

June 2, 2022

Dave:

Thanks for sharing the ministry’s Discipleship Training. It is true that our Greatest Need in these last days is “*Discipleship*”. Regarding the teaching you shared (*Lesson Fifteen – Bible Study: The New Covenant of Grace, Not Law*), I do challenge it as it has become one of the “*teaching of men*” that is making void the word of God (*Matthew 15:6-9*), which Jesus was challenging during His day. In fact, Jesus told us to beware of the “*leavened*” (*teaching*) of the religious leaders (*Matthew 16:6*), teaching the “*teaching of men*”, as like leaven, it would change people, not in “*repentance*” towards God, but rather in opposition to God. It is in this correspondence that I share Jesus’ teaching, “*The Fulfillment of the Law and Prophets*”, and its contextual meaning, especially in light of God’s “*New (or better translated, ‘renewed’) Covenant*”, that in fact it is not that the “*Law*” that was in error, as God tells us that it is “*Perfect*” (*Psalm 19:7, “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple,” and “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts,” Jeremiah 31:33-34*), but the “*Hearts*” of men are in error, “*Hard*” (*or disobedient*), of which we see in **Ezekiel 36:26-28**, God replacing the “*Hearts*” not the “*Law*”, which **results** in our **keeping** (*committing without delay*) **all of God’s statutes and commands**:

**“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone (a disobedient heart) from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh (an obedient heart). And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”**

The error of most teaching on the “*Law*” is their lack of importance/recognition of Jesus’ teaching on it (“*Law*”), of which Paul does prioritize as the foundation of his teachings, “*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ,*” *1 Corinthians 11:1*, and “*For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ,*” *1 Corinthians 3:10-12*. It is “*Jesus’ teaching*” that Jesus commands His followers in His “*Great Commission*” to “*Make Disciples . . . teaching them to keep (committing without delay) all that I (Jesus) have commanded you,*” *Matthew 28:19-20*, consequently, on the other hand, Jesus teaches, “*But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant,*” *Matthew 23:3-12*, *Mark 12:38-40*, *Luke 20:45-47*, as a prioritization of who we are to “*Follow*”, God, not man, Jesus, our Messiah, the way, the truth, and the life (*John 14:6*), understanding, as Jesus taught, “*For the gate (Jesus, the size of one man) and the way (Jesus’ teachings) is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few,*” *Matthew 7:13-14*.

In the same spirit, regarding Paul’s teaching, we learn from Peter, “*just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote . . . in all his letters . . . there are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures . . . therefore . . . knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless (absent of God’s law) people and lose your own stability,*” *2 Peter 3:14-18*, and in fact Paul’s actual clarification of faith and the law in *Romans 3:31*, “*Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.*”

As you will learn here in Jesus’ teaching, known as the “*Sermon on the Mount*”, Jesus gives the “*Law*”, himself, His proper placement in our lives, as we learned in Jesus’ first commandment, “**Follow Me**” (“*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me,*” *John 10:27*), this faith walk has never been about “*Obedience*”, as there is no word in Hebrew for the word “*Obedience*” (“*obedience*” is not found anywhere throughout the Old Testament, other than in our English translations, but the word in Hebrew that is used is “*Shema*”, meaning to “*listen and follow without delay*”). This is the same commandment (“*follow me*”) that was given at

Mt Sinai (*“The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel. . . if you will indeed **obey** (“shema”, **listen** and **follow** without delay) my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation’ . . .*<sup>8</sup> *All the people answered together and said, ‘All that the LORD has spoken we will do,’” Exodus 19:3-8*), before God gave any additional Commandments for His people to follow, was to “*Shema*”, at which, all of the people agreed to the condition of the terms of the covenant. It is here in Jesus’ first commandment that the teaching continues, if we agree to “**Follow Jesus**”, we are agreeing to “**listen and follow without delay**” all His teaching going forward. Again, no “*Obedience*” required, but rather “**practicing loyalty**” (i.e. 1 John 2:29, “If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who **practices righteousness** has been born of him.”; 1 John 3:7, “Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever **practices righteousness** (loyalty to God) **is righteous, as he is righteous.**”; 1 John 3:10, “By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: *whoever does not **practice righteousness** (loyalty to God) is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.*”; 2 Timothy 3:16, “All **Scripture** (the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms) is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching . . . and for **training in righteousness** (loyalty to God).”), walking it out as it is required, which Jesus affirms in the following teaching, not completely done away with, at least not until “*heaven and earth pass away*”, which we learn from the Scriptures is not until after the Millennial Reign of Christ and the Final Judgement (*Matthew 5:18; 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-21:8*).

In fact, we find Jesus once again affirming this same teaching and instruction at the conclusion of His “*Sermon on the Mount*”, as read in Matthew 7:21-29:

*“<sup>21</sup> Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ <sup>23</sup> And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; **depart from me, you workers of lawlessness**’ (living without law or in violation of the law) . . .*

*. . . <sup>24</sup> Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it’ . . . <sup>28</sup> And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, <sup>29</sup> for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.”*

But just before we proceed through this foundational teaching of Jesus on the proper placement of the “*Law and the Prophets*”, in His own words, following are additional contextual teachings of Jesus, the Word of God, on this same foundational topic:

*<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, you will keep my commandments . . . <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him” . . . <sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. <sup>24</sup> Whoever does not love me does not keep my words.” **Matthew 14:15, 21-24***

*<sup>9</sup> “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.” **Matthew 15:9-11***

*“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the*

Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.” **John 12:46-50**

<sup>16</sup>“And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” <sup>17</sup> And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” <sup>18</sup> He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, <sup>19</sup> Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” **Matthew 19:16-19**

<sup>3</sup>“And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. <sup>4</sup> Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, <sup>5</sup> but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: <sup>6</sup> whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.” **1 John 2:23-6**

<sup>19</sup>“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” **Matthew 28:19-20**

<sup>14</sup>“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” **Revelation 22:14**

<sup>20</sup> “*Thus says the LORD: **If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time,** <sup>21</sup> **then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken,** so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. <sup>22</sup> As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me.” **Jeremiah 33:20-22***

United Brother in the Faith, *Ryan Roberts*

*“The law of the LORD is perfect”*  
Psalm 19:7

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*“Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.”*  
Ezekiel 22:26

## **Jesus, the Fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets – (Lesson 5)**

### **Introduction:**

Most people are not raised in the Jewish faith. To understand what Jesus is talking about and how the disciples heard Him requires some background information. Jesus introduces His next subject in the Sermon on Mount by talking about the Law and the Prophets. Let’s begin there.

The Torah<sup>1</sup> (“The Law” or “Teaching”) contains six hundred thirteen laws<sup>2</sup>. There are three hundred sixty-five negative ones. According to Jewish rabbis these supposedly correspond to the number of veins in the body or days in a year. There are two hundred forty-eight positive laws, which correspond to the number of bones in the body. The purpose of bones is to provide structure for the body. The veins carry blood and “*life is in the blood.*” Together God’s laws provide life and structure for the body or the way a person

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<sup>1</sup> **The Torah.** See article on page 9 (“Torah Defined”) for a full explanation.

<sup>2</sup> **six hundred thirteen laws.** The Hebrew numerical value (*gematria*) of the word *Torah* is 611, and combining Moses’s 611 commandments with the first two of the Ten Commandments which were the only ones heard directly from God, adds up to 613. Many of the commandments (*mitzvot*) cannot be currently observed following the destruction of the Second Temple (estimating just over 200 commandments, many of which Jesus taught us (*those who follow Him*) are representing in the earth today, by revelation, the “*Spirit of the Law*” lives on (i.e. “*you are the temple*” (1 Corinthians 3:16), “*you are a living sacrifice*” (Romans 12:1), “*be salted with fire*” (Mark 9:49), “*you are a sweet aroma*” (2 Corinthians 2:15), “*you are a royal priesthood*” (1 Peter 2:9), “*you are the light of the world (the menorah)*” (Matthew 5:14-16), etc.). In addition, one-day, there will be the prophetic fulfillment of the building of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Temple (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; Ezekiel 43:4-7; 47:1-23; Zechariah 14:3-4; Matthew 24:15-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 11:1-2), in which these Temple commandments will become required again (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:4), as well as the focus of end-time prophecy and the anti-Christ (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:4), and from which Jesus will rule from for the entire millennial reign (Zechariah 14:3-4; Revelation 20)), though they still retain religious significance. According to one standard reckoning, there are 77 positive and 194 negative commandments that can be observed today, of which there are 26 commands that apply only within the Land of Israel. Furthermore, there are some time-related commandments from which women are exempt (examples include *shofar*, *sukkah*, *lulav*, *tzitzit* and *tefillin*). Some depend on the special status of a person in Judaism (such as *kohanim*), while others apply only to men or only to women. Finally, Jesus does not fulfill the earthly Tabernacle/Temple worship, as read in Hebrews 8:4, “*Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law,*” but rather according to a **heavenly order**, as read in Hebrews 7:13-17:

*“For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek (who was both the “King of Righteousness” and “King of Peace”), who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of him, ‘You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek (a heavenly order, not an earthly order).’”*

**Scriptural Context:** “Then after his (Abram’s) return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley). And **Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.** And he blessed him and said, “*Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.*” And he (Abram) gave him a tenth of all.” (Genesis 14:17-20)

According to Scripture, Melchizedek was both the “King of Righteousness” and “King of Peace” (Hebrews 7:2). This is derived from his name and his title. His name was Melchizedek (*Melchi* meaning king and *zedek* meaning righteousness). His title was king of *Salem (Shalom)*, meaning “peace”. Since he was the “King of Righteousness and Peace,” it meant that he had authority over those two things. Therefore, he had the power to grant righteousness and peace to anyone as he wished.

Melchizedek imparted his righteousness and peace to Abraham through the gifts of bread (**righteousness**) and wine (**peace**). Then, he spoke a blessing to Abraham. Abraham was so honored by Melchizedek’s gifts and blessing that he gave Melchizedek a tithe (tenth) of all God had given him (the plunder of the conquered worldly kings).

According to Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews chapters 5 and 6, Jesus is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. And in the book of Hebrews, Jesus is referred to as the high priest of that order fifteen times. This has profound implications in regards to the bread and wine.

The order of Melchizedek is a “royal priesthood” since the head of the order was a king (Melchizedek was king of righteousness and king of peace). Jesus, being the high priest of that order is able to impart righteousness and peace through the elements of bread and wine in the same manner as Melchizedek did.

should live daily or 365 days a year. These laws fall into two broad categories: ceremonial (laws towards God) and civil (laws towards one another). The Ten Commandments summarize all these laws and are found in Exodus 20:1-17.

When Moses descended from Mount Sinai he delivered The Ten Commandments written on two tablets of stone. Five commandments were written on each tablet. **(See two tablet layout at the end of this lesson)** The first five laws deal with man’s relationship to God and the second five with man’s relationship to one another. Each set of five is listed in descending order from the greatest to the least. The idea being that if a person broke the least of the commandments he was on a path that would lead to the breaking of the greatest commandment.

In the first set of five, the fifth commandment is “Honor your father and mother.” If a person breaks that commandment it leads to breaking the first commandment, “You shall have no other gods before Me.” The thought goes like this. If a person will not honor his parents whom God has placed over him, then he will not honor God either because he is self-willed and consider himself to be god.

In the second set of five, the tenth commandment is “You shall not covet anything that belongs to another”. If a person breaks that commandment it leads to breaking the sixth commandment, “You shall not murder”. The thought goes like this. When a person covets he will stop at nothing to get it. A current example of this concept would be a bank robber, who kills someone during a holdup. He starts by coveting something that is not his, and then steals what he wants and finally winds up murdering someone to get it.

The Ten Commandments can be further summarized by just two commandments. When Jesus was confronted with the question as to which was the great commandment in the Law, Jesus replied by quoting two Scriptures: Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. *“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.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”*

### Reading the Scripture:

**Jesus, the Fulfillment of the Law and Prophets**  
**The Sermon on the Mount**  
**Matthew 5:17-20**  
*Scripture excerpts from “Follow Me: A Message from God”*

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets<sup>3</sup>; I did not come to abolish,<sup>4</sup> but to fulfill.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> **the Law or the Prophets** – Jesus was referring to everything that His Father had established (the Law) and everything that His Father wanted brought to pass (the Prophets). The Law simply defined is the *teaching and instruction* of G-d, but more than a divinely ordained behavior pattern for life on earth: it also describes G-d’s own “behavior pattern,” the manner in which He chooses to relate to His creation. When we order our lives after Torah’s directives, we are not only fulfilling G-d’s will – we are also emulating His “behavior,” translating the divine relationship with creation into human/physical terms. In the words of the *rabbis*, “G-d’s manner is not like the manner of flesh and blood. The manner of flesh and blood is that he instructs others to do, but does not do himself; G-d, however, what He Himself does, that is what He tells *his people* to do and observe,” ([chabad.org/media/pdf/17098.pdf](http://chabad.org/media/pdf/17098.pdf)); (i.e. 1 John 2:3-6, “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”).

<sup>4</sup> **Abolish** – (*I did not*) loosen thoroughly, (*I did not*) break up, (*I did not*) overthrow, (*I did not*) destroy (both literally and metaphorically), (*I did not*) unyoke, unharness a carriage horse or pack animal. Nor did I metaphorically **overthrow, render vain, deprive of success, bring to naught** God’s institutions, forms of government, laws. (*Synonyms: deprive of force, annul, abrogate, discard.*) – (<https://biblehub.com/greek/2647.htm>).

<sup>5</sup> **Fulfill** – to be obeyed (*walked out*) as it should be (<https://biblehub.com/greek/4137.htm>); (i.e. Matthew 3:13-15, “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.<sup>14</sup> John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. Whoever then **annuls**<sup>6</sup> one of the least of these **commandments**,<sup>7</sup> and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever **keeps**<sup>8</sup> and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your **righteousness**<sup>9</sup> surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

### The Command:

- ❖ Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to **fulfill** (to be obeyed (walked out) as it should be; i.e. Ezekiel 36:25-27, “. . . I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”).

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baptized by you, and do you come to me?”<sup>15</sup> But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he consented.” (i.e. Ezekiel 36:25-27, “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And **I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules,**” and Galatians 5:25, “If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”).

<sup>6</sup> **Annul (abrogate, relaxes)** – declare invalid (an official agreement, decision, or result), to “loosen” (literally or figuratively). (Synonyms: *subvert (undermine the power and authority of (an established system or institution) – (https://biblehub.com/greek/3089.htm); (i.e. declare (a marriage) to have had no legal existence.). (Abrogate) repeal or do away with (a law, right, or formal agreement) or evade (a responsibility or duty). (Synonyms: repudiate, revoke, repeal, rescind, overturn, overrule, override, do away with, annul, break off, invalidate, nullify, void, negate, dissolve, veto, declare null and void, discontinue) – (https://www.bing.com/search?q=abrogate+meaning); (i.e. Romans 3:31, “Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law,” Romans 2:12, “. . . all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law,” Romans 2:13, “For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.”).*

<sup>7</sup> **Parallel Biblical Law definitions** – i.e. Matthew 28:20, “teaching them to **observe** all the **I have commanded** you,” **observe**: I keep, guard, observe, keep watch over, continue keeping guard over, preserve – (https://biblehub.com/greek/5083.htm); and **I have commanded**: to order, command to be done, enjoin (to direct or impose by authoritative order or with urgent admonition (gentle or friendly reproof, counsel or warning against fault or oversight) – (https://biblehub.com/greek/1781.htm); i.e. Deuteronomy 30:11-20, “If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his **statutes** and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you,” **statutes**: (in the words of the rabbis) Divine law was first given to us encapsulated in the Ten Commandments, which were etched by the hand of G-d in two tablets of stone . . . When something is written, the substance of the letters that express it – the ink – remains a separate entity from the substance upon which they have been set – the parchment. On the other hand, letters engraved in stone are forged in it: the words are stone and the stone is words . . . By the same token, there is an aspect of Torah that is “inked” on our soul; we understand it, our emotions are roused by it; it becomes our “lifestyle” or even our “personality”; but it remains something additional to ourselves. But there is a dimension of Torah that is **statutes**, engrave in our being. There is a dimension of Torah which expresses a bond with G-d that is the very essence of a believer’s soul, (chabad.org/parshah/article\_cdo/aid/2832/jewish/Reasoning-The-Stone.htm); (i.e. Exodus 31:18, Exodus 32:16, Jeremiah 31:33, 2 Corinthians 3:3-9).

<sup>8</sup> **Keeps (does, to do)** – to make or do (I make, manufacture, construct; I do, act, cause.). (**To Do**) to follow some method in expressing by deeds the feelings and thoughts of the mind; universally, describing the mode of action: to act rightly, to do the law, meet its demands, (to do) the things which the law commands. (Synonyms: *abide, agree, appoint, be, bear, cause, commit without any delay, exercise, fulfil, gain, hold, keep, observe, perform, provide, purpose, secure, tarry, work, yield) – (https://biblehub.com/greek/4160.htm).*

<sup>9</sup> **Righteousness** – properly, *judicial approval* (the verdict of approval); in the NT, *the approval of God* (“divine approval”); refers to *what is deemed right by the Lord* (after His examination), i.e. what is *approved in His eyes*; **the state of him who is such as he ought to be, righteousness; the condition acceptable to God; walking in the way of righteousness equivalent to an upright, righteous, man** – (https://biblehub.com/greek/1343.htm); (i.e. 2 Timothy 3:16, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for **training in righteousness.**”); **to do righteousness, to live uprightly** (i.e. 1 John 2:29, “If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who **practices righteousness** has been born of him,” 1 John 3:7, “Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever **practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous,**” 1 John 3:10, “By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: **whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God,** nor is the one who does not love his brother,” 1 Peter 2:24, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that **we might die to sin and live to righteousness.**”).

**Group Discussion:**

1. Many in the Church today are saying that Christians are no longer under law but grace. What do you understand this statement to mean?

**The Lesson:**

Jesus doesn't want His disciples to think that He is doing away with everything they have been taught in order to establish His own religion. He isn't doing that! But like parents towards their children, He wants them to gain in wisdom and understanding.

When Jesus spoke concerning the Law and the Prophets He was talking about more than just a few laws and prophecies. He was talking about the sum-total of all that was written in Scripture. Jesus was referring to everything that His father had established (the Law) and everything that His father wanted brought to pass (the Prophets). And Jesus declared that He alone would fulfill them!

After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus appeared to two of His disciples while they were on the road to Emmaus. *“And beginning with Moses (“Torah” or “The Law” or “Teaching”) and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures”*.<sup>10</sup> No ordinary man could perfectly fulfill all that was written, only the one of whom the Scriptures testified, the Word of God, Himself, Jesus.

The gospel according to the Apostle John opens with this testimony of Jesus. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being”*.<sup>11</sup> John's words are pregnant with meaning, but difficult to comprehend. Let's try to get a grip on them.

Do you remember how the Bible starts? *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* Do you remember how they were created? God spoke them into existence. By His word everything came into existence. According to John, Jesus is God's Word. You might say that Jesus is the creative force behind every one of God's thoughts and plans. He brings things to pass! God created everything through His Son, the Word of God.

The Scriptures are the revealed ideas and plans of our Father in heaven; it is up to the Word of God to bring them to pass. For nothing was created apart from Him. We know the Word of God by the name He was given at birth, Jesus or Yashua or Joshua. The meaning of the name is “I Am Salvation” or “God's Salvation”. The people of God were also to refer to the Word of God as Immanuel or “God With Us”. However, the Word of God is more than just Jesus or Immanuel. He is the Son of God, the creator of all things and one with God, His Father. He is the expression of all that God is.

Since the Word of God and the Father are one, how can they be divided? They can't. The Word of God is always in harmony with the Father and can do nothing except His will. In John 4:34 Jesus tells His disciples, *“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.”*

This concept of oneness, unity and harmony was passed on to man as we were created in the image of God. And since we were created in His image, God does not want us to lie. A lie destroys harmony, unity and oneness. Jesus cautioned His disciples to do what they said they were going to do when He told them, *“Let your yes be yes, and your no be no”*.<sup>12</sup> When a person does not do what he says he is going to do it tarnishes the image of God. There is no oneness, unity or harmony in that person because His words are not in line with his actions.

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<sup>10</sup> Luke 24:27

<sup>11</sup> John 1:1-3

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 5:37

As Jesus continues speaking He assures His disciples that the Law will not pass away until everything in it is fulfilled. All the commandments in The Law are spiritual, holy and good. Think of it this way, “Which of the laws are not good for people?” If the laws are good, then God, who is good and gave them, will not remove them.

Jesus goes on to say, *“Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”* Did you notice something interesting in His statement? A person can be in the kingdom of heaven and not keep the commandments and even teach others to do the same thing. The keeping or not keeping of the commandments is not the requirement of remaining in the kingdom of heaven. The observance of them only determines a person’s stature within the kingdom of heaven.<sup>13</sup>

Jesus’ next statement is a blockbuster! *“For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.* Entrance into the kingdom of heaven cannot be gained by keeping the laws and commandments. Jesus said righteousness greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees, who tried to keep, each law perfectly, was required. What is this righteousness?

The Apostle Paul in Romans 4:3 and 9 answers the question. *“For what does the Scripture say? ‘AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.’”* Abraham not only believed that God existed but in what God said. Abraham believed the Word of God. Jesus is the Word of God. Abraham trusted God and His Word, the Father and the Son. This trust, belief or confidence is called faith. *“Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.”*

**The Point of the Lesson:**

Jesus Christ, fulfills all the requirements of the Law and the Prophets. An individual does not gain entrance into the kingdom of heaven by fulfilling those requirements, but by a belief in and dependence on Jesus Christ, the Word of God.

*– Teaching from “A Journey with Jesus” by Key2Changes.com*

**The Ten Commandments**

**Tablet 1 - Love of God**

**1**

“You shall have no other gods before Me.”

**2**

“You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing loving kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

**3**

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.”

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<sup>13</sup> The term “kingdom of heaven” is used throughout Matthew’s gospel and means the “kingdom of God.” Many Jewish people as a pious observance will not use the name “God” so use an evasive synonym in its place. The kingdom of God simply means the rule of God or God ruling over His people.

**4**

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

**5**

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.”

**Tablet 2 - Love of Neighbor**

**6**

“You shall not murder.”

**7**

“You shall not commit adultery.”

**8**

“You shall not steal.”

**9**

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

**10**

“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

***“Torah” Defined***

*Law is Hitting the Mark while Sin is Missing the Mark . . . . . page 10*

*What does it mean to Walk with God? . . . . . page 11*

*You Who Practice Lawlessness . . . . . page 13*

**Law is Hitting the Mark while Sin is Missing the Mark**

*Insights from Hebrew*

LAW! Such a harsh word. A word disliked and abhorred by many Christians. But was this always the case? Why did David delight in the “Law”? (Ps 1:2, 119:70,77,174) Why did Paul – the misunderstood apostle say the same thing? “I delight in the law of God, in my inner being.” (Rom 7:22). A simple word study into the original Manuscripts of the Scriptures can help us understand God’s Law in new light.

The word commonly translated as “LAW” in our English versions of the Scriptures is “Torah” in the Original Hebrew and derives from the root word “Yarah”:

**Strong’s Hebrew Concordance H8451 – תורה – tôrâh**

From H3384; a precept or statute, especially the Decalogue or Pentateuch: – law.

(Brown-Driver-Briggs’ Hebrew Lexicon – law, direction, instruction)

**Strong’s Hebrew Concordance H3384 – ירה – yârâh**

A primitive root; properly to flow as water (that is, to rain); transitively to lay or throw (especially an arrow, that is, to shoot); figuratively to point out (as if by aiming the finger), to teach: – (+) archer, cast, direct, inform, instruct, lay, shew, shoot, teach (-er, -ing), through.

(Brown-Driver-Briggs’ Hebrew Lexicon – to throw, shoot, cast, pour)

Looking at the definitions given on the Strong’s Concordance and BDB Lexicon, it is clear that Torah and its root word Yarah are connected to “teaching and instruction”. And not only is it connected to these ideas, it also denotes “shooting an arrow” or “taking aim”. A few examples of usage of the word “Yarah” is given below:

**Genesis 46:28** And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to **direct (H3384)** his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.

**1 Samuel 20:20** And I will **shoot (H3384)** three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark.

**Psalms 64:7** But God shall **shoot (H3384)** at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded.

**Exodus 4:12** Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and **teach (H3384)** thee what thou shalt say.

**Leviticus 10:11** And that ye may **teach (H3384)** the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.

**Psalms 119:102** I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast **taught (H3384)** me.

Since we have looked at the meaning of Torah, let us look at another word which is closely connected with it in Scripture – the word “SIN”. The word commonly translated as “SIN” in our English versions of the Scriptures is “Chatta’ah” in the Original Hebrew and derives from the root word “Chatta”:

**Strong’s Hebrew Concordance H2403 – חטאת – chattâ’âh**

From H2398; an offence (sometimes habitual sinfulness), and its penalty, occasion, sacrifice, or expiation; also (concretely) an offender: – punishment (of sin), purifying (-fication for sin), sin (-ner, offering).

(Brown-Driver-Briggs’ Hebrew Lexicon – sin, sinful, sin offering)

**Strong’s Hebrew Concordance H2398 – חט – châtâ’**

A primitive root; properly to miss; hence (figuratively and generally) to sin; by inference to forfeit, lack, expiate, repent, (causatively) lead astray, condemn: – bear the blame, cleanse, commit [sin], by fault, harm he hath done, loss, miss, (make) offend (-er), offer for sin, purge, purify (self), make reconciliation, (cause, make) sin (-ful, -ness), trespassive.

(Brown-Driver-Briggs’ Hebrew Lexicon – to sin, miss, miss the way, go wrong, incur guilt, forfeit, purify from uncleanness)

Looking at the definitions given on the Strong’s Concordance and BDB Lexicon, it is clear that Chatta’ah and its root word Chatta are connected to “missing and going astray”. It denotes “missing the mark”. An example is given below:

**Judges 20:16** Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men left handed; everyone could sling stones at a hair breadth, and not **miss (H2398)**

## The relationship between Sin and Law

As per John’s explanation in his 1st Epistle, Sin = Breaking the Law (**1 John 3:4** “Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.”).

While “Law” means to “shoot”, “take aim”, “direct” and “instruct”, “Sin” means to “miss” or “go astray”. If we put this thought in a picture form, “Torah” is an archer who aims/shoots at a target, while “Sin” is the same archer “missing the mark”. If we stop taking aim at the perfect instructions of God, we stand to miss the mark, thereby falling into “Sin”.

*“<sup>10</sup> And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. <sup>11</sup> And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.”* **Matthew 24:10-12** (and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

**How do we prevent this “The Great Falling Away” and address “Lawlessness”?**

### **The Law!**

*(the teaching and instruction of God, found in the Word of God, the Way, the Truth, the Life)*

– Word Study by Key2Changes.com

## **What does it mean to Walk with God?**

It does not mean to have the intellectual understanding of the workings of God. No, I am walking with God . . . is like a dance . . . *What does that mean?*

(defined) Torah law is the same word for “Walk”, Jewish law is not called any of the legal terms; Jewish law is called “the walk” . . . here we uncover the essences of Faith as it should be understood and lived according to the *Scriptures* . . . to live with *faith* is not only to live in action, but it is to live faithfully . . .

. . . (the root of faith is) Emunah “Faith”, Emun “Practice”, Ne’eman “Loyalty” . . . Biblical faith directs us towards a living relationship with God, that’s the essence of Covenant; in relationships there is moments of intimacy, there is moments of distance, highs, lows . . . relationship is real, its dynamic, but to walk with God, to be wholehearted is to be “loyal” in our encounter with God . . . (we) touch the ultimate good . . . we align ourselves with that “Vision”, in that direction, and then the walk begins . . . one step at a time . . . we do not have all the answers. There is so much unknown, so much mystery, but we are always given enough to take the next step . . .

Let’s look at the word “Israel”. Inside the word “Israel” is “struggle”, but the word itself “Israel” is made up of two words, one is “Straight” and then you have “God”, so think about what that is saying to us, what is it to live by the faith of Israel; it is to put God up in front of our “Vision”, and then “Straight”, we have a path, we have our eyes set on the Kingdom of God, our highest ideals, our values that will never be corrupted, we will . . . live out our lives with Laser like Focus, “Straight” ahead.

The default of this world is “struggle”, and the definition of Israel is to “Struggle and to Prevail”, we have the keys, how to persevere in the hard times and prevail . . . we have been gifted . . . “Israel” . . . we are going to be challenged and pushed to the ends of our limits and beyond; and that seems to be one of the fundamental purposes of life . . . to grow beyond ourselves, in the struggle I become more than who I am, maybe that is the purpose here, to become more than who you are . . . that is why Israel is called “to embrace the struggle, to embody the struggle”, when you prevail you emerge triumphed, you emerge greater and stronger. A life of *Faith* is not something that you can just casually say, “I believe” . . . that is not going to last. Biblical “Faith”, you contend with the world, you struggle with the world, you struggle towards God, you struggle with yourself, and in the struggle you discover your strength, you discover your character,

your inner value, you discover yourself; the challenges of life are going to hit us and there is nothing we can do about that, but in confronting the suffering of life, you can do something honorable, admirable, knowable, worthy, glorious, powerful, helpful, upright . . . right there, that is the light of Israel . . . in that struggle you can bring the light of those amazing gifts to the world. *Faith* is not trying to convince yourself of the existence of a transcendent power that you can believe in . . . that is a cognitive approach to faith, that is the approach to solving a scientific problem. The prophets were not scientists . . . I do not believe that I love *God*, I live my love *for God*, and out of my loyalty and action, a deeper relationship is developed. *Faith* is a life committed to action, to love . . . a covenant . . . God makes a covenant with us . . . a covenant is a commitment . . . to be committed in practice, in action, to be loyal in your life, that is the root of what the word means, it means “*Loyal*”, it is to be loyal to the internal calling inside of you . . . there is a calling inside of all of us . . . God’s law is written in our heart if we just open it up and look in . . .

What did Abraham have, “*a Calling*”, a move away from organized religion, and it is a return to a relationship, a return to a simple pure wholehearted “walk with God” . . . walking and living in alignment with God . . . with the highest ideal you could imagine . . . that is *Biblical Faith* . . . to live life with love as your driving force, with unshakable character, and the courage of Joshua to struggle and prevail and conquer the land of Israel . . .

. . . we have no idea how much power you will discover in your walk through life as you start aiming towards the higher good, and in pursuit of your highest self, and in pursuit of the ultimate good, that’s where you will find the meaning in your life, when you start living with character, and you start walking with God aligned with your ideals, good things will happen, you will be blessed . . .

. . . that does not always mean you’re going to succeed in every endeavor or in every project, but “*Committed*”, living “*Committed*” to “walking with God”, ensures that every day in pursuit of that goal you will be blessed, even if the goal is never accomplished. Everyone needs to take a strategy of how they are going to live life, this is the Biblical Strategy, this is the “*Biblical Walk*”, to walk uncompromisingly, “*Straight with God*” . . . that is the Deeper Meaning of the Biblical Promise:

**“He who Blesses Israel will be Blessed”** - *(meaning) If you live a life committed to manifesting the ultimate good, committed to building Zion, you will attract good into your life, that is the essence of what it means to walking with God. To live in the Walk. We have a covenant, and a commitment to the ultimate good. We have temptations to our right and we have self-doubts to the left, and Biblical Faith is to walk in alignment with that Vision no matter. That is the essence of loyalty to the King.*

. . . What is that next stage, the Law is going to be written on our hearts. What does that mean? It is a mistake to say that this is a prophecy that has already been fulfilled, it must be fulfilled again, it must be fulfilled in our generation, that’s the message. Open your heart, there is . . . a place inside of you that is calling you to be a higher being, and if all of us hear that calling, if all of us live by that, we manifest a joint destiny that all of us are collected to. From the mountains of Judea to the Colorado Rocky’s, it’s . . . one destiny, a House of Prayer for all Nations, that will be a Blessing for all Nations. So, “*to walk with God*”, may our Walk direct us to that ultimate Prophetic Vision . . . aligned with His Torah (*God’s teaching and instruction, the walk He is calling us to*), may we all walk whole heartedly with God, all the way to a new rebuilt Jerusalem.

*– excerpts from an audio teaching of a Rabbi living in Judea, on the Biblical Definition of “Torah”*

## **You Who Practice Lawlessness**

### **Matthew 7:21-23**

*Scripture excerpts from “Follow Me: A Message from God”*

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'<sup>14</sup>

**Lawlessness** (Strong's No. 458 – *translation*: anomia) properly, without law; *lawlessness*; **the utter disregard for God's law** (*His written and living Word*). 1 John 3:4, “*Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.*” While “Law” means to “shoot”, “take aim”, “direct” and “instruct”, “Sin” means to “miss” or “go astray”. If we put this thought in a picture form, “**Torah**” (*the teaching and instruction of God*) is an archer who aims/shoots at a target, while “Sin” is the same archer “missing the mark”. If we stop taking aim at the **perfect instructions of God** (“*Torah*”), we stand to miss the mark, thereby falling into “Sin” (i.e. 2 Thessalonians 2, **The Man of Lawlessness**).

Jesus clearly tells His disciples that not everyone who declares that Jesus is Lord actually belongs to Him. He is cautioning His disciples about an error concerning salvation that will creep into the Church.

Both the apostle Paul (Romans 10:8-21, “. . . *But they have not all obeyed the gospel . . .*”) and Peter (2 Peter 3:16-18, “. . . *take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.*”) talk about this error, concerning the lordship of Jesus Christ, which involves giving only mental ascent to the fact that Jesus is Lord. People will simply say the words “*Jesus is Lord*” and believe they will be saved. To them the statement becomes a magical incantation or ticket to heaven. Whereas the truth of the matter is that **when a person confesses that Jesus is Lord, he is in fact stating that he will do everything that his Lord commands him to do**. When a person does not do as his Lord commands it shows that he is a hypocrite, saying one thing and doing another. His behavior reveals his character. He really doesn't believe in his heart that Jesus is Lord or he would do what Jesus says. As James (James 2:17) puts it, “*Faith without works is dead.*”

In **John 12:46-50**, Jesus reiterates this truth:

*I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. **He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.** For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak. And I know that **His commandment is eternal life**; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”*

– excerpts from Lesson 17: Fruit Inspection, on pages 82-87

## **Relationship to God**

It's popular in preaching the gospel or sermons to tell people that they **must** have a personal relationship with God. *But what does that mean?* For example, what is the nature of the relationship, how does it get started, what expectations are there in the relationship and how does it work in a practical sense? These are all valid questions that race through a person's mind but usually go unanswered.

The name of the relationship is **covenant** and it is the basis for Biblical Faith. All denominations of Christians acknowledge this covenant relationship, yet many forget about it and what it means when it

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<sup>14</sup> 'DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS'. *Leviticus 26*. **Lawlessness** here means living without law or in violation of the law. Followers of Jesus Christ are still under law . . . The Law of the Spirit of Christ, a higher standard of living, the Spirit of the Law.

comes to arguing their particular point of view. Without knowledge of what a covenant is and how its parts work, much of what it means to be a Christian is difficult to understand. So let’s take a closer look at the key concept of covenant.

### **The Covenant Relationship**

An individual becomes a Christian by entering into a covenant with God. The Biblical name of that covenant is the “New Covenant”<sup>15</sup> and is referenced by Scripture in Jeremiah 31:31-34. “*Behold, days are coming,*’ declares the LORD, *‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,’ declares the LORD. ‘But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ declares the LORD, ‘I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, “Know the LORD,” for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,’ declares the LORD, ‘for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.’”*

A covenant in its simplest terms is an **agreement** or **promise** between two or more parties. It is derived from the Hebrew word “*berith*”, which means to divide or cut in two. It has come to mean, “*a coming together*” which signifies a mutual undertaking between two or more parties each binding himself to fulfill obligations. It does not in and of itself contain the idea of joint obligation. It mostly signifies an obligation undertaken by a single person.

Covenant is the way that **God has chosen** to enter into relationship with men. There are several of these covenants recorded in the Bible. Seven predominant ones are the: Adamic (Genesis 1:28-29; 2:15; 3:5, 14-15, 21), Noahaic (Genesis 6:18; 9:1-17), Abrahamic (Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 15:4-21; Genesis 17:6-14; Deuteronomy 30:1-20), Mosaic (Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 26:17-18; Exodus 31:12-18), Palestinian (Deuteronomy 28:1, 15; 30:19), Davidic (1 Samuel 16:13; 2 Samuel 7:11-18; 1 Chronicles 17:10-14; Psalm 89:34-37; Jeremiah 33:20-21) and the New (meaning “Renew, Repair, Restore” – Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Covenants have been used since ancient times as a way for people to come together. For example, friends would pledge their friendship forever, enemies would make peace and become friends, and conquerors brought the conquered into submission and worked out a friendly relationship with them.

The key word in all these covenant agreements is **friend**. Our modern-day usage of the word friend has been corrupted. In most cases we should be using the term, “acquaintance”. The word friend, according to the dictionary, comes from prehistoric times and has a root meaning of “to love”. A friend is one who is attached to another by esteem or affection, or one that is not hostile, or one that is of the same nation, party or group. The most common form of covenant that people participate in today is **marriage**.

Covenants are entered into by representatives who become functionally one and are bound together in an unbreakable treaty. They are in fact **exchanging** their lives with one another (*Jesus, “I lay down my life . . . on my own accord”* John 10:17-18 and *His Followers, “whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple”* – John 13:34-35; Matthew 16:24-25; Luke 14:26-27). The representatives can be the actual people engaged in the covenant themselves or they can also represent their families, organizations, nations, the unborn or those who wish to be part of it.

Covenants are formally binding agreements much like are modern day contracts however they differ in five primary ways:

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<sup>15</sup> The Hebrew name for this covenant is “Brit Hadashah”.

1. A covenant is initiated based on the concept of friendship, whereas a contract is initiated to achieve an agreement.
2. A covenant is based on trust between the parties. (i.e. “I know you care for me.”) A contract is based on distrust for one another.
3. A covenant is based on unlimited responsibility. (i.e. “I will do everything in my power to bless you.”) A contract is based on limited liabilities.
4. A covenant cannot be broken if new circumstances occur, whereas a contract can be voided by mutual consent.
5. A covenant is made before impartial witnesses, whereas a contract needs only the agreement of the two participating parties.

### **The Parts of a Covenant**

Every covenant, including the New Covenant has four basic parts:

1. The Choice
2. The Law or terms of the agreement
3. The Sacrifice
4. The Sign which is “a memorial” or “in remembrance of”

### **The Choice**

The “Choice” consists of an **invitation** or proposal by one party to another to come into a covenant agreement. The stronger one usually makes the invitation or proposal since he has more to offer. The weaker one accepts the offer. This is why we historically see a man proposing marriage to a woman.

In the New Covenant, God invites or proposes that an individual enter into a covenant relationship with Him. The invitation comes through the preaching of the gospel or as some would say by declaring the “good news” of Jesus Christ. It is God calling out to people to come to Him. When a person **hears** this invitation it is what the Scripture refers to as being “**called**” by God. Once a person **accepts** the invitation and enters into the New Covenant the terms **chosen**<sup>16</sup> or elect apply to him.

The choice also includes a discussion of what the parties’ relationship had been up to this time, what brought them together and what their relationship would be in the future.

In the New Covenant the relationship of Christians had been that of enemies of God and sinners. The goodness of God is what brings them together and their relationship in the future will be that of friends and family.

The choice also includes a preliminary exchange of gifts such as clothing, weapons, rings or dowry. This demonstrates the parties’ goodwill toward one another.

In the New Covenant the exchange of gifts takes place around the sacrament of baptism. The individual brings his gifts of repentance from dead works and faith towards God when he gets water baptized. That is why water baptism is sometimes referred to as a baptism of repentance. God also brings His gifts . . . the forgiveness of sins and a new life for the individual or as some would say . . . the gift of eternal life. God evidences these gifts by giving the individual the Holy Spirit who then comes to dwell within the individual. This is called being baptized with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit serves as the seal of the covenant or in other words it is God’s way of “sealing the deal.”

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<sup>16</sup> For example, “Many are called (invited) but few are chosen” (accept). (Matthew 22:14)

## The Law

The second element, “The Law” or “terms of the agreement” consists of a **promise** to **exchange** lives. For example, your debts are my debts, my bank account is your bank account, my house is your house, my strength is your protection and my body is your body. The legal term for this relationship of chosen bondage is “lovingkindness.”<sup>17</sup>

The idea of an exchanged life with Christ through the New Covenant has huge implications for Christians. Basically they get to exchange everything they are or have for everything that Christ is and has. For example their sins for His righteousness, their physical talents and gifts for His spiritual gifts, their worldly reasoning for His wisdom and their sorrows for His joy. He also gets their obedience in exchange for His provision and their faith in what He says in exchange for His reward. Is that a good deal or what?

Then the parties make vows or promises to one another. For example in a wedding ceremony we usually hear a promise of love and faithfulness to one another for better or worse, richer or poorer and in sickness and health as long as we both shall live.

Christians hear similar words as the Apostle Paul reminds them in Hebrews 13:5 that Christ said: *“I will never leave you or forsake you.”*

The Law also consists of **curses** and **blessings**. In other words, bad things happen to those who do not adhere to the terms of the covenant and good things happen when they do.

We find some examples of New Covenant blessings and curses in the words of Jesus. For example, in the Beatitudes we hear these kinds of words: *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.”* Jesus also expressed **curses** when He said: *“Do not judge lest you be judged. If you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgression. Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.”*

## The Sacrifice

The third element, “The Sacrifice” consists of shedding the blood of at least one animal whose body is cut into pieces and divided into two separate piles of meat. This is done with the thought that the two bloody heaps of meat will stand as **witnesses** that the parties are giving each other to one another unto death. The sacrificial element of a covenant is foundational since the Hebrew word for covenant means to “**divide**” or “cut in two”.<sup>18</sup>

The two bloody heaps of meat are meant to convey a couple of additional thoughts to the participating parties. They are: (1) If you dare break or become unfaithful to this covenant, may God do this to you and more and (2) In order to keep this covenant, I will die if necessary.

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<sup>17</sup> Lovingkindness (covenant loyalty or faithfulness) is a tender (soft, delicate, yielding, mild, gentle, precious, considerate, dear) and benevolent (for the purpose of doing good, kindness, help) affection (to strive after).

<sup>18</sup> “**divide**” or “**cut** in two”: i.e. Genesis 15:1-18, “. . . *When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram . . .*” and Jeremiah 34:18, *“And the men who transgressed my covenant and did not keep the terms of the covenant that they made before me, I will make them like the calf that they cut in two and passed between in parts.”*

Once the meat is separated, the representatives **walk** through the pieces in a figure eight. The number eight has a dual meaning. In the Bible it represents a “new beginning”. From the book of Genesis we learn that God created the heavens and the earth in six days and on the seventh day He rested. From this we are to understand that the number seven represents the completion of the cycle, therefore the number eight represents “the starting another cycle” or “beginning something new.” A second meaning for the number eight arises when it is laid on its side. The number ( $\infty$ ) then becomes the symbol for “infinity” or “without end” or “eternal”.

A great picture of covenant making is found in the Bible, when God makes a covenant with Abram. This is found in the book of Genesis, chapter 15. A portion of that chapter reads as follows: *So God said to him, “Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” Then Abram brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram. (Genesis 15:9, 10, 17 and 18)*

In the New Covenant, God provides the sacrifice . . . His son, Jesus Christ, “the Lamb of God.” Jesus serves as a witness to the covenant. But God has called other witnesses as well. They are Heaven and Earth, the Law and the Prophets, heavenly angels and members of the congregation as well as the water, the blood and the Spirit as referenced in 1 John 5:7-8.

### **The Sign**

The fourth element of a covenant is “The Sign.” It is also known as a “**memorial**” or “in remembrance of”, and is used to help the parties remember the covenant they have made with each other. Throughout history people have used several different types of signs and memorials. For example: They heaped up stones, or planted a forest, or exchanged herds of animals and in marriages they exchanged rings.

Many times they exchanged names and when the covenant was complete they would eat a meal. The meal was usually a light one . . . symbolic in nature consisting of bread and wine or water. This memorial meal can easily be identified at weddings. It’s when the bride and groom feed each other a piece of cake and share a glass of champagne.

When an individual enters the New Covenant he takes another name, “Christian” and participates in the covenant meal, which is known as “communion”.

After Jesus’ death the New Covenant was offered immediately to the Jewish people, which was in accordance with the Scripture. In Jeremiah 31:31 God had declared, *“I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”* Some ten years later the New Covenant was offered to the Gentiles. The story of how this occurred is the subject of is the subject of chapter 10, in the book of Acts.

*– Teaching by Michael Gibson of Key2Changes.com*

### **Is Moses’ Law working up to now?**

*Following is the response to one of our Disciple Maker’s question(s) from a groups he was discipling:*

#### **1. Is Moses’ Law working up to now?**

***What does Jesus say:***

***Matthew 5:17-20, “Do not think that I came to abolish (“abolish”: (I did not) loosen thoroughly, (I did not) break up, (I did not) overthrow, (I did not) destroy (both literally and metaphorically), (I did not) unyoke, unharness a carriage horse or pack animal. Nor did I metaphorically overthrow, render vain “the Law or the Prophets”) the Law or the Prophets (“the Law or the Prophets”:***

EVERYTHING that the Father has established (the Law) and EVERYTHING that the Father wanted brought to pass (the Prophets)); I did not come to **abolish** (“abolish”: (I did not) loosen thoroughly, (I did not) break up, (I did not) overthrow, (I did not) destroy (both literally and metaphorically), (I did not) unyoke, unharness a carriage horse or pack animal. Nor did I metaphorically overthrow, render vain “the Law or the Prophets”), but to **fulfill** (“fulfill”: to be obeyed (walked out) as it should be.). For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, **until all is accomplished** (The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, God Himself, the Word of God, will remain relevant until unto a “New Heaven and New Earth” is established at the end of Jesus’ Millennial Reign, and into Eternity (“Jesus (the Word of God) is the same yesterday, and today, and forever,” Hebrews 13:8)). Whoever then **annuls** (“annuls”: declares invalid (null and void, discontinued) “the Law and the Prophets” or too loosen “the Law and the Prophets”) one of the least of these **commandments** (“commandments”: “the Law and the Prophets” – commands to be done (directives imposed by authoritative order or with urgent admonition.)), and so teaches others, **shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven**; but whoever **keeps** (“keeps”: commit without any delay “the Law and the Prophets”) and teaches them, **he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven**. For I say to you, that unless your **righteousness** (“righteousness”: the approval of God, what is deemed right by the Lord (“the Law and the Prophets”), as one ought to be (righteous), the condition acceptable to God.) surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

**Luke 18:18-22**, “<sup>18</sup> And a ruler asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>19</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. <sup>20</sup> (Keep (without delay) the Commands “the Law and the Prophets”) You **know the commandments** (*know*: become learned, understand, kept (without delay) the commands, “the Law and the Prophets”); i.e. “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. **Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,** <sup>5</sup> but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: <sup>6</sup> whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked,” **I John 2:3-6**; “**Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city,**” **Revelation 22:14**: “Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.”” <sup>21</sup> And he said, “All these I have kept from my youth.” <sup>22</sup> When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “One thing you still lack . . . **follow me** (listen and follow without delay – “Shema”).”

**What does Paul say:**

**Romans 3:31**, “Do we then overthrow **the law** by this faith? **By no means!** On the contrary, **we uphold the law.**”

**Romans 2:12**, “. . . all who have sinned under **the law** will be judged by **the law.**”

**Romans 2:13**, “For it is not the hearers of **the law** who are righteous before God, but the doers of **the law** who will be justified.”

**What does the Word of God say** (first of all, the law given to Moses is not Moses’ law, but God’s law (teaching and instruction) given to Moses, with the instruction, from God, “if you will indeed **obey** (*shema*: listen and follow without delay) my voice and keep (committing without delay) **my covenant** (the Law, the terms of the Marriage Agreement), you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”), which is eternal):

**Numbers 15:15-16**, “For the assembly, **there shall be one statute** for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, **a statute forever throughout your generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before the LORD. One law and one rule** shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you.”

**Psalm 19:7**, “**The law of the LORD is perfect**, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”

**James 1:25**, “But the one who looks into **the perfect law** (is the law of liberty), **the law of liberty**, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.”

**James 2:12**, “So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty **the law of liberty** (is the perfect law).”

**Jeremiah 31:31-34**, (The New Covenant) “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: **I will put my law within them, and I will write** (*engraved, the heart would become the law, and the law would become the heart*) **it on their hearts** (the new covenant was not a law issue but a heart issue, God was promising a “New Heart” not a “New Law”). And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

**Ezekiel 36:26-28**, “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**”

**Deuteronomy 30:1-3**, “*And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul,<sup>3</sup> then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you.*”

**Deuteronomy 30:11-14**, “*For this commandment that I command you today is **not too hard for you, neither is it far off.** . . . **But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.***”

**Ecclesiastes 12:13**, “The end of the matter; all has been heard. **Fear God and keep his commandments,** for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring **every deed** into judgment, with **every secret thing,** whether good or evil.

**Deuteronomy 18:15-21** (A New Prophet like Moses) “<sup>15</sup> **The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you** (Joshua, or prophetically, “Yahshua” (the Hebrew name for Joshua meaning “Yahweh is salvation”) who would take God’s People into the Promise Land (aka Heaven)) **from your brothers – it is to him you shall listen** (shema: listen and follow without delay) – <sup>16</sup> *just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’* <sup>17</sup> *And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken.’* <sup>18</sup> *I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. **And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.*** <sup>19</sup> *And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.* <sup>20</sup> *But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods . . . <sup>22</sup> the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.*”

## **2. Can law and grace work together?**

**James 2:17-18**, “So also **faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.** But someone will say, ‘You have faith and I have works.’ Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

**1 John 2:3-6**, “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. **Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.** By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.”

**Romans 3:31**, “Do we then overthrow **the law** by this faith? **By no means!** On the contrary, **we uphold the law.**”

### **God's Covenant Through Moses**

#### **Exodus 19:1-9**

The covenant that God made with Abraham was **renewed** with his son Isaac. In Genesis 26:3 God says to Isaac, “*To you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will fulfill the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.*” And then to Isaac’s son, Jacob, God appeared at Bethel (according to Genesis 28:13-15) and confirmed the covenant to him: “*I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants; and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth . . . and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go.*” At the time Jacob may not have known that he would be going to Egypt and that *for 124 years his descendants would be sojourners in Egypt, followed by 86 years of bitter-enslavement, with the promise lying dormant until God confirmed it afresh with Moses, 210 years after leaving the Promise Land during a great famine, in which his son Joseph would save his family from.*

#### **From Misery in Egypt to Mosaic Covenant**

But God’s ways are seldom our ways, and it was indeed his plan to carry his covenant people through the miseries of Egypt toward the promised land. (See the prediction of Genesis 15:13.) That divine principle hasn’t changed to this day: “If we *suffer* with him, we will be *glorified* with him” (Romans 8:17). But after a long dark night of Israel’s soul, dawn breaks, God calls Moses, and with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm God liberates his people from bondage. They cross *into* the Red Sea on dry ground. They receive food from the sky and water from the rock. And *within 50-days* they arrive at Mount Sinai. Here God makes a solemn covenant with Israel to confirm and undergird the covenant he made with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

Virtually all of Exodus 19–34 is concerned with the making of this covenant:

1. **how the covenant was established**, and then
2. **what divine promises and human conditions make up the covenant**, and
3. **how can so much grace come by this covenant.**

#### **A. How Was This Covenant Established?**

In Exodus 19:3 Moses goes up the first time into Mount Sinai, and God announces to him the general terms of the covenant in verses 5 and 6: *If you obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my special possession, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.* Moses goes down, reports to the people, and in verse 8 they accept the covenant: *“All the Lord has spoken we will do.”* Moses returns with this acceptance to the Lord, and in verse 9 the Lord says that he is coming to speak in earshot of the people so that they will believe Moses.

In Exodus 19:10-15 God instructs Moses to consecrate the people. In three days they are to approach the mountain. In three days the Lord descends in fire and the mountain is wrapped in smoke. God calls Moses to the top (v. 20) and sends him down again with the warning to the people not to break through and perish (vv. 21, 24). Then God himself (20:22) addresses the people in 20:1–17 and gives the ten commandments. The people are so terrified at the voice of God that (in vv. 18–19) they plead with Moses, *“You speak to us and we will hear, but let not God speak to us lest we die.”* So in 20:21 Moses draws near to the thick darkness and receives the rest of the ordinances from the Lord. These are given in chapters 21–23 and include a lot more specifics than the ten commandments.

In Exodus 24:1-2 God tells Moses to get the priests and the elders and to come up on the mountain. But first in Exodus 24:3 Moses reports all the ordinances to the people, and again they accept the terms of the covenant: *“All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do.”* Then Moses writes the words he had received in a book (v. 4), builds an altar, sacrifices several oxen, and seals the covenant with blood. He throws some blood on the altar, reads the book to the people, and throws some blood on the people (vv. 5–8). The implication is probably that the people are taking an oath that if they break the covenant, their blood will be shed like the oxen's and it will be on their own head.

Then (in Exodus 24:9-10) Moses and Aaron and Nadab and Abihu and the seventy elders went up the mountain partway and had a feast and saw God's glory. But in verse 12 the Lord calls Moses further up to receive the *“tables of stone”* written by God. So Moses went up into the cloud (v. 18) and remained forty days. Chapters 25–31 give the message God spoke to Moses, mainly a plan for the tabernacle to be built and for the ministry of the priests. When he was done speaking, God gave Moses the two tables of testimony (31:18) to carry back to the people – a kind of personally signed covenant document from the Lord.

But during the forty days the people had already broken their covenant promise and made an idol. In Exodus 32:8 God says, *“They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them.”* Moses prays for the people and God withholds his destruction (32:11–14). When Moses comes down to the camp (v. 19), he smashes the two tables of the covenant to show how the people have broken the covenant. The sons of Levi slaughter 3,000 men (32:28) and God sends a plague (v. 35) but the nation as a whole is spared through Moses' prayer.

***Now the question is, what becomes of the covenant?*** They had broken it before it was even completed. If this covenant were based on works or on strict justice alone Israel would be done for. But ***to show that the covenant is based on grace, God renews the covenant and uses words which make this gracious foundation clear.*** In Exodus 34:1 God tells Moses to make a new set of stone tables and to come up again. In 34:6–7 God reveals himself and the basis of the renewed covenant: *“The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and children's children, to the third and fourth generation.’”* Moses pleads in verse 9, *“Pardon our iniquity and our sin and take us for thine inheritance.”* And the Lord responds in verse 10, *“Behold, **I make a covenant.** Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth or in any nation.”*

Then in 34:27–28 the Lord concludes this last meeting on Mt. Sinai like this: *“And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Write these words; in accordance with these words **I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.**’”* And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote upon the tables *the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.* And he came down with his face shining because of his time with God, *on the day of Atonement, a true day of Jubilee, a day of restoration, the renewing of God's Covenant.* The rest of Exodus reports the building of the tabernacle.

## **B. What Are the Covenant's Promises and Conditions?**

Now from that overview of how the covenant was established between God and Israel we can answer our second question: what are the divine promises and human conditions of this covenant? What does God commit himself to do? And what does he require of his covenant partner?

### **Five Divine Promises Within It**

First, the promises. There are at least five:

#### **1. Israel Will Be God's Prized Possession**

In Exodus 19:5 God says, *“If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all the peoples; for all the earth is mine.”* God mentions that all the earth is his to show that when he calls Israel his *“own*

*possession,*” he means more than the general care and authority he has over the world. He will be Israel's God and they will be his possession in a special way. They will have blessings beyond all other nations. They will be God's prized possession – *if they keep his covenant.*

## **2. Israel Will Be a Kingdom of Royal Priests**

The second promise in Exodus 19:6 is, *“and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests.”* The most striking privilege of the priests was intimate access to God. They drew near on behalf of the people. Their inheritance was not the land but the Lord. This privilege God promises to the whole nation. This privilege is heightened when God calls them a *royal* priesthood or priests in the services of the *King*. There is no greater privilege than to have intimate access to the King of the universe.

## **3. Israel Will Be a Holy Nation**

The third promise of the covenant in 19:6 is that Israel will also be a *“holy nation.”* Israel would be holy in two senses: one, she would be set apart and distinguished from all the other peoples; two, she would be granted a moral likeness to God. She would share God's character. *“Be holy, for I am holy”* (Leviticus 19:2). *If Israel keeps covenant with God, she will have the all-satisfying privilege of likeness to God. She will be a holy nation.*

## **4. God Will Defend Israel from All Her Enemies**

The fourth covenant promise is found in Exodus 23:22. *“But if you hearken attentively to his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.”* Anybody who opposes Israel will have to deal with almighty God – *if Israel keeps covenant.* This is probably what God means in Exodus 34:10 when he promises, *“I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth or in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord.”* In defense of his people God will do marvels to display his glory among the nations.

## **5. God Will Be Merciful and Gracious and Forgiving**

Finally, and **as the foundation to everything else, God promises to be merciful and gracious and forgive iniquity and transgression and sin.** Exodus 34:6-7 are among the sweetest gospel words in the Bible. The fact that they come from Mt. Sinai and not Mt. Calvary, the fact that they preface the ten commandments (34:28) and not the book of Romans shows that *the message of Christ and the message of Moses are one harmonious message of grace.* *“The Lord passed before Moses and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.”* So the fifth great promise of the Mosaic covenant is that God will treat Israel with mercy and grace and will forgive her sins – *if she keeps the covenant.*

In summary, then, five divine promises of the Mosaic covenant, which reconfirm the covenant with Abraham, are:

1. that Israel will be God's special possession,
2. Israel will be a kingdom of priests to God,
3. Israel will be a holy nation,
4. God will fight for Israel and overcome all her enemies, and
5. God will treat Israel with grace and mercy and forgive her sins.

These are the divine promises of the covenant. But they all depend on certain conditions being fulfilled by the people, as Exodus 19:5 says, *“If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall . . . ”* experience all these divine blessings.

## **Three Pointers to Its Human Condition**

So we turn now to the human conditions that must be met in order to enjoy the covenant blessings.

### **1. Founded on Grace and Offering Forgiveness**

One thing is clear from the outset. The condition is not sinless perfection. The Mosaic covenant does *not* teach that if you commit a sin, you forfeit the covenant blessings. It says that the Lord forgives iniquity and transgression and sin (Exodus 34:7). **The foundation of the covenant is grace.** Therefore, when Exodus 19:5 says that Israel must *“obey God's voice and keep God's covenant,”* it does not mean they must earn their blessings by working for God. **It means they must keep themselves in an attitude to receive God's grace and mercy and forgiveness.**

### **2. Loving God and Earning Grace?**

And what attitude is that? One answer is given in Exodus 20:5-6 in the midst of the ten commandments: *“I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love (KJV: mercy) to thousands to those who love me and keep my commandments.”* Israel upholds her side of the covenant by loving God and by not putting any other value where God belongs in her heart. And out of this love to God inevitably flows an obedience to his word, because you always go after what you value. So this obedience is not *earning* God's grace. It is the *evidence* of love for God's grace. God is not loved when we put ourselves in the position of an employee and him in the position of an employer who pays us earnings.

When God says that love for him is the condition Israel must meet in order to share the covenant blessings, it's like saying that the condition you must meet in order to benefit from your vacation is to enjoy the sunsets. It is unthinkable that the command to love God could be a command to *earn* blessings from him. On the contrary, when you think it through, the command to love a God who is gracious and forgiving (Exodus 34:6-7) must include a command to *trust* him. The only way to receive forgiveness is by trusting the forgiver. And the only way to benefit from gracious promises is to trust the promiser. *The fundamental condition that Israel had to meet in order to enjoy God's blessing was trust.*

### **3. Israel's Failure of Unbelief**

Again and again in the Old Testament the rebellion of Israel against the covenant is traced back to unbelief (Numbers 14:11; Deuteronomy 1:32; 9:23; 2 Kings 17:14; 2 Chronicles 20:20; Psalm 78:22, 32; 106:26). For example, Psalm 78:22 looks back and says that God's anger flamed against Israel in the wilderness "because they had *no faith in God, and did not trust his saving power.*" And Hebrews 3:19 says that the reason the wilderness generation did not enter the promised land was *unbelief*. Or as Hebrews 4:2 says, "*The message which they heard did not benefit them because it did not meet with faith in the hearers.*"

So, there are at least three reasons to conclude that *the basic condition required from Israel is faith.*

1. First, because the covenant is renewed on the basis of grace and offers merciful forgiveness for sins (Exodus 34:6-7). Forgiveness can only be received by faith.
2. Second, God promises mercy to all who love him (Exodus 20:6). But loving God is just the opposite of trying to earn wages from a heavenly employer. Loving God must include delighting in his trustworthiness as one who "*bore you on eagles' wings (out of Egypt) and brought you to himself*" (Exodus 19:4).
3. Third, numerous Old Testament and New Testament passages say that the root of Israel's disobedience was her failure to trust God. Therefore, **the obedience required in the Mosaic covenant is the obedience which comes from faith.**

It's the same obedience required in the Abrahamic covenant when the Lord said to Abraham, "*By your descendants shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because you have obeyed my voice*" (Genesis 22:18). And it's the same obedience required in the new covenant under which we live. Hebrews 5:9 says of Christ that "*Being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.*" The Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic covenant, and the covenant that Jesus sealed with his own blood are **all various expressions of ONE GREAT COVENANT of grace.** And under all these covenants, expressed in many different ways, one thing is required of man in order to inherit the covenant blessings: "*faith working through love*" (Galatians 5:6).

### **C. How Can So Much Grace Come by This Covenant?**

That brings us to one last question which the Mosaic covenant leaves unanswered. **How can so much grace be dispensed under this covenant? How can a righteous God simply forgive iniquity and transgression and sin? How can a judge just let guilty sinners go free?** Surely the sacrifices of bulls and goats are no just satisfaction for all the dishonor heaped on God's name by Israel's sins. Again, the answer lies in the future. Isaiah saw it most clearly and said, "**All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all!**" (Isaiah 53:6). How could a just God, under the Mosaic covenant, be so gracious and forgive so freely? **Answer: He would live out, as an example for his followers, and fulfill the righteous requirements laid out in the Law both physically and spiritually, providing a spiritual restoration and healing back in right relationship with Him, once and for all for all those who daily, fervently (or jealously) "Repent" and "Return Back" to walking obediently in His ways, His truth, and His life, and no other way, truth or life. This "New Covenant" that God promised is more accurately translated, "Renewed Covenant", which addresses not the error of the Law, which is perfect, but rather the error of man's heart, which this "Renewed Covenant" addresses, "a heart of stone", which is simply defined as a disobedient heart, and replaced with "a heart of flesh", which simply defined is an obedient heart, in which the Law of God is **engraved** on (letters **engraved** in stone are forged in it: the words are stone and the stone is words, or in this case, words are the heart and the heart is the words), with the promise of the Holy Spirit to not just equip us with the right heart, but the spirit to walk it out, as read in Ezekiel 36:26-28:**

**“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone (disobedient heart) from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh (obedient heart). And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.**

So, in answer, "**Can law and grace work together?**", "**Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? **By no means!** On the contrary, we uphold the law.**" Romans 3:31. And again, in Hebrews 5:9 says of Christ that "*Being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.*" The Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic covenant, and the covenant that Jesus sealed with his own blood are **all various expressions of ONE GREAT COVENANT of grace.** In fact, from the very beginning, in the DNA of God's Covenant relationship with Adam and Eve, we see God's Grace on display in its perfectly designed and perpetual covenant for all those who choose to follow Him, purposed from the beginning of time, forgiveness, and a covering of sin for redemption and righteousness, as read in Genesis 3:21, "*And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them,*" and God did for Adam and Eve, as He did for Noah and his

family, Abraham and Isaac, Jacob turned Israel, Moses and the people of Israel, David, and all those who call upon the name of the Lord, through Jesus’ death and resurrection, by the shedding of blood and the covering of man’s unrighteousness, for forgiveness and being made righteous through God’s **renewed** covenant of Grace through each of His covenants, and fulfilling the Great Commission, “teaching them to observe (putting into practice without delay) everything I (Jesus) have commanded you,” Matthew 28:20.

**3. How do i escape temptations?**

**Hebrews 5:12-14**, “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. **But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment TRAINED by constant practice to distinguish good from evil** (doing it God’s way).”

Luke 6:40, “**A disciple is not above his teacher**, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.”

**John 16:33**, “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; **I have overcome the world.**”

i.e. *Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness: Matthew 4:14-10 (How did Jesus “Overcome” the teaching of this world? . . . the Word of God!)*

<sup>14</sup>Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup>After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup>The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

<sup>4</sup>Jesus answered, “**It is written**: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God . . .’ <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, “**Away from me, Satan!** For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

**James 4:7-8**, “**Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.** Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

**Psalm 1**

**The Way of the Righteous and the Wicked**

<sup>1</sup>Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; <sup>2</sup>**but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.** <sup>3</sup>He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. **In all that he does, he prospers.** <sup>4</sup>The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. <sup>5</sup>Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; <sup>6</sup>for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

. . .

“I will keep your law continually, forever and ever, and I shall walk in a wide place, for I have sought your precepts.”

Psalm 119:44-45

<sup>7</sup>**The law of the LORD is perfect**, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; <sup>8</sup>the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;

Psalm 19:7-8

“But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty (the law of liberty here is the perfect law, not a replacement of it), and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.”

James 1:25

<sup>15</sup>For the assembly, **there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations.** You and the sojourner shall be alike before the LORD. <sup>16</sup>**One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you.**”

Numbers 15:15-16

. . .

**Lesson Fifteen – Bible Study: The New Covenant of Grace, Not Law . . .** (*everything above is Ryan, of Key2Changes response to this very popular teaching in the Christian Church today*):

**Our greatest need worldwide: more discipleship training**

**Below, I have included the most recently completed Ministry Training Institute lesson for you to see as an example.** Each of the lessons are around eight to nine pages, so it will take a few minutes to read. If you are short on time, the first page will give you an understanding of the approach. Discussing law and grace, we hope this lesson especially helps disciples around the world who lean toward legalism to adopt a framework of grace. (Reply to this email to let us know what you think.)

People are saying, “Yes,” to Jesus but are **desperate for more discipleship training to be like him and continue his ministry.** The Ministry Training Institute is increasingly a part of the solution. It includes both the eight Ministry Skills of Doing What Jesus Did, with its activations, and the 72 lessons of the Institute. **Already translated into at least 26 languages, over 17 million participants in 190,000 churches in 100 countries have completed the training. It remains online and without cost.**

Most of our work involves revising the 72 lessons (soon to be 80) with an amazing Feedback Team. The revision especially focuses on:

- Reorganizing existing lessons and adding necessary additional lessons.
- Decreasing the amount of text and increasing the Scripture quotations.
- Adding a cross-cultural perspective.
- Reducing the text to a sixth-grade level to make translation easier and increase accessibility (for example, we are using the sixth-grade-level New Living Translation throughout).
- Adding instructions for studying with others and discussion questions.

## **Thank you for caring about worldwide discipleship training**

Thank you for your prayer and financial support. **Please let us know how we can pray for you;** simply respond to this email.

You can also learn more about our ministry and give us prayer requests at [davemetsker.com](http://davemetsker.com).

To make a **tax-deductible** donation...

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**by check or bill pay**, please make your check payable to **Ministry Training Network** and mail it to The Metskers, 1010 NE 13<sup>th</sup> Ave., Canby, OR 97013.

Grateful to make disciples with you,

Dave

## **Example: Lesson 15**

### **Ministry Training Institute Part Two: Studying God’s Word**

#### **Lesson Fifteen | Bible Study: The New Covenant of Grace, Not Law (Lesson 15 of 80)**

## **Doing What Jesus Did**

While you are studying Institute Lessons 11-20, complete Leading People to Jesus and the activation (Ministry Skill 2 of 8) in Doing What Jesus Did.

### **Purpose**

Lesson 15 helps the reader engage in the new covenant of grace, which God has given us. After reviewing some of the covenants in the Old Testament, we focus on the covenant of law given to Moses. Then we study its replacement, the new covenant of grace. We learn that trying to earn favor from God is a rejection of his grace and Jesus’ sacrifice. We cannot be good enough for God (perfect), so we need the grace that God provides. This is a foundation for correctly interpreting the Bible.

## **Studying God’s Word**

This lesson is part of a series of lessons to help you effectively lead a discussion of the Bible for changed lives. At the foundation is your personal, focused, daily time alone with our Father in his Word. As you listen to our Father speak to you through careful interpretation of the Bible, and then apply his Word to your life, you experience change. You can use this approach to be a small group leader, preacher, or teacher. It opens the way for the Holy Spirit to change lives. They become more like Jesus and continue his ministry.

## **God Communicates Using Covenants**

### **Covenants form the foundation of the Bible.**

Before we study the Bible, we must understand God’s use of covenants. A covenant in the ancient world was similar to what we would call today a contract, treaty, or will. It defined a relationship with promises and usually conditions with consequences. Covenants are the foundation of the whole biblical story. God makes, keeps, and fulfills his covenants. He used them to reveal his plan of salvation.

### **Discussion**

Share an example of an important covenant in your life.

### **The Old Testament covenants**

Five of the covenants in the Bible are most important for understanding God’s story and his plan of salvation.

God established a covenant with Noah after the flood (Genesis 9:1-17). It renewed the promises of creation and promised he would never again destroy the world by a flood. It had no conditions.

Genesis 9:8-11 – [Then God told Noah and his sons,] “Yes, I am confirming my covenant with you. Never again will floodwaters kill all living creatures; never again will a flood destroy the earth.”

God’s covenant with Abraham is the most important in God’s story. God promised him land, descendants, and blessing. This blessing promised to Abraham would extend through him to all the peoples of the earth. This covenant also had no conditions. The blessing would primarily come through Jesus Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3 – The Lord had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.”

God’s covenant with Moses generally referred to the law as given to Moses by God at Mount Sinai. By this covenant, the living and true God, who had delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, promised to bless them as his special people. The Ten Commandments were at the center of the covenant (Exodus 20:1-17). The laws were not a means for salvation. It distinguished the people from the surrounding nations as a special kingdom of priests. They were to worship him alone as their God, accept his law as their rule for life, and then bless the nations. This covenant had clear conditions.

Exodus 19:5-6 – “Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me. And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation.’ This is the message you must give to the people of Israel.”

Exodus 24:7-8 – Then [Moses] took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud to the people. Again they all responded, “We will do everything the Lord has commanded. We will obey.”

Then Moses took the blood from the basins and splattered it over the people, declaring, “Look, this blood confirms the covenant the Lord has made with you in giving you these instructions.”

God also made a covenant with King David, promising a descendant to reign on the throne over the people of God. This covenant became the basis for the hope of a Messiah, and Jesus fulfilled this promise.

2 Samuel 7:8-16 – “This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies has declared....

I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son.... Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.”

### **Jeremiah announced in the Old Testament the coming of a new covenant.**

Jeremiah prophesied to Israel that God would make a new covenant. It would be different from the one that Israel had broken by disobedience.

### **Discussion**

Ask one person to read aloud the following passage.

What does it teach about God and about the salvation he will provide through Jesus Christ?

Jeremiah 31:31-33 – “The day is coming,” says the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,” says the Lord.

“But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days,” says the Lord. “I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

### **In the New Testament, the new covenant replaces the old covenant.**

We do not worship the Bible. We worship the God who gave us the Bible. The Pharisees of Jesus’ day worshipped the Old Testament, especially the laws. Many of them missed love from God and love for God and each other. Jesus called them hypocrites because they were too concerned with the outward acts of keeping laws. They did not focus as well on the inward love behind the laws to care well for others (Matthew 23). Jesus taught us to love (which fulfills the Old Testament law, Matthew 5:17-20). As a result, some Pharisees and other leaders worked with the Roman government to have Jesus’ crucified.

Matthew 23:1-7 – Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, “The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses. So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don’t follow their example. For they don’t practice what they teach....

“Everything they do is for show.... They love to receive respectful greetings as they walk in the marketplaces, and to be called ‘Rabbi.’

1 John 4:20 – If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see?

The new covenant is the agreement between God and his people based on grace and faith through Jesus’ sacrificial death. Jesus announced it as he spoke to his disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem the night before his death.

Luke 22:20 – After supper [Jesus] took another cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.”

2 Corinthians 3:6 – [God] has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life.

### **Jesus fulfilled the covenants in the Old Testament.**

Matthew 5:17 – [Jesus explained,] “Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose.”

### **God Gives Us a New Covenant of Grace**

The New Testament, with its new covenant, is not a new set of laws, but a new relationship with God our Father by grace through faith. We do not earn our way to God, but receive our relationship with him for free and love him and others with abandon.

### **We are no longer under law.**

Romans 6:14 – Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God’s grace.

The Law of Moses was good. It gave the community of Israel ways to love God and one another. However, it was not a way to obtain salvation. It simply revealed sin. No one can ever be good enough for God. We are not capable of keeping the law. Even one sin breaks our relationship with God. Only through Jesus can we receive the forgiveness, honor, and victory we need.

Romans 7:7 – Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, “You must not covet.”

Romans 7:12 – The law itself is holy, and its commands are holy and right and good.

Romans 7:14 – So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin.

James 2:10 – For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God’s laws.

Trying to keep the law does not make us good enough for him. (Some church leaders still teach that we are under the law.)

Romans 7:10-11 – So I discovered that the law’s commands, which were supposed to bring life, brought spiritual death instead. Sin took advantage of those commands and deceived me; it used the commands to kill me.

If we continue to try to earn our way to God by keeping laws, we reject God’s grace and Jesus’ sacrifice. We cannot both try to gain favor and receive grace. They are opposites.

Galatians 2:21 – I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.

Galatians 5:4 – For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God’s grace.

The Pharisees were an example of those who tried to earn favor from God by keeping the law. They valued outward behavior rather than love and inward devotion to God. Some people today are like the Pharisees. They use their laws to judge others but have little love. The law is more important for them than healing someone on the Sabbath!

Mark 3:2 – Since it was the Sabbath, Jesus’ enemies [the Pharisees] watched him closely. If he healed the man’s hand, they planned to accuse him of working on the Sabbath.

Jesus called these people hypocrites. They did evil in their desire to earn God’s love.

Mark 7:6-8 – Jesus replied, “You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,

‘These people honor me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.  
Their worship is a farce,  
for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.’ [Quotin Isaiah 29:13]

For you ignore God’s law and substitute your own tradition.”

At the root is pride.

Luke 18:9-14 – Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: “Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters,

sinners, adulterers. I’m certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.’

“But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’ I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

## **Discussion**

Share a story about how keeping the law can be rooted in pride.  
Discuss the problem of being oriented toward law and then using it to judge others.

## **We are under grace.**

We do not read the Bible as a book of law but as a book of grace. This may change the way you view the Bible and our Father.

John 1:17 – For the law was given through Moses, but God’s unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ.

The law was helpful, but not for salvation. Under the old covenant, forgiveness, honor, and victory came from the sacrifices at the temple. Under the new covenant, grace alone allows us to have a relationship with God. This grace comes through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:13-14 – Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people’s bodies from ceremonial impurity. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.

When we realize our Father loves us this much and adopts us as sons and daughters, we no longer need to try to earn his love. We want to obey him and keep the commandments of love because of his love for us.

Galatians 4:5 – God sent [Jesus] to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.

Romans 8:1-2 – So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

Ephesians 2:8 – God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God.

Romans 5:20-21 – 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. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God’s wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 11:5-6 – It is the same today, for a few of the people of Israel have remained faithful because of God’s grace—his undeserved kindness in choosing them. And since it is through God’s kindness, then it is not by their good works. For in that case, God’s grace would not be what it really is—free and undeserved.

Titus 3:4-7 – But—

When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.

Honor replaces shame when we live under grace. The woman at the well is an example of this (John 4:1-42). She felt she was not worthy of giving to Jesus or receiving from him.

John 4:9-10 – The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, “You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?”

Jesus replied, “If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water.”

## **Discussion**

Share about a time in your life when you focused on the law rather than grace.  
What happens to our relationship with God when we focus on keeping the law?  
What happens when you access the grace of Christ by faith and live in it?  
Which of these verses above is most helpful for you?

## **Sin is no longer our master.**

God does not want us to be in bondage to sin. We change our direction in life from trying to be good enough to living in the freedom of love and grace.

Romans 6:12-14 – Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of

God. Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God’s grace.

### **We live by the Spirit.**

Now that we are free from keeping the law to earn favor with God, we live by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:4-5 – [God] did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit. Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.

Romans 8:9 – But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you.

2 Corinthians 3:6 – He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life.

### **We Study God’s Word to Learn about Living in Grace**

This lesson has focused on studying the Bible to learn about our Father and his grace, not to learn about the law or God as an angry judge. As we explore the Bible, we must understand the differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament. God gave the old covenant of law to Moses. It focused on the laws necessary for the ancient culture to thrive. It prepared the way for Jesus.

God replaced the Old Covenant with the New Covenant. We no longer study the Bible as a book of laws. The New Testament is not a new set of laws to obey. With new motivation, we love God our Father, and one another as ourselves (Mark 12:29-31). We are not motivated by fear, judgment, and shame. Instead, we are motivated by the love, honor, and forgiveness our Father freely offers us through his Son’s sacrifice. Free from guilt, shame, and condemnation (Romans 8:1), we worship with passion, and dance with joy and gratitude in the grace that God freely offers us.

2 Corinthians 5:17 – This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

Be careful not to go back to the law (as some of the Galatians did).

Galatians 3:3 – After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?

Galatians 4:8-10 – Before you Gentiles [non-Jews] knew God, you were slaves to so-called gods that do not even exist. So now that you know God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the

weak and useless spiritual principles of this world? You are trying to earn favor with God by observing certain days or months or seasons or years.

Galatians 5:4 – For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God’s grace.

Galatians 5:13 – For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don’t use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

God’s Word is the story of God’s love for us. We study his Word to learn how to live under the new covenant. We study to receive the grace and love of our Father and then give it freely to others and ourselves.

### **Discussion**

From this lesson, what did you learn about God?

What did you learn about yourself or others?

What did the Holy Spirit say to you?

How can you now apply this lesson to your life?

With whom are you going to share this?

With whom are you going to share the good news this month?