

The Law: Do We Need It?

Various Texts

1 Timothy 1:3-8

The Three Divisions of the Law

A.) Moral Law (Exodus 20)

1st Commandment - "You shall have no other gods before me."

2nd Commandment - "You shall not make a graven image."

3rd Commandment - "You shall not take the Lord's name in vain."

4th Commandment - "Remember the Sabbath."

5th Commandment - "Honor your father and mother."

6th Commandment - "You shall not murder."

7th Commandment - "You shall not commit adultery."

8th Commandment - "You shall not steal."

9th Commandment - "You shall not bear false witness."

10th Commandment - "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, house, etc."

B.) Civil Laws (Exodus 21-24)

C.) Ceremonial Law (Exodus 25-40)

Are We Subject to the Law?

A.) Ceremonial Law

"And the swine (pig), though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you." (Lev 11:7)

"You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you." (Lev 19:19)

"You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard." (Lev 19:27)

One last one. And I realize this one is a little more controversial, but please hear me out.

"You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the Lord." (Lev 19:28)

B.) Civil Law

"He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death." (Exd 21:12)

"You shall not permit a sorceress to live." (Exd 22:18)

"If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a money-lender to him; you shall not charge him interest." (Exd 22:25)

C.) Moral Law

"As I urged you when I went into Macedonia - remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully." 1 Tim 1:3-8

"For as many as have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience is also bearing witness and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)" (Rom 2:12-15)

"Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters." (1 Cor 7:19)

The Inherent Applications of the Law for Christians

1.) The gospel strengthens our obligation to keep the law in Christ.

"Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law." (Rom 3:31)

"...not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ..." (1 Cor 9:21)

Therefore, the work that Jesus performed on the cross does not negate our obligation to obey our Creator, but instead adds the obligation of gratefully obeying our Redeemer.

2.) The law is not to be kept as a covenant of works, but as a rule of life.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom 10:4)

"So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty." (Jam 2:12)

"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?" (Jam 2:14)

3.) When used properly, the law and the gospel do not conflict in the Christian's life.

"Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law." (Gal 3:21)