

ILLUSTRATIONS SHOWING WE ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW OF MOSES

Intro: In today's pen points article I address the question, "Do Christians today keep the Ten Commandments?" The religious world is in a state of confusion and contradiction on how to view the laws and institutions of the OT.

Some groups advocate a distinction between the moral and ceremonial aspects of the Law and contend that Christians today must keep the Ten Commandments including the command to keep the Sabbath (Seventh Day Adventists and other groups assemble on the Sabbath and follow at least in part the Laws requirements for Sabbath rest).

Other groups advocating a similar distinction between moral and ceremonial aspects of the Law contend that Christians are to keep the Ten Commandments and that the fourth commandment is fulfilled in worshipping on Sunday, the so-called "Christian Sabbath".

I believe in both cases the error is the same!—namely, making a non-Biblical distinction between ceremonial and moral aspects of the Law and failing to acknowledge the abrogation of the whole Law given by Moses and the establishment in its place of a new law, given by Jesus and His apostles, for those who enter the new covenant with God.

Today I want to show that the NT writers clearly teach that Christians now live under a new covenant that was inaugurated by the shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross and a new set of obligations based on the authority of Christ as God's spokesman for this age.

One of the things that has impressed me is the many illustrations NT writers used to teach the fact that we no longer live under the Law of Moses, but rather under the Law of Christ given by Him in anticipation of the new age, and by his disciples in the new age! Let's study some of them together.

I. AN ILLUSTRATION FROM MARRIAGE LAW

A. Paul in Romans seeks to show that the Law did not make men righteous but instead gave them the knowledge of sin. Therefore there was a need for a new way of righteousness, the way of forgiveness through faith in Jesus' sacrifice. He wanted his readers to understand that those who accept the sacrifice of Christ are living "under grace" and such would not produce a life of sin (as many thought) but a life of righteousness. Thus in Romans 7:1-6 Paul answers the question, "Shall we live in sin because we are under grace rather than under law?"

B. Rom. 7:1-6

C. Paul answers this question by the analogy of law and the law of marriage in particular.

1. **The first principle:** Law has jurisdiction over a person only as long as the person is living. Law has no binding power on dead people!

2. The second principle is an application of the first principle: A woman is bound by law to her husband as long as her husband is living; but is released if her husband dies. This principle has two applications:

- a) If while she is married to one man she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulterous.
- b) If her husband is dead, she is released from her husband and is not an adulterous though she is joined to another.

D. These principles can be used to illustrate what has happened to the Christian and its consequences.

1. Of course, the Law of Moses to which Paul refers was originally given to the Jews as their obligation in entering the covenant with God. But even so, it set forth principles of righteousness to which all men were amenable as the creation of God (Gentile as well as Jew). In that sense, all men were “bound” like a wife to the “letter” as if it were their husband.
2. Paul shows that neither Jew nor Greek kept those obligations to which they had been bound by the letter of the Law. Sin even used the Law to arouse the passions that led to its violation. The fruit of this relationship was death.
3. However now, through Jesus’ sacrifice, those bound in this marriage have been released from their obligation to the Law (and its demands of perfect obedience for righteousness). They have “died to the Law” and have been “joined to Christ”, so that they are now no longer “under Law” but “under grace”. Our obligation is to the revelation of the Spirit rather than the “letter”; thus we serve in the newness of this revelation rather than the oldness of the Ten Commandments. The result of this relationship is not the fruit of death, but instead the fruit of righteousness or life

E. Though it is not the main point Paul is making in this text, it is an important contributing truth: The Christian is now “released” from the Law and “bound” to Jesus. To seek justification by obedience to the Law and to Jesus is tantamount to a woman trying to be married to two men at once!

F. The Christian is not “bound” to the letter, the Ten Commandments! He is released from the Law, that he might be “joined to Christ” and to the new revelation of the Spirit!

II. AN ILLUSTRATION FROM BUSINESS

A. Col. 2:8-15

B. Rarely do we speak about or address the spiritual processes of accountability implied in these texts. Once again, Paul addresses the Colossians and shows them that the Law had constituted a set of demands or obligations that they must fulfill in order to be righteous. Paul uses an interesting term for the Law. He calls it a “handwriting of ordinances that

were against us and hostile to us” (KJ V). The NASV uses an interesting term “certificate of debt”.

C. Paul uses a figure of speech from the business world. Each time a person made a purchase, he wrote down in his own handwriting his obligation or debt to the creditor, much like we sign a credit card receipt or a bill of purchase. This was his certificate of debt. Here is a man who has amassed a debt he cannot pay. Someone pays the debt and blots out or cancels the indebtedness. The person so forgiven is no longer obligated to that debt. Instead the debt certificate is nailed up for all to see and marked with a giant X. It is crossed out or cancelled—paid in full!

D. In a similar way as he had spoken in Romans, so Paul once again shows that the Law revealed God’s righteous demands for all mankind. Each violation placed us in debt and called for our punishment. The law that was intended to make men righteous was thus “against us” and “hostile to us”. But there is good news.

E. “He paid a debt He did not owe, I owed a debt I could not pay, I needed someone to wash my sins away and now I sing a brand new song, “Amazing grace”, all day long. Christ Jesus paid the debt that I could never pay” (376).

F. Christ paid the debt that we could not pay. He met the obligations of the Law, living without sin. Thus, wholly righteous, he stood in our place in paying the debt for us. He took upon himself the punishment we deserve and we are forgiven of the debt..

G. Gone is all my debt of sin, a great change is wrought within, and with him I now begin, risen from the fall. Yet the debt I did not pay, someone die for me one day, sweeping all the debt away! Jesus paid it all!”

H. The obligations of the Law are cancelled for those who have “died with Christ and been buried with Him in baptism”. They have put faith in the work of God and been forgiven of their trespasses. Their sins have been off in a spiritual circumcision.

I. The Law with its Ten Commandments was the “handwriting of decrees against us and contrary to us”. Jesus took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross! Keeping the Law could not make them more righteous than they already are through the shed blood of Jesus!

J. Paul makes the application of his message in the verses that follow.

“Let no one be your judge...” Paul refers to the ordinances of the Law...

1. the Law concerning the religious festivals (Sabbath, new moon, feast)

2. The laws concerning uncleanness (food or drink)

K. Yet it is not a life of sin

1. The concern that many people have when you say we are not as Christians accountable to the Law of Moses or the Ten Commandments in particular is that it suggests a life of immorality and sin.

2. In a similar way as he had done in Romans, so now also in Colossians, Paul shows that “release” from the debt of the Law did not mean living in sin. Instead, he urges them in this way

a) “If you have died with Christ...

b) “If you have been raised with Christ...

3. The spiritual quality of our lives is not made worse because we are not amenable to the Law. Jesus while on earth and as the prophet of whom Moses had spoke, took from the Law of Moses the greatest principles of righteousness and made them the foundation of our spiritual life. He teaches us to love God with all our hearts and love our neighbor as ourselves. When we do this, then all that God hoped to accomplish in the Law is fulfilled in us!

a) Rom. 13:7

Conclusion: