12, 21:16, 31:14, etc). That curse - death for our sins - Jesus took from us and died in our place so we could become righteous in God’s sight. God’s Law itself is not a curse. The curse Jesus took for us was fulfilled when He died, freeing Him from the curse too.⁸

Another scripture that is incorrectly used to claim that God’s Law is somehow evil is Col 2:14. However, an accurate translation of this passage actually confirms the paragraph above:

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of

⁸ The twisted ‘understanding’ of this passage is one of the things Peter warned us about: “Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they also do *to* the rest of the Scriptures.”

your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven all your trespasses, having wiped out the record of our debts to the law that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Therefore let no one but the body of Christ judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths; which are a shadow of things to come.⁹ Col 2:13 to 17

Though God wants us to obey His Laws, He makes it clear that without His spirit living in us, we are not able to put them in our hearts and keep them; thus bringing the curse of sin and death on ourselves. Only Jesus Christ was ever able to keep God's Laws:

“Jehovah your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Also Jehovah your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. And you will again obey the voice of Jehovah and do all His commandments which I command you today.

Jehovah your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For Jehovah will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, if you obey the voice of Jehovah your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, and if you turn to Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

For this commandment which I command you today, it is not too

⁹ The ESV translation of 2:14 is similar to ours, but it does a poor job of vs. 2:16-17, giving it the opposite meaning that Paul gave in the original Greek. More details on God's annual Holy Days are in our article "God's Holy Days for Christians" available at www.chcpublications.net

mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love Jehovah your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and Jehovah your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.

But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.

I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;¹⁰ that you may love Jehovah your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days.”

Deu 30:6 to 20

Let’s clarify this message for anyone who still thinks they can earn their own salvation by always keeping all of God’s Law. God, through Paul, says:

“What then? Do we excel? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks to all be under sin, just as it is

¹⁰ Legally, the Mt Sinai covenant was literally a ministry of death for those that disobeyed it as it included the death penalty for some sins that were to be administered by the government and citizens of the nation of Israel (Lev 20:2). But as Christians, we are now ambassadors of Christ, not truly citizens of any earthly nation, and thus we are not to administer such death penalties. Instead, we offer reconciliation with God, and thus freedom and life (2 Cor 5:17 to 6:2).

written: “There is no one righteous, no, not one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.

All have turned aside; *they* have become worthless together; there is not one who does good, no, not one.” Rom 3:9 to 12

Also Romans 3:23 says: for **all** have sinned and come short of the glory of God,

So we must admit that we are unable to save ourselves. None of us have ever managed to keep even the Ten Words faultlessly. And the penalty for sin is death. But our wonderful God can convert our hopeless situation into a victory:

“And when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, then the word which is written will occur: “Death was swallowed up in victory.”

O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor 15:54 to 57

Salvation and the New Covenant through our Great High Priest

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Heb 4:14 to 16

“Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a

change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.”

Heb 7:11 to 19

So the law made nothing perfect; -for we contained the law of sin and death within ourselves. God’s Law remained a written code outside of us. We were not able to always keep God’s perfect Laws. Indeed, God tells us that He added burnt offerings and sacrifices, administered by the Levitical Priesthood, to his covenant made at Mt Sinai because of ongoing sin:

“For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices, but this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people, And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’

Yet they did not obey or incline their ear...” Jer 7:22 to 24

And now Jesus has terminated the covenant given at Mt. Sinai with its temporary laws, ordinances and ceremonies, sanctifying us and placing God’s pure laws inside us that love Him:

“...once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

For law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshippers, once purged, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year, for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you had no pleasure.

Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come; in the volume of the book it is written of Me; to do Your will, O God.’ “

Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to law), then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He eliminates the first that He may establish the second.

By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once.

And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.

For by one offering He has completed forever those who are being sanctified.

And the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after

those days, says Jehovah: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” then He adds, “Their sins and their lawlessness I will remember no more.”

Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” Heb 9:26 to 10:23

“You are manifestly an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Cor 3:3 to 6

Have you grasped what Paul is saying in 2 Corinthians? He is not saying that the Ten Words are abolished. He is saying that now they are written in our hearts. No longer are they external words carved into stone that we could not keep, now they are alive at the core of our being. The Spirit of the living God who now lives in us has brought God’s law with him and enables us to obey it. This wondrous event was prophesied long ago through Ezekiel:

“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols.

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart

of flesh.

I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you.

And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations.

Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations.” Ezek 36:25 to 31

The Hebrew passages tell us God’s law will be placed inside us. Ezekiel is more specific as it identifies God’s statutes and judgements as part of what is to be put into our hearts¹¹.

The new spirit in us is one of unity, both with God and each other:

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh; who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands; that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has removed the middle wall of division between us, having inactivated in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in decrees, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the enmity.

¹¹ This corresponds with the “ink” of 2 Cor 3:3 on the previous page.

And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. Eph 2:11 to 22

In this Ephesians passage, note that it is the decrees of the Mt Sinai covenant that have been inactivated by Christ's death as He was one of the covenanters. It is essential to understand the difference between God's Law and the covenants. God's Law can be compared to the laws of the government of a country. These laws underlie all legal contracts, as an agreement that breaks the law of that country cannot be enforced. A covenant is a legal contract that is made between citizens of that country or even between citizens and the government and is binding until the death of the covenanters. Though it is a legal contract, it is not the law. When God spoke His Ten Words at Mt Sinai, He was making sure they knew the framework of His Law underlying the covenant He was about to make with them. The reality is that God's Law underlies every covenant that He makes, including the New Covenant. Bringing the Sinai covenant to an end does not remove even a single letter from God's Law, just as Jesus said.

The decrees of separation were part of the covenant put in place at Mt. Sinai to help protect the Israelites from corruption through the idolatrous nations surrounding them (Lev 20:22 to 24). Now that the Gentiles are also being saved through Jesus, that separation is no longer needed though the decrees remain in God's Word as an ongoing warning of the dangers of idolatry. Also note that the covenants of promise are still in effect, such as God's covenants with Noah, Abraham and David. They continue because they were made with the Father, who never died.

Justification is through Christ alone

Justification is being cleansed of all sins and then being placed in a righteous relationship with God. God makes it clear that justification is only possible through the Cross of Christ:

But we know that all the Law says, it speaks to those in the Law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be under judgement before God, because by works of law no flesh will be justified before Him, for through law is the full knowledge of sin.

But now *the* righteousness of God is revealed apart from law, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ to all and on all those believing. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,

being justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to display His righteousness, because in His toleration God had passed over the sins that had occurred before, to display His righteousness at the present time, for He is being just and the justifier of the one who has the faith of Jesus.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but through *the* law of faith.

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law. Rom 3:19 to 28

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Cor 5:21

“let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.

This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Acts 4:10 to 12

So, no one but Jesus Christ can save us from sin. We could not save ourselves by keeping God’s Law. Nor could we ever earn forgiveness for our sins by our own actions. But does that mean that now that we are in Christ we no longer need to keep God’s Laws? What does God’s word say about that? -The Bible warns us that this direction leads to lawlessness, which leads to the second death in the Lake of Fire. Do you remember these words of Jesus?

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of My Father in heaven.

“Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, in Your name did we not prophesy, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many powerful works?’

“And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’¹² Mat 7:21 to 23

It is likely that these people did do these works, but their rejection of God’s Law and consequent disobedience to it has disqualified them from the reward they had expected. The works sound like those of the modern Pentecostal movement. Sadly, many of these ‘Pentecostals’ actually refuse to keep even God’s annual Holy Day of Pentecost because they have been incorrectly taught that God’s law is a curse from which they have been set free. Yet they are happy to keep pagan ‘holydays’ like Easter and Christmas which God condemns: Eastre is the pagan Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and fertility: Easter is a corruption of God’s Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread and actually denies that Jesus kept the sign that proves He is our risen

¹² Lawlessness is translated from ἀνομία (anomia an-om-ee’-ah, meaning no law, lawlessness. (Strong’s # 458)) It is also translated lawlessness in the ESV and NKJV.

Saviour¹³. Christmas Day is just the pagan ‘Day of the Invincible Sun’ with a little bit of whitewash on it: Jesus was born in the autumn, not on Christmas day.¹⁴ All of this nonsense is lawlessness and spiritual adultery.

God has more to say about lawlessness:

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they may all be condemned; who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.

¹³ This is the Sign of Jonah (Mat 12:38-42). God’s calendar reveals that Jesus died on a Wednesday, was put into the tomb that evening and rose at the end of the Sabbath on Saturday evening, exactly fulfilling this sign. This is explained in *God’s Calendar and the Sign of Jonah*, also at www.chcpublications.net

¹⁴ More detail on this is in our *Holy Days for Christians* article and “*The Two Babylons*” book, both on our website.

But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.

And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 2 Thes 2:9 to 3:7

We hope and pray that many of these people will awaken from their deception, repent and not be condemned. Then they can rejoice in the truth of Christ and the purity of His Spirit and love.

By the way, over the last two thousand years there has always been a small remnant of Christ's followers who have kept the traditions taught by the Apostles, which include rejoicing in God's weekly and annual Sabbaths.

What does Jesus want with us?

He wants to engrave His Laws in our hearts:

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.

Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming," says Jehovah, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them," says Jehovah.

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel:

After those days,” says Jehovah, “I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

None of them shall teach his neighbour, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know Jehovah,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawlessness I will remember no more.”

In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Heb 8:6 to 13 (also read Jer 31:33-34)

This is the second time in Hebrews that we are told that God is putting His Laws into our hearts. Can you remember that in Deu 10:16 (quoted on page 7) God told us to put His laws in our hearts? We were not able to do so. Only Jesus Christ achieved this. Now God’s Spirit has done for us what we could never do ourselves. This is another aspect of being under grace.

As we have seen above, what is vanishing away includes the burden of animal sacrifices and the rituals for the Levitical priesthood which were included in God’s covenant at Mt Sinai due to ongoing sin. Indeed, shortly after the book of Hebrews was written the Temple at Jerusalem was destroyed and the entire Levitical/animal sacrifice system was destroyed with it. There is no longer any sacrifice for sin apart from Christ’s.

Only the Sacrifice of Christ can free us from the enormous burden of sin that we created for ourselves when we broke God’s Law while we were without God’s Spirit and without Christ. These are the things that Paul warns those who want to be physically circumcised about, as being circumcised symbolically commits them to keeping everything that was given at Sinai:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of slavery.

Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.

And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that

he is a debtor to keep the whole law.

You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love. Gal 5:1 to 6

In Titus we are again reminded that we are saved by God's grace and we cannot -ever- be justified by works of law:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly cravings, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, passing time in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

But when the kindness and the love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to

men.

Titus 2:11 to 3:8

God again reminds us that He loves righteousness and hates lawlessness:

But to the Son He says: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.”
 Heb 1:8 to 9

Indeed, God still wants us to keep His commandments:

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and *there* is no darkness in Him at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is completed in him. By this we know that we are in Him. The *one* saying to remain in Him ought himself to walk just as that *One* walked.

1 John 1:5 to 2:6

And how did Jesus walk? -He loved His Father and His commandments:

“Do not think that I came to pull down the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to pull *them* down but to fulfill.

Truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, *there* is no way one letter or one dot will pass from the law until all is implemented. Thus whoever removes one of these commandments *in* the least, and teaches men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

For I say to you, that if your righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way you will enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Mat 5:17 to 20

Jesus then makes these statements which clarify what he means by greater righteousness:

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

And if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna.

Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ “But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except fornication causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ “But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s

throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.

But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' "But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Mat 5:27 to 48

This theme is continued in 2 Peter 1:4 to 11, where Peter confirms that we are to be partakers of the divine nature. How great is God's Grace! Can you see that Jesus wants **more** from us than the Old Covenants ever required, not less? He adds a whole new spiritual dimension to His Law, requiring us to operate at a purer level of love than someone without God's Spirit indwelling them could ever achieve. The examples Jesus use go beyond just the Ten Words. And all of them are founded on love for God and love for neighbour.¹⁵

¹⁵ God really wants a deeper level of love for our neighbours. We are not to sit back and allow them to drift off into destruction without warning them.

But we must be very careful of two things:

1: We must never, ever think that we are earning our justification with God by keeping His Laws (review Gal 5:4, Titus 3:5-7 both quoted above). We are only, and can only ever be, saved by the Sacrifice of Christ as our Passover and the washing of His blood. Our new ability to keep God's Law after being cleansed by Christ is in fact totally a gift from God and has nothing to do with any supposedly wondrous nature within ourselves:

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Do all things without murmuring and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or laboured in vain.

Phil 2:12 to 16

2: God only requires us to keep His Law, not the full Sinai covenant. His Law is summarised in the two great commands: Love God, love neighbour. They are expanded in the Ten Words. The Sabbath commandment is also expanded to include His annual Sabbaths as enumerated in Leviticus 23. These Holy Days are sacred to God as they reveal His full Plan of Salvation for us first and then for all the earth (ie: they are a shadow of the things to come). Honouring what is sacred to God shows our love for Him. We are not to get caught up with the temporary rules made in the covenant at Mt Sinai such as the earthly temple, the Levitical priesthood, and the many animal sacrifices for sin (Review Heb 9:27 to 10:18 quoted above).

God says: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbour, and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am Jehovah." (Lev 19:17-18)

In this context, it is wise to examine this passage from Acts where James outlines what God requires from the Gentile converts to Christ:

“Known to God from eternity are all His works.

Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from things strangled, and from blood.

For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

Acts 15:18 to 21

Some people claim that this is all that modern Christians are required to do. Note that none of the four things that James lists are the Ten Words, though all four are in God’s Law. Even the reference to ‘abstain from things offered to idols’ is telling them to not eat food, etc which has been offered to idols first (see 1 Cor 8:1-13). Does this short list mean that it is acceptable for the gentile Christians to have other gods, abuse God’s Name, dishonour their parents, steal, murder and defile the Sabbath? Of course not. The apostles did not tell them to keep the Ten Words at this time because everyone already knew and agreed that all Christians were to keep all of the Ten Words. That was not being disputed. James even expected the gentiles to go to the synagogues every Sabbath to learn more about God’s Law and way of life.

These four things were just a few additional items that God revealed to them as essential for all Christians to avoid. Three of them relate to food (for example, Christians are not to eat black sausages as they are made from blood nor eat things strangled because they still have their blood in them¹⁶). These food restrictions are also referred to in Col 2:16 (see page 15 to get the context correctly translated). But as stated above, no requirement was placed on the gentile Christians to observe the entire covenant given at Mt. Sinai.

¹⁶ Why forbid consuming blood? God explains in Lev 17:14 “for the soul of all flesh *is* its blood; It is one with its soul. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the soul of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.’”

**And why would we keep God's Laws
if doing so isn't earning our Salvation?**

“for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to display His righteousness, because in His toleration God had passed over the sins that had occurred before, to display His righteousness at the present time, for He is being just and the justifier of the one who has the faith of Jesus.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but through *the* law of faith.

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law.

Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

Do we then make law void through faith? It cannot be *so*! On the contrary, we establish law.”

Rom 3:23 to 31

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from law sin was dead. I was alive once without law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.

Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. Rom 7:7 to 14

Behold what manner of love the Father has given us, that we may be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not been revealed yet what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as that *One* is pure.

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

1 John 3:1 to 7

“Thus whoever removes one of these commandments *in* the least, and teaches men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Mat 5:19

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. James 1:21 to 25

Did you grasp that? Jesus and James say that God will bless us if we study and keep his law. God wants us to know His Word and to act upon it. We are also to do other works of obedience to God which are not necessarily in the law. As an example, perhaps God reveals something to us about our neighbour and asks us to speak to him about it. James uses the example of Abraham and Isaac:

But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

James 2:20 to 26

So, we obey because God wants us to become sinless like He is. The more we obey Him, the closer to Him we come. The more like Him we become, the more intimate our relationship with Him becomes.

But mostly we obey because we love God, our great ruler, lawgiver, father and saviour:

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

John 14:15 to 21

Please re-read verses 15 and 16: We are required to begin keeping Christ’s commandments **before** our Father will give us the Holy Spirit. And if we refuse to continue keeping Christ’s commandments, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit will be taken back from us (Heb 10:26-31, 2 Tim 2:12, 2 Pet 2:17-22).

Loving Jesus and keeping His commandments mark us as being God’s Children, filling us with the joy of Christ and helping us to hold fast to the end:

“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

John 15:9 to 12

Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

2 Tim 2:19

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the witness of Jesus Christ.

Rev 12:17

Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Rev 14:12

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into

the city.

Rev 22:14

Christ has freed us from the body of sin. Now that we are truly free we can love God, obey His laws and rejoice in his Love:

For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 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.

O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve God's law, but with the flesh sin's law.

Therefore now there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For the law *was* powerless in that it was weak through the flesh. God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and because of sin He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to *the* Spirit.

For those living according to the flesh concentrate on the flesh, but those living according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be fleshly minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Because the fleshly mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be. And those living in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit since the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your

mortal bodies by His Spirit who dwells in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors; not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Rom 7:22 to 8:21

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Do not quench the Spirit.

Do not despise prophecies.

Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

1 Th 5:16 to 22

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are

noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Phil 4:4 to 9

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Scripture quotations are taken from the Central Highlands Christian Publications translation.

The Heart of God

Just	Romans 3:26
True	John 3:33
Pure	I John 3:3
Light	I John 1:5
Faithful	I Cor 1:9
Good	Nahum 1:7
Spiritual	I Cor 10:1-4
Holy	Isa 6:3, I Pet 1:15
Truth	John 14:6
Life	John 14:4-6
Righteousness	Jer 23:6
Perfect	Matt 5:48
Royal	Rev 17:14
Delight	Is 58:14, Psalm 40:8
Forever	Heb 13:8
Freedom	John 8:36

The Heart of God's Law

Just	Romans 7:12
True	Neh 9:13
Pure	Psalm 19:7,8
Light	Prov 6:23
Faithful	Psalm 119:86
Good	Rom 7:12,16
Spiritual	Rom 7:14
Holy	Rom 7:12
Truth	Psalm 119:142,151
Life	John 12:50, Mat 19:17
Righteousness	Psalm 119:172
Perfect	Psalm 19:7, James 1:25
Royal	James 2:8
Delight	Rom 7:22, Ps 119:143
Forever	Psalm 111:7,8
Freedom	James 1:25

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- God's Calendar and the Sign of Jonah** - What does the Bible teach us about God's Calendar? How did Jesus keep the Sign of Jonah?
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- Spirit, Soul and Body**-This booklet provides a deeper look at the Bible's teachings about the composition of human beings and the role of our soul.
- Unclean Animals and Food** - What does the Bible teach about unclean animals? Does the New Covenant allow us to eat unclean meat?
- The Millennium** - Will the Earth be an uninhabited wasteland throughout the Millennium or will it be converted into a paradise under Christ's leadership?
- Radiocarbon Dating** - Shows how changes in radioactive carbon levels can drastically alter radioactive dates. Not heavily technical.

Software

- Calculated Biblical Calendar** - Calculates dates of Annual Holy Days, Crucifixion, Flood, Creation, etc, and allows you to test the calendar locally.
- Radiocarbon Dating** - Shows effects of changes in geomagnetic field and radiocarbon/carbon ratios on radioactive dating.

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