

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16.

SALVATION — THE GIFT OF FREEDOM

By His death Jesus has provided for our salvation from sin and eternal death. We are not saved by "righteous things we have done" (Titus 3:5) for "no-one will be declared righteous in his (God's) sight by observing the law." Romans 3:20. (Also read Romans 3:28.) However, consider two questions:

Does our faith in Jesus mean we can forget the commandments of God?

Paul answered this question. He wrote, "Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all. Rather, we uphold the law." Romans 3:31. "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" Romans 6:1,2. The saved person does not want to continue sinning or breaking the commandments of God. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command." John 14:15. God's people "obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus." Revelation 14:12. The grace of God does not abolish the commandments.

What do the commandments do?

Paul wrote, "I would not have known what sin was except through the law." Romans 7:7. "Through the law we become conscious of sin." Romans 3:20. John wrote, "Sin is lawlessness." 1 John 3:4.

By His death, Jesus has established the eternal nature of the ten commandments. If the ten commandments could have been changed then Jesus would not have needed to die. There are a number of reasons why there is confusion over the eternal nature of the ten commandments:

1. Sinful people oppose the commandments.

"The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God." Romans 8:7,8. (Compare Romans 7:12,14.)

2. Attempts to change the ten commandments.

The Father did not change the ten

commandments for they are as eternal as He in that they reveal His character. (See Psalm 111:7-10.) Jesus, the Son, did not come to change or abolish the ten commandments. He made His position clear when He said, "I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love." John 15:10. (Compare Matthew 5:17-19.) Of course, the apostles could not change the ten commandments of God for they did not have the authority to change that which God had established as eternal. (See Romans 13:8-10; James 1:19-25; 2:8-13; Revelation 11:19; 12:17; 14:12.)

3. Daring attack on the ten commandments.

Daniel was shown that the little horn power "will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change set times and laws." Daniel 7:25.

4. Confusion over the law systems in the Bible.

In the Bible, as well as the eternal laws of the ten commandments, there are health laws, civil laws for the nation of Israel, laws about sacrifices, and others. These law systems should not be confused. Even in the laws of Moses we need to distinguish between the sanctuary (ceremonial, ritual) laws and health and political laws.

The ten commandments were established by the death of Jesus, whereas the ceremonies and sacrifices of the temple came to an end with His sacrifice. It is because of the breaking of the ten commandments of God that we need a Saviour. Salvation is a free gift. However, it is a mistake to believe that we can be saved while rebelliously and blatantly disregarding the ten commandments. A person who has no intention of keeping the commands of God cannot claim to know God. (See 1 John 2:3,4.)

Notice the differences between the ten commandments and the laws of Moses:

The TEN COMMANDMENTS - God's direction on how to live

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| 1. Spoken by God. | Exodus 20:1,2. |
| 2. Written by God on tables of stone. | Exodus 31:18; 32:16. |
| 3. Put "in the ark" by Moses. | Exodus 25:16. |
| 4. Deal with HOW TO LIVE. | Exodus 20:3-17. |
| 5. Reveal sin. | Romans 7:7. |
| 6. Establish by faith in Jesus. | Romans 3:31. |
| 7. Have one weekly Sabbath. | Exodus 20:8-11. |

The LAWS OF MOSES - Details on ceremonies and sacrifices

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| 1. Spoken by Moses. | Exodus 24:3. |
| 2. Written by Moses in a book. | Exodus 24:3,4,7. |
| 3. Put "beside the ark" by the Levites. | Deuteronomy 31:25,26. |
| 4. Deal with ceremonies, rituals and sacrifices. | Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteron. |
| 5. Reveal the sin bearer. | John 1:29. |
| 6. Abolished by Jesus' death. | Ephesians 2:15. |
| 7. Contain a number of yearly sabbaths. | Leviticus 23. |

OBEDIENCE — THE LIFE OF FREEDOM

We cannot save ourselves by what we do. We are saved by what Jesus has done for us. However, the saved person will want to obey Jesus and the Father. In fact, it is impossible to keep Jesus at the centre of our lives and yet refuse to obey Him and the Father. The saved person recognises, perhaps better than anyone else, that to have happiness, stability and freedom in society there are certain basic principles or laws by which we must all live. When Jesus gave the ten commandments He was teaching people whom He had already saved *HOW TO LIVE*. (See Exodus 20:1-17.)

The Message of the Ten Commandments

1. The first tells us *WHO TO WORSHIP*. There is only one being worthy of worship. He is the great God of the universe, the Creator of all life, the Saviour of humanity and the Author of the Bible. If He is not first in our lives we are open to the attacks of atheism, humanism and evolution.
2. The second tells us *HOW TO WORSHIP*. God forbids bowing before images. "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:24. We need this command for much of the beauty, happiness and simplicity has been taken out of worship. God desires a closer relationship with worshippers than is possible when there is an image between Himself and His people.
3. The third command prohibits profanity. It tells us what our attitude should be in our

APPROACH TO WORSHIP. This command forbids the careless use of God's name. It condemns coarse swearing, oaths, profanity, irreverence of any kind and empty profession.

4. We cannot do without the fourth commandment today. We need time to reflect and *TIME TO WORSHIP*. Sabbath means rest. Each week we need the seventh day for rest and worship.
5. The fifth commandment concerns *PARENTS AND CHILDREN*. The family is the basic unit in society. This command governs our relationships with our parents and our responsibilities to them. It calls for respect for parents and constitutional authority. We need this command today.
6. The sixth commandment safeguards *LIFE*. If this command were abolished everyone's life would be in danger. Sin has brought death into the world.
7. The seventh commandment clearly forbids adultery and all illicit sex relationships between *MEN AND WOMEN*, between men and men, and women and women. A disregard for this command has led to the moral collapse of society, deadly social diseases and unhappiness in many homes.
8. One of the most common criminal offences is stealing. People need to return to the keeping of the ten commandments and respect the *PROPERTY OF OTHERS AND GOD*. (Also read Malachi 3:8-11.)
9. The ninth commandment requires us to be careful of the *REPUTATION OF OTHERS*. This commandment condemns all lying, slander, false witness, all untruthfulness and all gossip. The devil invented the lie. (See John 8:44.) Lies destroy confidence. God is truth. Those who are unrepentant liars and

those who choose to believe lies will not enter God's kingdom. (See 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Revelation 21:27.)

10. The tenth commandment is quite different. It deals with motives and the *THINKING* of people. It is in the mind that the choice for good or evil is made. Covetousness lies at the base of all sin. It is one of the prevalent sins of the last days. (See 2 Timothy 3:1-5.)

The Order of the Ten Commandments

The ten commandments reveal that the universe is run by law. It is impossible to imagine what confusion there would be if there were no natural or moral laws governing the universe.

The ten commandments reveal God's order for our living. The commands of God reveal the order of priorities by which we should live. Many of our troubles and conflicts come because we often reverse God's order. The ten commandments reveal:

1. **God** should be first in our lives.
2. Our **Families** should come next.
3. Other **People** must come before things.
4. **Things** come last.

Among the ten commandments there are two positive commands: (1) the fourth concerning the *SABBATH*, and (2) the fifth concerning the *FAMILY*. These two positive commands reveal the basis of the ten commandments. These two commands point back to two great events: (1)

creation, and (2) the establishment of marriage and the home in the Garden of Eden. These two commandments are the basis of the others. Because God is the Creator we have the first four commandments. Because we have families and people we have the last six commandments. The first four commands concern our love for God, while the last six concern our respect and love for our fellows.

The ten commandments reveal the One who is God. The fourth command reveals the authority of God. (See Exodus 20:8-11.) It declares:

1. His *NAME* is - "the *LORD* your God."
2. His *TITLE* is - "the *LORD* made." He is the Creator.
3. His *TERRITORY* is - "the heavens and the earth."

The ten commandments reveal *GOD'S CHARACTER*. The positive principle of each commandment shows us God's character. God is:

1. Loyal.
2. Spiritual. (True worship.)
3. Reverent.
4. Holy.
5. Respectful.
6. Loving.
7. Pure.
8. Honest.
9. Truthful.
10. Content.

God is eternal and unchanging. Likewise His law is eternal and unchangeable. Only the Lawgiver has the right to change the law and Jesus Christ chose to affirm the ten commandments rather than change or cancel them. Some have suggested that the ten commandments were just for the Jewish people and that Christians do not need to be concerned with them. However, the Scriptures teach that the ten commandments were given long before the Jewish people. For example, the Sabbath was given to humanity in the very first week of time on earth, and the command forbidding murder was violated by Cain when he killed Abel, otherwise that deed would not have been sin. Sin is an act or life that is not in harmony with God's character. The ten commandments are as eternal as God. The Bible declares:

GOD is . . .

Just. Romans 3:26.
True. John 3:33.
Pure. 1 John 3:3.
Faithful 1 Corinthians 1:9.
Good. Nahum 1:7.
Holy. Isaiah 6:3.
Perfect. Matthew 5:48.
Eternal. Genesis 21:33.

The TEN COMMANDMENTS are . . .

Just. Romans 7:12.
True. Nehemiah 9:13.
Pure. Psalm 19:7-11.
Faithful. Psalm 119:86.
Good. Romans 7:12,16.
Holy. Romans 7:12.
Perfect. Psalm 19:7; James 1:25; 2:12.
Eternal. Matthew 5:17,18.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS — IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Three Questions



What did JESUS say about the Ten?

Jesus outlined the eternal nature of the ten commandments. (Matthew 5:17-19.) By referring to the sixth and seventh commandments, He revealed the depth of the commands. (Matthew 5:21,22,27,28.) The ethics of the Ten were the basis of the life and teachings of Jesus.



What did PAUL say about the Ten?

The ten commandments are an expression of God's character. By obeying them we demonstrate our love for God and our neighbours. To obey the ten commandments, Paul said, is to obey the rule, which sums them up, "Love your neighbour as yourself." Romans 13:9. (See Romans 13:8-12.)



What did JAMES say about the Ten?

James wrote of the ten commandments as "the perfect law that gives freedom." James 1:25. It is the "royal law" (James 2:8) by which we will "be judged." (James 2:12.) (Read James 1:22-25; 2:8-13.)

Present in the New Testament

1. "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only." Matthew 4:10.
2. "Dear children, keep yourselves from idols." 1 John 5:21. (Also read Acts 17:29.)
3. "God's name... may not be slandered." 1 Timothy 6:1.
4. "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." Mark 2:27,28. "For... he has spoken about the seventh day in these words:

'And on the seventh day God rested from all his work.'" Hebrews 4:4. (Compare Hebrew 4:9,10; Matthew 24:20; Colossians 1:16.)

5. "Honour your father and mother..." Matthew 19:19.
6. "Do not murder..." Matthew 19:18. (See Romans 13:9.)
7. "Do not commit adultery..." Matthew 19:18. (See Romans 13:9.)
8. "Do not steal..." Matthew 19:18. (See Romans 13:9.)
9. "Do not give false testimony..." Matthew 19:18.
10. "Do not covet." Romans 7:7. (See Romans 13:9.)

Satan hates God's design for our freedom

Satan hates Jesus our *SAVIOUR*. He hates the gift of salvation that Jesus gives. He hates us when we choose to believe and follow our Saviour. Satan hates the *TEN COMMANDMENTS* for they are God's directions to us on how to live. He hates them for they give freedom from disobedience and they reveal God's character. He hates the ten commandments for they condemn him. The negative aspect of each commandment exposes *SATAN'S CHARACTER*. Satan is:

1. Disloyal.
2. Rebellious. (False worship.)
3. Irreverent.
4. Unholy.
5. Disrespectful.
6. Hateful.
7. Impure.
8. Dishonest.
9. Untruthful.
10. Discontented.

IN CONCLUSION...

The conflict in Revelation centres upon worship and obedience. (See Revelation 12:17; 14:12.) Satan uses the beast and the false prophet in his battles against God and truth. True believers will be attacked. However, true believers will remain faithful to Jesus and the ten commandments of God. They obey God's commandments, not in order to be saved, but because they have been saved. Their obedience is not the basis of their salvation, but the fruitage. They will serve the Lamb and follow Him wherever He goes. (Revelation 14:4,5.)