

God's Law was not given to save us, but to reveal our sin and lead us to Christ, who fulfills the Law in us through the Holy Spirit.

1. What is the Law?

- God's commandments given to Israel through Moses
- A revelation of God's character—His holiness, justice, mercy, and love
- Includes moral, ceremonial, and civil laws
- God's call: "Be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 19:2)

👉 The Law shows us who God is and how we were meant to live.

2. Why Did God Give the Law?

- Not as an arbitrary rulebook, but as a gift revealing His nature
- Given externally (written on stone tablets) as a standard outside of us
- Intended to set God's people apart as a light to the nations

👉 The Law reveals God's standard—but not the power to meet it.

3. What Did the Law Reveal?

- Our sin — "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20)
- Our inability — "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23)
- Our need for a Savior

📌 Key illustrations:

- Light in a dark room → reveals the mess, doesn't create it
- Mirror → shows what's wrong, can't fix it

👉 The Law exposes the problem—it doesn't solve it.

The Deeper Problem

The Law:

Defines righteousness ✓

Cannot produce righteousness

Humanity:

- Knows the good to do but
- cannot consistently do it
- (Romans 7:18)

👉 The issue isn't the Law—it's the human heart.

God's Solution

The Law:

Acts as a "tutor" leading us to Christ (Galatians 3:24)

Jesus:

- Fulfilled the Law perfectly
- Died in our place

The Holy Spirit:

- Works inside us, where the Law could not

👉 What the Law could not do, God did through Christ (Romans 8:3–4).

Application

1. Stop trying to fix yourself

- Willpower and rule-keeping cannot save you

2. Embrace conviction

- God's Word exposes sin to lead you to healing—not shame

3. Let the Law increase your gratitude

- The clearer you see your failure, the greater Christ's grace appears

Takeaway

The Law shows us:

- God's holiness
- Our sinfulness
- Our need for Jesus

➡ Salvation is not about trying harder—it's about being changed from the inside by the Spirit.

WRITTEN ON THE HEART

(The Law, the Spirit, and the Fulfillment of God's Purpose)

PART ONE: THE PROBLEM THE LAW REVEALED

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We just completed a series entitled “Understanding the Gospel”.

We explored the basics and benefits of the Good News...that Jesus, the eternal Son of God became flesh so that we could have a way to a restored relationship with a Holy God through His life, death and Resurrection.

Today we are going to begin another series entitled WRITTEN ON THE HEART (The Law, the Spirit, and the Fulfillment of God's Purpose).

Over the next three weeks, we're going to explore one of the most important themes in all of Scripture...

...the relationship between the Law God gave Israel at Sinai, and the Holy Spirit that God now places inside every born-again believer.

We're going to see that the Law and the Spirit are not in competition with each other.

They are part of the same story — a story that ends with something far better than a list of rules.

My hope is that this series, which will be in three parts, will encourage you to open your Bible regularly and carefully as well as prayerfully,

That it will deepen your understanding of the full arc of the gospel and how to hear from God through His Word and apply it in your daily life.

One of the greatest impediments to engaging with the Bible, for many believers, I think, is the mistaken opinion that since they are living under the New Testament of Grace, they have no need of devouring the Old Testament scriptures which contain, but are by no means limited to, “The Law”.

I maintain that unless we know how God’s Word, from “In the Beginning” in Genesis through “Amen” at the end of the Book of Revelation fits together, we cannot understand the depth of relationship that God wants us to have with Him in Christ.

By way of explanation, let’s look at two Old Testament scriptures before we dive into the concept of “The Law”.

Joel 2:29

**29 And also on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.**

This scripture has always been perceived as a Messianic prophecy. The prophecy was specifically fulfilled on the day we call Pentecost, when God’s Holy Spirit was poured out, giving all followers of Jesus a personal relationship with God through the awakening of our spirits by His Spirit.

Now, let's look at this scripture from the prophet Jeremiah who was speaking to the people of the southern Kingdom of Judah Just before the final fall of Jerusalem and the beginning of the Babylonian exile, around 588 BC.

Jeremiah 31:33

**But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel
after those days, says the Lord: 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.

Although these words were to the Judeans living at that time... through the lens of the New Testament it helps us understand that now, those who are in Christ are the true Israel of God and have fulfilled this ancient prophecy.

That said, now let's look specifically at the law that has been put in our minds and written on our hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Today, in Part 1 of our series, we begin at the beginning.

We ask three questions:

What is the Law?

Why did God give it?

And what did it reveal?

To understand the Law, we first must start with the God who gave it, to whom and why.

The Mosaic Law... the commandments, statutes, and ordinances God gave to Israel through Moses, was not an arbitrary rulebook.

It was intended as a gift to all people.

It was God reaching down to a people He had chosen and saying, 'I am going to show you what I am like, and how I want you to live so that you can reflect My character to the nations.'

Deuteronomy 4:8

And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?

Moses is speaking to Israel here, and the point is clear: no other nation on earth had what Israel had.

God had given them a direct window into His own character... His holiness, His justice, His mercy, His love.

The Law was, at its core, a revelation of who God is.

The Law that God gave Moses on Mount Sinai was comprehensive.

It wasn't just the Ten Commandments, although those were its foundation.

The Law included moral commands, how to treat your neighbor, how to deal with injustice...how to speak the truth.

It included ceremonial laws - the sacrifices, the feasts, the priesthood - all pointing forward to something greater.

It included civil laws that governed Israel as a nation.

But underneath all of it, there was a unified message and purpose: be holy, because God is holy.

Leviticus 19:2

Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

That was the call.

Be holy.

Reflect the character of your God.

Live in a way that is completely different from the nations around you. In this way, Israel was to be set apart as “a light to the nations”.

Now here is a crucial detail: when God gave the Law, He wrote it on tablets of stone. Physical objects. External things that Moses carried down from the mountain.

The Law was a physical thing outside of the people of Israel. It was placed before them as a standard, a measure, a demand.

That detail matters more than we might first realize. We will come back to it in a big way shortly.

But for now, hold that image in your mind: stone tablets. The Law was external.

Now that we have seen what the Law was, and why God gave it, we come to the question, “What did the Law reveal?”

Here is one of the most important things that the Apostle Paul tells us about the Law. It's found in his letter to the Romans:

Romans 3:20

"Therefore, by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Read that last phrase carefully: “by the law is the knowledge of sin”.

The Law was not primarily given to save people. It was given to show people what they were. And what they were, what we all are, is sinners.

Paul tells us why and what that means a few scriptures later when he says...

Romans 3:23

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Now you may well wonder why would God give His chosen people a set of laws that he knew they were unable to keep?

Think of it this way. Imagine you are walking through your house in the dark. You bump into things, you step on something, you have no idea what a mess the place really is.

Then someone turns on the lights. Suddenly you can see everything..., the clutter, the dirt, the disorder.

The light didn't create the mess. It just revealed what was already there. That's what the Law does.

It turns the lights on.

James, the brother of Jesus, uses a similar picture. He calls the Law 'a mirror':

James 1:23–24

"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."

A mirror doesn't make you look the way you look... it just shows you what you look like.

The Law holds up the perfect measure of who we were made to be, and when we look into it honestly, we see that we don't measure up to God's standard.

God knew that Israel would not be able to keep the Law perfectly.

In fact, even before Moses came down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments written on those tablets of stone, the people had already broken the first one.

They had built a golden calf idol and they were worshiping it.

If you are familiar with the Old Testament you may have read the Book of Judges.

The whole book of Judges is a painful cycle:

Israel receives the Law, Israel ignores the Law, God disciplines Israel, Israel cries out, God sends a deliverer.

Then the whole thing starts again.

The Law was set before them, perfectly clear, and yet they could not keep it.

The Law itself was not the problem. God's standards are perfect.

Paul addresses this directly in his letter to the Romans:

Romans 7:12

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

The problem was not the standard — the problem was the people being measured against it.

And a few verses later we see that Paul doesn't exempt himself:

Romans 7:18

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

Paul is saying: I want to do the right thing. I know what the right thing is. But I can't make myself do it consistently.

There is something inside me... something the Paul calls 'the flesh', that fights against the Law every single step of the way.

And this brings us to the deepest problem with the Law.

It tells you what to do, but it has no power inherent in it to make you want to do it. It gives you the standard, but it cannot give you the strength to meet it.

It can define righteousness clearly, but it cannot produce righteousness in you.

This is not a flaw in the Law. This was never what the Law was designed to do.

Paul explains:

Galatians 3:21

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.

The Law was never meant to give life. It was meant to reveal the need for life.

It was meant to show us that we are desperately in need of something more than a set of rules that exists outside of ourselves, we need something supernatural to change us on the INSIDE.

Paul gives us one of the most beautiful descriptions of the Law's purpose in his letter to the Galatians:

Galatians 3:24

Therefore, the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The word translated 'tutor' in the New King James is the Greek word paidagogos.

In the ancient world, a paidagogos was not a teacher in the classroom.

He was a trusted servant in a wealthy household whose job was to take the child to school, to walk alongside him, correct him along the way, guard him from danger, and deliver him safely to the teacher.

That is exactly what the Law does.

It walks alongside human beings... showing us our sin, correcting us, holding up the standard, giving us guardrails to keep us from danger, and ultimately delivering us to Jesus Christ, the One who can actually do what the Law never could.

Every sacrifice in the Law was pointing to the final sacrifice on the Cross.

Every priest in the Law was pointing to the great High Priest.

Every demand for holiness in the Law was pointing forward to the One who would be holy on our behalf, and then... and this is the miracle, He put that holiness inside of us by His Spirit.

Romans 8:3-4

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account 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.

Notice what Paul is saying here. The Law had a righteous requirement... a standard of perfect holiness.

But humanity was too weak, too corrupted, too enslaved to sin to meet that standard.

So God sent His Son.

Jesus lived the life we couldn't live and died the death we deserved to die.

And then... watch this... He sends His Spirit into those who believe, so that the righteous requirement of the Law would be fulfilled IN US.

Not by us straining harder. Not by us trying to follow more rules. But IN US... by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

That is the story we are going to follow for the next two weeks.

But today, we begin here: with the Law and what it actually is...

The stone tablets that set an impossible standard from the outside.

The mirror that shows us exactly how far we fall short.

So, let me bring this home in three ways.

1. Stop being surprised that trying harder doesn't work.

If you've been trying to fix yourself through willpower and rules and sheer determination, the Bible says: that is not the plan.

The Law was never meant to fix you. It was only ever meant to show you that you need fixing and then point you to the One who can do it.

Stop trying to save yourself. You can't. That's the whole point.

2. Thank God for the mirror, even when it's uncomfortable.

When God's Word convicts you... when you read something in Scripture that shows you a sin in your heart you didn't even know was there... don't run from it.

That is the Law doing exactly what God designed it to do.

It is turning the lights on.

It is delivering you to the schoolmaster so the schoolmaster can take you to Christ.

3. Let the Law deepen your gratitude for Jesus.

Every time you read the commands of God and feel the weight of how far you fall short, let that be fuel for worship.

Because Jesus Christ perfectly kept every command.

He satisfied every demand of the Law... not for Himself, but for you.

The more clearly we see what the Law requires, the more clearly we see what the Cross accomplished.

Next week, we are going to look at what God promised... long before it happened... that He would do with the Law

A promise that doesn't do away with the Law, but fulfills it in the most unexpected, personal and transforming way imaginable.

Come back next week for Part 2 of our series *Written on the Heart: The Promise the Law Was Pointing To*.

Bring your questions and bring your friends with questions.

But for now, let's pray...

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your holy Law which is good. Thank You that it shows us the truth about ourselves — that we are broken

sinners in need of a Savior. We confess that we are unable to meet Your standard in our own strength.

Lord Jesus, thank You that You met those standards for us, perfectly and completely and exchanged our sin for Your righteousness.

Holy Spirit, teach us to run to the Cross, not away from it. May we find there the will to walk in your perfect ways for Your Glory and our joy.

And it is in Jesus' name that we pray.

Amen.