

Why Biblical Law?

A Lesson from The Potter

THE POTTER stretched his wetted hand over the lump of clay as he started rotating the large stone wheel. Turning it slowly with his feet, he formed the revolving mass until a rounded shape began rising from the miry clump.

Adding water from time to time, the potter skillfully smoothed out the softened clay, eliminating minor imperfections. What was once a shapeless blob on the wheel soon became a sleek, pliant jar in the deft hands of the potter. Next would come the firing of the kiln to bake permanently the shaped clay into a usable jar.

We Are In the Hands of the Maker

Have you ever considered looking at mankind through our Creator's eyes? He evidently sees humans as vessels of clay that can eventually be transformed into something wonderful and precious.

Paul addresses this concept in Romans 9:21, "*Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?*"

We are clay in the hands of the Master Potter. He can mold of us whatever He wills. We are all individuals, each different from all others. We are unique beings on this earth, each with individual strengths and weaknesses.

We were created for a special reason, a higher purpose than most can imagine. Sadly, very few will realize they are being called to participate in an eternal plan for loftier than this life. Only a few are aware of the awesome opportunity offered them.

If someone with unlimited power and sovereignty offered you spectacular rewards exceedingly greater than you could ever imagine, gains beyond your wildest dreams, would you be interested? You would acquire vast authority, prestige, honor, wealth, and happiness — all far greater than your fondest hopes and desires. What would you say?

Your answer would probably be "Yes! I'm ready! What are you waiting for?"

Suppose in addition, you were told that this unique role you would fill rested upon your determination to discipline yourself now.

This discipline would mold and shape you in preparation for the task and gains to come. Would you willingly sacrifice your time and effort to attain that goal? Remember, the rewards are certain, guaranteed by the highest Authority in the universe! You have absolutely nothing to lose and everything to gain.

But you must willingly change your way of living and allow yourself to be molded in a certain way. The shaping, forming, chipping, fitting, and polishing will take time – yet you will also be given help and guidance, strength and patience along the way.

You will also discover that there are immediate and lasting benefits that begin as soon as you start making changes in your life. That is also assured.

The molding and shaping comes from your willingness to accept certain principles and rules to guide you. These guides are laws that change your behavior and your deportment to conform to the great plan of the Master Potter. For a clearer explanation, let us digress for a moment.

The Necessity of Law

Failure to bring your vehicle to a stop at a stop sign is breaking the law. Most of us habitually strive to keep the law, driving on the right side of the road even when the road is on our own property. We obey rules of the road and conform to traffic regulations from early training, thus avoiding traffic accidents and citations.

Traffic laws are for our own good and the welfare of all. When other drivers conform to the laws of the roads as well, our own safety is assured. Time is saved, a minimum of confusion results, and motorists are happier when all obey the laws. It simply requires self-discipline from everyone. Human laws are made for the general welfare of mankind.

Just as laws regulating traffic and the motoring public are both necessary and beneficial, each individual must exercise proper discipline as he interacts with others.

But the carnal man naturally resists law and authority, pursuing his own selfish aims with utter disregard for others. As society becomes more complex, disciplined behavior is increasingly necessary. Violence is unacceptable. Enforcement of law is vital if societies are to function effectively. Anything less would lead to anarchy.

Just as human laws are to control mankind's behavior, the entire universe is governed by precise, physical laws that follow a set pattern. The movement of the sun, moon, and celestial bodies is governed in a prescribed, orderly manner. Any small deviation could spell catastrophe for our planet earth.

Our physical earth is composed of various elements controlled by physical laws of stability and interaction. Chemical elements all react predictably according to a set pattern of laws. Water boils at a given temperature and freezes at a certain temperature, materials combust at precise temperatures and pressures, etc.

Although man may make laws to govern himself, he has to operate within established physical laws of the universe and function in harmony with these laws.

Higher Law of the Master Potter

There are other, higher laws that extend beyond our physical realm, but are every bit as binding. These laws, when obeyed, bring harmony, joy, peace, and love to all.

The Bible reveals that Yahweh's spiritual laws are all pervasive and just as sure as the physical laws guiding our world. These laws are eternal and spiritual, dealing with every activity and thought of mankind.

Biblical laws were known anciently from Adam onward. Noah knew of Yahweh's laws, Genesis 6:9, being aware of the clean and unclean, Genesis 7:1-2. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob also walked in these same laws which were later revealed to Israel through Moses and written down and codified at Sinai.

There is a greater reason and underlying purpose for Biblical laws and why they have been revealed to mankind. Yahweh's Commandments are a guiding principle of life that will determine your future. We'll consider that further in a moment.

To Keep, Or Not To Keep

Which brings us to the question: Which laws in the Bible are we to keep in this day and age? Are certain laws like the Ten Commandments important, while others are not? How can we know?

The Bible has many laws governing human behavior. The longest Psalm (119) is entirely devoted to teaching obedience to all of Yahweh's laws.

Yet the majority of churchianity teaches that the Savior came to do away with our Father's laws. If only we believe or have faith, they say, nothing else is required of us. The Savior did it all, and we are now under grace, we are told.

"Fida Sola" was the rallying cry of the reformation in Martin Luther's day: "Faith Alone!" No works to do, no laws to keep; only faith in the Savior. That is still the basic message of many churches.

Some in churchianity may concede that if we are to obey any laws, it is only those laws found in the New Testament; the Old Testament laws are obsolete and no longer binding, they contend.

Commandments Stand Forever

Yahweh's laws were given as a long-lasting ordinance. In Matthew 5:18 the Messiah Yahshua said no part of the law would be dropped so long as heaven and earth remain. The Ten Commandments reflect His very nature, His righteousness. He changes not, Malachi 3:6.

His laws are a blueprint for man's ideal behavior, and His Commandments are eternal standards of righteousness. Only His Son Yahshua has measured up to these standards, keeping His laws perfectly, 1Peter 2:22.

The Savior, in rebuking the Adversary, said, "*It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of Yahweh,*" Matthew 4:4. That is to say, we eat physical food to maintain physical life. We must feed on spiritual food, however, for everlasting life in the higher spiritual realm. By "every food" He meant the Old Testament as well as the New, which, incidentally was not yet written.

A Creator with Double Standards?

Let us stop for a moment and analyze the teachings of many who contend that we are now under a different dispensation. They teach that the Israelites were under the dispensation of law, meaning, they were under penalty of the law. Breaking these Old Testament laws demanded a penalty, sometimes death.

According to this teaching, we are now under the dispensation of grace and are not required to keep the law. Since the Savior died, we are placed under His blood through faith and no longer required to obey any law. They call it grace.

If this concept is true, Yahweh had many different standards for peoples down through history! Before the death and resurrection of the Savior, man was expected to obey laws of the Old Testament. Breaking of them brought death and required blood to be shed.

The Israelites were under the "harsh" laws of the Old Testament, according to the dispensationalist view. Israelites gathering sticks on the Saturday Sabbath were punished by death, Numbers 15:32-35. But it is perfectly acceptable today to work a full-time job, clean out a garage, fix an auto or do any other dirty task on the Sabbath, we are told.

How can one work on the Sabbath today and be considered guiltless, but anyone picking up sticks to keep his family warm in the Old Testament be condemned? Is this the way of a completely fair, Supreme Judge who doesn't change?

Man is saved by grace, Ephesians 2:5. He cannot in any way attain everlasting life by his own hand. Then why did Yahweh make ancient Israel go through "works"? Were they "earning" salvation by keeping the law? No, because that isn't the purpose of law!

Animal Sacrifices Superseded

The moral law embodied in the Ten Commandments still stands. Granted, there was indeed a change in the law of sacrifices and offerings. The sacrificial law, which pointed to the Messiah, is now in abeyance, for He was the Supreme Sacrifice for all sins.

The destruction in 70 C.E. of Jerusalem and the Temple ended the Levitical priesthood and the physical sacrifices.

When we accept the supreme sacrifice of our Savior Yahshua, the sacrifices of offerings and animals are no longer required. He is now our Advocate, our High Priest.

That the laws of sacrifices are no longer incumbent on us today is borne out in Hebrews chapters 9 and 10. Especially do we find in Hebrews 9:11-12 that Yahshua is our High Priest who "*by His own blood He entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*"

Hebrews 10:5 reveals a physical body was prepared for the Savior to sacrifice, and thereby verses 9-10 show He took away the physical sacrifices of the Old Testament to establish the New Covenant with His people.

There is no Bible example that either the Savior or Paul sacrificed an animal in the Temple. Clearly, we are not expected to sacrifice animals.

Today it is impossible for even the Jews to sacrifice an animal because there is no functioning priesthood and no Temple in which they can sacrifice. Animal sacrifices are not required today when we accept the great sacrifice of our Passover Lamb, Yahshua the Messiah.

Be Like Yahshua, Live Every Word

The apostle in 1Peter 2:21 commands us to walk in the footsteps of the Savior, who said He kept His Father's commandments, John 15:10. Paul tells us to follow him as he followed the Messiah, 1Corinthians 11:1. And Paul "believed all things that were written in the law and in the prophets," Acts 24:14.

Again, this time in Luke 4:4 we read our Savior's words, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh.*"

Paul commanded the Philippian brethren, "*Wherefore, 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,*" 2:12.

A deeper study of the Bible reveals that we are expected to keep Yahweh's laws. This includes the Ten Commandments and His other laws. Not only are we to keep them to the letter, but also to fulfill them in the highest spiritual intent, which the Pharisees, for example, failed to do.

Not to Destroy but to Fulfill

"*Think not I came to destroy the law,*" said our Savior in Matthew 5:19. He wanted us to get the idea out of our minds that He came to do away with the law. In no way did He set the law aside. In fact, He went on to say, "*I came not to destroy, but to fulfill.*"

A popular, false teaching is that what He meant by fulfilling the law is that it was now set aside, abolished, put on the shelf, and no longer made demands on anyone. In truth, the Savior actually conformed to the law in its highest spiritual intent. He showed that even thinking of wrong acts is wrong, for sin starts with the thought that leads to the act, Matthew 5:28. (See James 1:14-15).

Many calling themselves New Testament churches teach modern, up-to-date doctrines of love, grace and forgiveness. Obedience is hardly mentioned. And if it is, one is left wondering

how that is done and what one is to be obedient to. Yet, it is the moral law that transforms us into the image of the Pattern Son.

The other great law Psalm, 19, tells us in verse 7 the living, active nature of Yahweh's law transforms an individual: *"The law of Yahweh is perfect, converting the soul."*

Is there a clear pronouncement that the Law as given in the Old Testament continues in effect? Yes, the New Testament refers back to the Old Testament laws and says they will be a part of the New Covenant. Notice Hebrews 8:10, taken from Jeremiah 31:31.

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Yahweh; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them an Elohim, and they shall be My people."

Galatians 6:16 refers to today's believers as "Israel," and Hebrews 10:14-16 specifically speaks of the saints of today, those who will have His laws imbedded in their hearts and minds.

Law Build Proper Character

"If you will enter into life, said our Savior to a rich young ruler, *"keep the Commandments,"* Matthew 19:17.

Clearly, entering into the Kingdom of Yahweh depends upon obedience to the Ten Commandments. In answer to a follow-up question, the Savior gives examples such as not to do any murder, not commit adultery, not steal nor bear any false witness. These are included in the Ten Commandments.

We become molded into the image of Yahshua by keeping the same laws He did. Practicing or refusing to practice wrong or evil directly affects the nature of our character. Scripture is clear that no practicing sinner will inherit the Kingdom (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; 1Cor, 6:9; Rev. 21:8). To help us, the Holy Spirit is now available to all who yield to Yahweh's Word. Through His Spirit's influence we are made fit for the Kingdom.

Our Heavenly Father is seeking a pliable; willing people who will follow in the footsteps of His Pattern Son. His laws are a mold whereby he is selecting human clay vessels like you and me; those He knows have the potential to come to *"the knowledge of the Son of Yahweh, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Messiah,"* Ephesians 4:13.

Yahweh's Laws and Commandments are a mold used by the Master Potter. Our character is molded by His laws into an obedient people who will keep all His Laws and live His way of life.

Although ancient Israel failed to keep these laws, we under the "New" Covenant have an invisible helper, the Holy Spirit, which is represented by water that shapes our lives as water shapes the clay of the Potter.

Since the Savior ascended to the heavens, the Holy Spirit has now come to this earth to reside within those who yield themselves to Yahweh. Paul writes in 2Corinthians 4:7:

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of Yahweh and not of us!"

Ancient Israel was to live Yahweh's laws and abide by His special Covenant, which embodies the Ten Commandments, Exodus 34. They were promised blessings of obedience and would be a model nation for the entire world to see and follow, Deuteronomy 4:5-13. In this they failed. Miserably

Coming: Kingdom of Priests, Laws

Yahweh is calling out a people now to become kings and priests in His Kingdom. Also known as the "Elect," they are to learn His laws now in the school of life in preparation to administering laws as priests and rulers in the Kingdom, Revelation 2:26-27. *"They shall be priests of Yahweh*

and of Messiah, and shall reign with Him a thousand years," Rev. 1:6; 20:6. Those who fit the mold of the Messiah, learn His ways and walk in His footsteps will be counted worthy to rule with the Savior on the earth, Revelation 5:10.

The fact that you are reading this study indicates that you have a spiritual thirst and hunger for something beyond the allurements that the world has to offer.

If you are willing to answer the call and submit to the discipline of Yahweh's laws, you have the potential to become a ruler in the Kingdom! Start by allowing the Master Potter to mold and make you into a vessel of honor. Obey His laws and make them a part of your life. Smooth off those rough edges of carnal disobedience.

Let the glorious light of the Evangel of the Messiah, Who is the image of Yahweh, shine through you.

Let Him Work with You

This present life is a school and the elect are in training to learn the ways of Yahweh. As we obediently keep all His Commandments day by day, we overcome the pulls of the Devil, the world, and our own flesh. Thus our character is gradually changed from rebellious, carnal nature to one exuding love, joy, peace, and other fruits of the Spirit.

Yahweh's indwelling Holy Spirit should dominate our life. By the time we reach our three score and ten years (Psalm 90:10) our nature is more or less fixed.

Many of us discover only later in life the awesome prospect of serving as a king and priest in His Kingdom. Our preparation becomes all the more urgent as we diligently make our calling and election sure, 2Peter 1:10.

This tremendous promise is truly for us today. *"Israel has not obtained that which he seeks for, but the election has obtained it,"* Romans 11:7.

Accept Yahshua as your Savior and be one of the Chosen who *"keep the Commandments of Yahweh and have the testimony of Yahshua the Messiah,"* Revelation 12:17.

May this be your prayer:

"But now, O, Yahweh, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our Potter; and we are the work of Thy hand," Isaiah 64:8.

Allow Him to work with you to become a vessel of honor. Prepare through repentance and obedience to be accepted as His bride at the soon-coming marriage supper of the Lamb.

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