

ARE WE UNDER THE TEN COMMANDMENTS TODAY?

In a recent broadcast of a religious program, a well known preacher made the following statement: "Men are sinners! The fabric of our society is unraveling. Salvation is only for those who accept Jesus as their personal Savior and live the Ten Commandments."

Are we really under the Ten Commandments today? Are we under part of them? Can we pick and choose which ones we need to follow? What many fail to realize is the difference between the old and new covenant and the purpose they serve.

I. WHAT IS A COVENANT?

A. Covenant = "A disposition of property by will or otherwise. It is a testament or agreement between two parties, to which one party takes on the obligation to which the other agrees." (Vines Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)

B. The word "testament" is another word used for "covenant." They mean the same thing. The Bible is in two parts:

(1) The Old Testament (covenant) and (2) The New Testament (covenant).

II. GOD'S INTENTION: REPLACE THE FIRST COVENANT WITH A NEW COVENANT.

A. As stated in the days of Jeremiah, 600 years before Christ.

(31) "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, (32) not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,' declares the Lord. (33) 'But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' declares the Lord, 'I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (34) They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' declares the Lord, 'for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin and I will remember no more.'"
[Jeremiah 31:31-34]

1. Was it God's intention to bring into being a "new covenant" (v.31)?
2. Who was the old covenant made with (v.32)?
3. Was it to be different from the old one (v.32)?
4. Where will this "new covenant" be written? On tablets of stone (v.33)?

5. What is the promise under this "new covenant" (v.34)?

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE OLD COVENANT (THE LAW OF MOSES)

A. Romans 3:19-20

(19) "Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; (20) because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."

1. Who are the only people under the old covenant (Law)?

2. The Law gives one knowledge of what?

"What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'"

[Romans 7:7]

"So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good."

[Romans 7:12]

B. Galatians 3

(19) "Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. (20) Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one."

1. Why was the Law added (v.19)?

2. Why is any law given?

a. Because man is always willing to do what is right?

b. What did the U.S. marshals bring to the wild west? Law and order!

c. How long did it take the children of Israel, God's chosen people, to go astray? Why did they build a golden calf (Exodus 32)?

3. When the Law was given, how long was it intended to be in force (v.19)?

"Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'And to your seed,' that is, Christ."

[Galatians 3:16]

4. Who is "the seed?"

"Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law."

[Galatians 3:21]

5. Was the Law's purpose to "impart life" to the guilty?

"For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them.'"

[Galatians 3:10]

"Christ 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-.'"

[Galatians 3:13]

6. What value was the seed (Christ) to those under the curse of the Law?

7. With these things in mind, would you want to be under that old covenant today?

8. The Law demanded perfection and if one didn't keep it perfectly, where did they stand?

"Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith."

[Galatians 3:24]

9. The Law was to lead them where?

"However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, 'He who practices them shall live by them.'"

[Galatians 3:12]

10. Is the Law based on faith or based on your performance?

"Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, 'The righteous man shall live by faith.'"

[Galatians 3:11]

11. Can anybody be justified by the Law?

Justified = "to pronounce righteous, acquittal from guilt"

C. James 2:10-11

"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of

all. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.'"

1. James quotes two of the Ten Commandments.
2. Notice that the Ten Commandments are part of "the Law."

IV. THE NEW COVENANT: THE LAW OF CHRIST

A. When did it come into being?

"For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."

[Hebrews 9:15]

1. At the writing of the book of Hebrews, is the "new covenant" in effect?
2. What promise did the "new covenant" bring with it?

"For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives."

[Hebrews 9:16-17]

3. The word "covenant" is used in this verse in the same sense as the word "testament."
4. What must take place first before a "covenant/testament" becomes valid?
5. Is it ever in force while a person is living?

ILLUSTRATION: If your parents or another family member "wills" their home and possessions to you, when do you take possession of those things?

6. Upon the death of Jesus, a "new covenant" became valid surpassing the "old covenant."

"When He said, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear."

[Hebrews 8:13]

7. What does this teach about the relationship of the "old covenant" and the "new covenant?"

8. In Hebrews 8:8-12, the Hebrew writer quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34.

9. When Jeremiah said, "a new covenant," it was the beginning of the end of the "old covenant."

ILLUSTRATION: When we think about trading for a new vehicle, we refer to the other vehicle as "the old" vehicle. The moment we start looking at new vehicles, our intentions are to replace "the old" with "the new."

B. Can one be under the old and new covenant at the same time?

(2)"Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. (3) And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. (4) You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."

[Galatians 5:2-4]

1. If these Christians accept circumcision, what benefit will Christ be to them (v.2)?

2. Circumcision was the sign of that old covenant. Read Genesis 17:11

3. Can they be Christians and under the Law at the same time?

4. How much of the Law were they required to keep (v.3)?

5. What two things automatically happened to those people who want to be right with God (justified) on the basis of law keeping (v.4)? (1) (2)

6. Since the Ten Commandments are part of the "old covenant"(Law of Moses), can one claiming to be a Christian hold to the Ten Commandments and the law of Christ at the same time?

C. Romans 10:1-4

(1) "Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. (2) For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. (3) For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. (4) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."

1. Paul is referring to the lost Jews, who still hold to the "old covenant. "He realizes they have a zeal for God but what is it not in accordance with (v.2)?

2. Can we be zealous for God without knowledge?

3. When a person does not know about God's righteousness, they always try to establish their own, based on their own ideas.

4. Christ is the end of what (v.4)?

CONCLUSION:

(24) "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ so that we may be justified by faith. (25) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. (26) For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (27) For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

[Galatians 3:24-27]

The Law of Moses (old covenant) was to lead people to Christ. If one is still trying to live under the Ten Commandments, that old covenant, are they living in Christ Jesus? Notice it was their faith and being baptized into Christ is what made them sons of God and clothed with Christ. Jesus came teaching and preaching to people who were under the "old covenant." They had great difficulty in accepting what He taught. It was the religious people that killed Him because they would not accept the truth of His word. We too live in a time where more and more people have difficulty accepting what God has spoken and we take man's word over what God says. For many, they take the Bible and use it to their own selfish beliefs and desires. We need to allow the Word of God to tell us what He wants and explain itself to us. That's why in this study we simply look at His word and allow Him to explain it to us. May you continue to look for the truth and have a sincere faith in your studies.