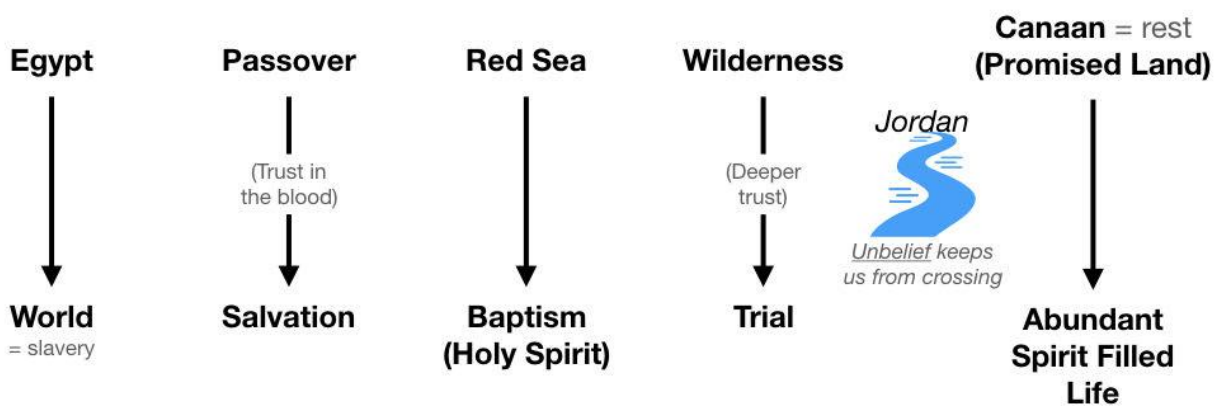


Session 4 The Law

T R U S T



Matthew 22:35-40 (NASB) 35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' 38 "This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' 40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Notice who it was that asked this question:

Lawyer - expert in the Mosaic Law

We see here that his motive for asking Jesus the question isn't to seek to understand that law but to try to trap Him in His answer. If Jesus answers that there is a law above the others then they will be able to attack Him on the grounds that He is diminishing other clearly important commandments that God gave and in essence showing that He doesn't understand God or the Law.

But there really is a **core problem** with this **line of questioning**.

The problem with this line of questioning is a misinterpretation of the purpose of the Law.

By asking this question it really suggests that the Law is a set of rules that we are supposed to obey. While the law certainly serves that purpose, that is not the **PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE LAW.**

What is the primary purpose of the Law? We learn that answer in Romans:

Romans 5:20 (NASB) 20 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

Romans 5:20 (NLT) God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant.

In other words, the law was given so that people would see just how impossible it was to fulfill the law, because it was showing just how sinful we are. But it also does an even greater thing, it not only shows us how sinful we are it shows how much greater His grace is than our sin.

THE LAW THEREFORE, IS ALWAYS POINTING TO SOMETHING...THAT SOMETHING IS JESUS CHRIST.

We must also understand though, that God didn't give the Law without the intention of it being fulfilled though. He was still going to have it fulfilled. By showing us the impossibility of our ability to fulfill it He was proving to us that we weren't the ones who were going to fulfill it.

BUT GOD HAD SOMEONE IN STORE TO DO THAT FOR US:

Matthew 5:17-18 (NASB) 17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

What was Jesus saying? He was pointing people to something. Notice what He says at the end of that passage...nothing was going to pass from the Law "***until all is accomplished***".

Until all is accomplished...what is the all that He is referring to:

John 19:28-30 (NASB) 28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, *said, "I am thirsty." 29 A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. 30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

The **all that was to be accomplished** was His fulfillment of the scriptures.

Romans 8:1-6 (NASB) 1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh,

God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

See humans have this bad habit of constantly viewing the world through a **self-centered lens.** That lens is constantly causing me to look at things, especially spiritual things, as how do I accomplish this?

When we engage scripture or the Law in this way we are missing the fundamental point of scripture. That fundamental point is that it is about HIM and not ME. LOOK AT ROMANS 8:3 AGAIN.... JESUS WAS OUR SUBSTITUTE.

WHEN WE ENGAGE SCRIPTURE IN A WAY WHERE WE ARE LOOKING TO PERFECT OURSELVES THROUGH THE LAW **WE ARE TRYING TO BE THE SUBSTITUTE!!!**

This has been going on for a very, very long time. When the children of Israel were given the Law this was their response:

Exodus 24:7 (NASB) 7 Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!"

Notice again their response. Notice where the focus of the people is "we will do it" & "we will be obedient".

We will do & be obedient - Notice from very, very early on people have equated their obedience with the purpose of the Law.

Romans 9:31-32 (NASB) 31 but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,

Romans 10:1-4 (NASB) 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.

Did God want them to be obedient? ABSOLUTELY, but was that His focus for the Law? ABSOLUTELY NOT. Notice again what David had to say:

Psalms 51:16-17,19 (NASB) 16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise...19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.

God is letting us know through David that His desire is for our hearts not our works. He absolutely wants our obedience but He wants our obedience because our hearts are in it not simply our empty actions.

Here is what Paul had to say:

Romans 4:15 (NLT) For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!)

This misinterpretation of the Law would plague the nation of Israel all through their existence. They became so focused on the importance of the Law and being obedient to it that when the One came whom the entire Law was written about came they completely missed Him. Why? Because they weren't interpreting the Law as something that was written so that they would see how sinful they were and in need of the Messiah's sacrifice they were trying to be so perfect with the Law that when the Messiah came they would be able to impress Him and please Him.

There is a fundamental truth for us here: When one views the Law as something that is focusing on them they have no ability to focus on Him, whom the Law is really about.

If you live as a believer like someone who is going to focus on living your life by trying to be perfect in the Law then you will be walking in the flesh. You are going to be walking no different than all of those Children of Israel and Pharisees that were working hard to perfect themselves through the Law. You and I can't perfect ourselves.

One can become a believer but because of their misunderstanding of the Law they can arrive at a place where they no longer give Jesus Christ full credit for saving them.

In other words, you can be saved be a believer and not live your life in a way that acknowledges that you know what it is that saved you.

It's true, it happens all the time. We tell people that they have to be baptized, they have to go through certain religious classes, they have believe a certain way (Make Him Lord).

SHOW THIS ON THE DIAGRAM. SAVED BY THE BLOOD, IDENTIFIED WITH BAPTISM BUT TRYING TO ACHIEVE PERFECTION BY THE LAW IN THE WILDERNESS. THEY DIED THERE BECAUSE OF IT.

This was happening in Paul's time in Acts:

Acts 15:1-2,4-5 (NASB) 1 Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue...4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. 5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

These Pharisees had believed and yet they were teaching that in order to be saved that people did indeed need to be circumcised and be willing to obey the Law.

Peter is going to respond to this in this way:

Acts 15:7-11 (NASB) 7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 "And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 11 "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."

Peter says 2 very important things here:

- **The way people are saved:** Verse 8 "God knows the heart and He gave them the Holy Spirit because the people "Heard & Believed". "Just as He also did to us", in other words whether you may think that you were saved because of circumcision and your willingness to obey the Law but you weren't.
- **If you are a believer but then incorrectly believe and teach that you came a different way (add obedience to the Law & circumcision, baptism, classes, works etc) to salvation then you will put a heavy yoke upon yourself and those you are teaching:** In verse 10 Peter then goes back and reiterates that salvation comes from the Lord Jesus' grace to us.

For us as believers there is something extremely important that we should look at from these verses.

What is the yoke that Peter is referring to? - The Yoke that Peter is referring to is the yoke of legalism. The belief that it is about my works or my obedience to the Law. This idea will always choke out something very, very important. It chokes out the heart and relationship which is what the Law was REALLY about:

This yoke of legalism will cause us as believers to miss something that He desires for us in our lives. Something that makes living life as a believer far more fulfilling and richer than anything else. That is an understanding of grace.

Galatians 5:3-4 (NASB) 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.

Romans 6:14 (NASB) 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

We are able to walk on the plane of grace. If one tries to engage the law in a trans-actionary sort of way then they are viewing and engaging the law in a lower (fallen from grace) way than it was intended.

Look again at what Peter had to say in our verses in Acts 15:

Acts 15:10 (NASB) 10 "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"

Our fathers - Who is Peter referring to? To the group traveling in the Wilderness!! This group leaned on the Law. They believed they were supposed to obey it. They believed it was for them to use instead of being FIRST AND FOREMOST for the coming Messiah to fulfill as a man.

What does viewing and interacting with the Law in this way do to us?

It causes us to trust ourselves for our perfection instead of Him. This in turn causes us to inadvertently make ourselves bigger and inevitably makes Him smaller and when He becomes smaller we no longer fear Him or revere Him.

THIS MISINTERPRETATION OF LAW WILL NEVER LEAD ANYONE INTO CANAAN AND IS EXACTLY WHY THIS GROUP DID NOT MAKE IT IN TO CANAAN.

Jesus said the following:

Matthew 11:28-30 (NASB) 28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

When Jesus was talking about His yoke being easy and His burden being light what was He actually saying?

Yoke - zygos (zü-go's)

1. a yoke that is put on draught cattle
2. metaph., used of any burden or bondage
 1. as that of slavery
 2. of troublesome laws imposed on one, esp. of the Mosaic law, hence the name is so transferred to the commands of Christ as to contrast them with the commands of the Pharisees which were a veritable 'yoke'; yet even Christ's commands must be submitted to, though easier to be kept

Easy - comfortable or pleasant

Burdens - phortion (for-tē'-on) -

1. a burden, load
 1. of the freight or lading of a ship
2. metaph.
 1. of burdensome rites
 2. of the obligations Christ lays upon his followers, and styles a "burden" by way of the contrast to the precepts of the Pharisees, the observance of which was most oppressive
 3. faults of the conscience which oppress the soul

Deuteronomy 12:9 (NLT) 9 because you have not yet arrived at the place of rest, the land

the LORD your God is giving you as your special possession. 10 But you will soon cross the Jordan River and live in the land the LORD your God is giving you. When he gives you rest from all your enemies and you're living safely in the land,

Hebrews 3:8-11 (NASB) 8 DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, 9 WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED Me BY TESTING Me, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS. 10 "THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS'; 11 AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.'"

BIG QUESTION - If the Law was put in place to point us to Him for salvation, why would it change and begin pointing to us for sanctification? Did He only come to save us and leave everything else after that to us?

Trying to use the Law to perfect oneself through obedience was only going to be able to be done by One individual. Jesus came to fulfill the requirements of the Law and by so doing He set you and I free. We are free!!

Galatians 5:1 (NASB) 1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

John 8:36 (NASB) 36 "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

His desire is for you and I to cross over the Jordan and into the Abundant, Spirit Filled Life:

John 10:10 (NASB) 10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.