

The Law: Friend or Foe? Life or Death?

Ex 20 ¹ And God spoke all these words, saying: ² “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

► Is the law a friend or a foe? Does it minister life or death?

Scripture seems to say _____.

Rm 7 ⁷ What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.” ⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. ⁹ I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. ¹⁰ And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. ¹¹ For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. ¹² Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

► The Bible’s seemingly schizophrenic view of the law makes sense once we remember that the law was a wedding _____ from the spiritual bride to the God who had already _____ her by the blood of the passover lamb (2).

Ex 12 ⁵⁰ Thus all the children of Israel did; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did [i.e., they kept the passover]. ⁵¹ And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt

Rm 7 ² For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. ³ So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. ⁴ Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another — to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. ⁵ For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. ⁶ But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

- _____ are the adulterous woman (4).
- _____ preincarnate is the first husband (2-3).
- _____ incarnate is the husband who dies (3-4).
- _____ resurrected is the new husband who marries us (4).
- This the greatest _____ story ever told.

► The problem is not the wedding vow, but the fact we _____ it. The remedy is not to _____ the vow, but to _____ it on our hearts by the Spirit of our risen savior husband.

Jer 31 ³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel ... — ³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers ... [when] I took them ... out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them ... ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days ...: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

► Seeking to please Christ is not seeking to _____ your salvation, anymore than seeking to honor or cherish your spouse is seeking to _____ your marriage. Seeking to honor or cherish your spouse is seeking to fill your marriage with _____, joy, and faithfulness. And seeking to please Christ is seeking to _____ back the one who loved you and _____ himself for you.

1Jn 4 ¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us.

Rm 5 ⁸ God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us ... ¹⁰ ... [W]hen we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son

► The “works of the law” Paul condemned were not the true works of the law – _____ in Christ and _____ for God and neighbor – but the false works of the law the scribes and Pharisees _____ through their traditions.

Jn 6 ²⁸ “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”
²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

Mt 22 ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’
³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Mk 7 ⁸ “[L]aying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men – the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” ⁹ He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. ¹⁰ For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’
¹¹ But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban” ’ – (that is, a gift to God), ¹² then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, ¹³ making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.” ¹⁴ When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, “Hear Me, everyone, and understand: ¹⁵ There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. ¹⁶ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!”

► Christ is and always was the _____ and destination of the law.

Rm 10 ⁴ Christ is the end [Gr., *telos* – goal, destination] of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

For those who approached the law by _____,
it took them straight to Christ and taught them to love Him and one another. For those approached the law without faith –
they twisted and perverted it into a means of _____.
The law was objectively a great _____
to Israel, and it is to _____ as well. But unbelief mangles every blessing of God, so they no longer _____
what they promise. The answer is not to jettison the blessings of God, but to approach them all by _____.

► Christ did not _____ the law, rather he _____ the traditions by which the scribes and Pharisees had obscured the law. They turned the law into a heavy _____, which Jesus removed. Jesus used the law as intended – as a sharp _____.

Mt 5 ¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. ¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, 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. ²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

²¹ You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ ²² But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment ... ²³ Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

²⁷ “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Mt 23 ² “The scribes and Pharisees ... ⁴ ... bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. ⁵ But all their works they do to be seen by men.”

Hosea 11 ⁴ “I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love, and I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck. I stooped and fed them.”

Heb 4 ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, 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. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.