



Session 4 - The Law

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."

We see the #1 priority of any believer is your relationship with Him before we focus on bringing someone else along with Him.

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 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.

Psalm 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 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).