

IS BIBLICAL LAW APPLICABLE TODAY?

People who profess to follow the teachings of the Bible are clearly divided into two categories: Those who believe that God's laws, precepts, and principles should be practiced, and people who believe that although these laws, precepts, and principles are good concepts, strict practice of these laws is not necessary in order to obtain salvation and enter the Kingdom of God.

Does it really matter if you strictly practice biblical laws or not? Are there blessings for their strict practice of these laws, are there any penalties for the violation of these laws? Will whether or not you personally practice or violate any of the 613 plus statutes, judgments, and commandments contained in the Bible have any effect on your eternal destiny?

If you are a person who is seriously concerned about your eternal destiny. The answers to these questions are important to you, because what is popularly believed or taught today about God's law, is mostly a perversion of what the Bible actually says. Therefore, you might want to pay careful attention to the information contained in this broadcast about what the Bible actually says about the necessity to practice God's law in order to enter into the Kingdom of God as an eternal and immortal spirit-being.

Today, as in the past, there is much disagreement among both Jewish and Christian Bible scholars concerning which biblical laws are in force today and their specific meaning and application.

The vast majority of people who profess to follow the teachings of the Bible have not taken the time nor spent the effort to study biblical law. Most have just taken the word of someone in whom they have confidence or they just have a feeling that their belief concerning biblical law is correct. But, is it logical to take the word of someone else or trust your feelings on such an important matter? It is not logical, it is foolish. Why is it foolish?

It is foolish, because there is a vast amount of evidence that shows that the Bible is the product of a superior intelligence. And because the Bible

claims that this superior intelligence is a supreme being that has sovereign authority over your eternal destiny. Therefore, it makes sense to make an effort to find out for yourself whether or not you should obey the biblical instructions contained in God's law.

Before I review what some of the authors of the New Testament say about whether or not God's law is applicable to people who profess to follow Christ. Let's review what God had Moses record for national Israel.

In Deuteronomy chapter 30, God sums up the choices that he had given to national Israel:

Beginning in verse 15:

"See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command you this day to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that you may live and multiply: and that the Lord your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it.

God offered the Israelites tremendous blessings for their practice of his law and the way of life that he expected them to pursue.

Continuing in verse 17:

"But if your heart turn away, so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce to you this day, that you shall perish, and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land, where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it.

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live" (KJV Para.).

It was the Creator God's earnest desire that his chosen people would choose life over death. But, history shows that this did not happen; therefore, a unified nation of Israel under the care and protection of God no longer exists.

Prophecies

Many prophecies in the Old Testament speak of a return of national Israel to the land of their inheritance after Christ returns and the reestablishment of the temple worship system. This is the time spoken of by many of the prophets, in which the world will be at peace and all nations will come to Jerusalem to learn God's way.

In Isaiah chapter 2, verses 2 and 3, Isaiah says of this time:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. And many people shall go and say, Come you, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion goes forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Para.).

In this prophecy, the government of God is symbolized as a mountain that will be above all other governments and people will look to this government of God for guidance. The prophecies of Isaiah and many other prophecies tell us that the central authority of this government will be located in the city of Jerusalem and that God's law will be administrated from there to all nations.

A New Agreement Promised

Because national Israel had great difficulty obeying God and broke their initial agreement, which they had made with him at Mount Sinai, God promised that someday he would make a new covenant with them, and that this agreement would be much easier for them to keep, because it would have much better terms and conditions.

In the Book of Jeremiah chapter 31, we are told of this new agreement with national Israel, beginning in verse 31:

"Behold the day comes, says the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which covenant of mine they broke, although I was a husband to them, says the Lord" (vs.31-32).

Because ancient Israel of the original covenant is not a nation today, and her descendants are scattered throughout the nations of the earth, When and with whom will God establish this new covenant?

Continuing in verse 33

"This shall be the covenant [agreement] that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer.31:33 Para.). See also Ezk 16:59-62; 36:27.

Notice that the new contract will be made "after those days." The phrase "after those days" refers to the time after God's wrath is poured out on humanity at the end of this age, and after Christ returns as conquering King. Therefore, this new contract will be made with a new nation of Israel.

The apostle Paul knew that God's law was a part of his mental makeup and said to the elect at Rome concerning the battle to overcome his human flesh:

"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom 7:23).

Today, the world is filled with hatred, murder, violence, wars, lying, cheating, and sexual perversion and promiscuity, yet most people claim that they are not required to strictly practice all of the Ten Commandments or other laws of God.

Believe it or not, according to both the Old and New Testaments these laws are extremely important and their rejection by most who claim to follow the

teachings of the Bible is the reason that there is so much hatred, murder, violence, wars, lying, cheating, and sexual perversion and promiscuity in the nations that they occupy. Few people realize that this world's problems are a direct result of not strictly practicing God's law.

The question of commandment keeping has caused many heated arguments since the demise and disappearance of the early church. For centuries, theologians have taught that Christians no longer need to strictly practice any of the laws that God gave to ancient Israel, because the sacrifice of Christ canceled these laws and released mankind from any obligation to practice them. Is this true? Were God's laws canceled at the death of Christ?

If a person professes to follow Jesus Christ and believes that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that God holds them personally responsible for their actions, it makes sense to find out what the bible actually says on such an important subject as God's law. Therefore, let us briefly review the first of the Ten Commandments to see if there is something in them that would make them harmful or objectionable to practice.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

In chapter 20 of the Book of Exodus beginning in verse 2, God said:

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me. (Ex.20:2. KJV).

God states that he is the Deliverer who has proven himself to be far superior to all Egyptian God's by virtue of the great miracles he performed in delivering the Israelites out of Egypt. Moreover, God wanted to bless Israel beyond their wildest dreams. But in order to do this, the Israelites must accept him as the only true God.

Continuing in verse 3:

"You shall have no other gods before me." God forbade Israel from having any other gods. He was to be the only god that they were to obey and

worship.

People can make gods out of almost anything, including the quest for material goods. Anything that becomes more important in your life than your relationship and love for the true God, is your God.

However, having many gods to whom you pay homage, is of no consequence if there is no supreme being who has authority over your life and death and if the Bible is not his instruction manual that you must follow, if you expect to live for eternity. It makes no sense to practice this commandment, if there is no Sovereign God; because, practicing or not practicing it will not affect your life one way or the other.

However, if there is a supreme being who has the power to enforce a penalty for disobedience of his law, then, it makes perfect sense to make an effort to find out for yourself whether or not the God of the Bible actually exists and whether or not the Bible is his words put to print.

The vast majority of people who profess to believe in the God of the Bible have not taken the time nor spent the effort to actually prove that God does exist and that the Bible is his word. Most have just taken the word of someone in whom they have confidence or they just have a feeling that these things are true. But, is it logical to take the word of someone else or trust your feelings on such an important question? The answer is obvious, No it is not logical, it is foolish.

The creation of this dimension of existence, its human inhabitants, and the Bible itself are incredible proofs that the universe and all that exist within it, are the product of a supreme being. There is so much proof that all things that exist are the products of careful engineering that, it is difficult to find a place to begin as study into the volumes of information that prove that God does exist and that the earth is his creation.

However a person does not have to be a scholar or have a degree in higher mathematics to prove that all that is, is the product of tremendous planning and design. There is abundant proof that the

universe and all that does exist in it, is not just an incredible cosmic accident. Anyone with average intelligence can easily find the abundant evidence of a perfectly engineered creation.

Israel's King David of was absolutely correct when he said, "The fool has said in his heart, There is no God. Ps 53:1 KJV

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

God said to Israel: "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, and shows mercy to thousands of them who love me and keep my commandments" (Ex.20:4-5 NIV).

Did God mean that all carved objects, or woven fabric that have images of flowers, birds, or trees on them forbidden? Is it forbidden to make or own pictures of things or statues of things? No, God did not forbid these things, he meant that he does not want mankind to make any idol, sculpture, or carved image for the purpose of worshiping it.

Mankind is forbidden to create anything to be used as a substitute for the one true God. An idol can be anything that one puts in place, of or in a more prominent place in their life than the true God.

The apostle Paul said this about the Sovereign God:

"So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. Paul continues to say:

"But not everyone knows this. For some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak" (1.Cor.8:4-9 NIV Para.).

Idols are empty gods they are nothing but physical things; they do not have inherent life. An idol can be in virtually any form—animate or inanimate—including mental images or concepts. An idol is anything that a person holds as more important than obedience to the true God.

For example, Paul says to the Colossians:

"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry" (Col.3:5 NIV).

From the very beginning of mankind, idolatry has been a problem. Adam and Eve trusted their own minds and desires and obeyed Satan. Adam and Eve put knowledge before God; thus, knowledge became their idol! Idolatry was prevalent in the days of Abraham. Israel worshiped and served the idols of Egypt:

Today, many people have pictures or statues that they feel represent Christ, his mother, Christ's apostles or a holy individual, and some wear crosses or carry a beads on a string because they feel that these man made objects have some sacred power or relevance. Are these articles merely thinly veiled idolatry? The answer to this question can be found in a short topical study of the Old and New Testaments.

There are many sincere and dedicated people today who have been misled by counterfeits of God's true worship system.. But only truth is truth, sincerity and dedication to not equal truth. Sincerity and dedication only shows the attitude with which people do what they do.

Jesus said, "God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." A clear understanding of what Jesus said, about worshipping the Sovereign God in spirit and truth reveals that there is no need to look to physical objects in order to worship or be reminded of the Sovereign God.

Today, many who profess to following the teaching of the Bible, are much the same as the Jews during Jesus time. Many of the Jews were so awe struck and impressed with the grandeur of the Temple that they replaced the worship of God with respect and reverence for the Temple complex. However, Jesus was not impressed with the Temples physical structure, because he knew that the Sovereign God was greater than anything men could construct, no matter how grand and beautiful it was, or what meaning men attached to it.

One only has to read the history of Israel and the New Testament to understand how the Creator God who became the Messiah and the Sovereign God who sent him to earth feel about modern day Idols within the professing Christian Community.

A clear understanding that the Creator God of Israel later became Jesus Christ the Savior of humanity and that he came to earth to reveal God the Father, who is the Sovereign God, allows one to understand the New Testament scriptures concerning worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

The last part of the second commandment indicates that God will punish children for the idolatrous sins of their parents? But is this what it says? Absolutely not. The curse of idolatry comes upon the children who hate God and worship idols. To hate God means to esteem idols above the true God and to show hostility towards his law.

God is fair! He does not punish the innocent for the sins of the guilty. God reminded the Israelites of this principle when he said: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin" (Deut.24:16 NIV).

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

In chapter 20 of the Book of Exodus beginning in verse 7, God said:

"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name " (Ex.20:7 NIV).

Before the new covenant was ratified, the Creator God allowed people to swear by his name. To Israel God said: "Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name" (Deut.6:13 NIV).

However, after the Creator God came to earth in the person of Jesus, Matthew records that he clarified this instruction and told his disciples to discontinue swearing. Jesus said:

"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to God . . .' Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one " (Matt.5:33, 37 NIV).

Jesus clarified the intent of the law by stating that any kind of swearing is breaking the intent and the spirit of the third commandment. But how is this so?

To swear using God's name, is to commit God as a witness in confirmation of a person's desire and the capability to perform what a person has promised. Human beings, unlike God, are unable to remain perfectly constant in purpose and they have great difficulty keeping their word. Thus, if God allowed men to swear by his name, every time man failed to perform his oath, God's name would be misrepresented.

This is why Jesus said, "Anything beyond these [that is, yes or no] is of evil [that is, the evil one]."

The apostle James also supported Jesus statement by saying: "Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," be no, or you will be condemned" (Jms.5:12 NIV Para.).

Under the covenant that God made with national Israel, he allowed them to swear because he had invoked his name upon them. He wanted them to have help in avoiding sin. He was willing to bear with them in their weaknesses for a time, but there came a time for them to understand that the name of God is above all names, including the name of any mortal man. Therefore, they were told to no longer swear by his name.

Taking God's name in vain can involve more than misusing the names by which he is called. Taking God's name in vain is claiming to represent God, but in reality denying his existence and power.

Jesus' Name

Because it is through the authority of Jesus (Jesus' name) that salvation is made available to humanity, his is the only name besides the Father's name that is considered holy. See Lk.1:49.

When a person truly understands the awesome sacrifice of Jesus, a person can begin to understand the importance of using his and his Father's name with respect.

The apostle Paul told the Colossians that every word spoken and every action taken should be done as Jesus would do it. Anyone who thinks Jesus is living in him and then lies, is taking God's name in vain. All false prophets and false Christians are taking God's name in vain. Moreover, the penalty for breaking the third commandment is still in effect today; because, the Bible says "The Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes his name in vain."

Today, most people including most of those who profess to love God, use various forms of God's name and the name of Jesus as a euphemism or a byword word, many use Gods name to invoke a curse, to pronounce foul epitaphs, to express surprise or disappointment, and in general, use the names of God and Jesus just to fill in dead spaces in a conversation.

All of these wrong usages show a tremendous disrespect for the Sovereign God and his son the Savior of mankind. Violating this law brings with it

the penalty of the second death in the Lake of Fire.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

The fourth commandment was the commandment most hated and most violated by ancient Israel and today, it is the most hated and most violated by many who profess to follow the teachings of the Bible.

The Book of Genesis records that, after God had prepared the earth for his human creation and placed Adam and Eve in the garden, he set apart the seventh day as holy time:

In Genesis chapter 1, God said:

"Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground . . . God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. . . Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished his work; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done" (Gen.1:26, 31; 2:1-3 NIV Para.).

God established the weekly cycle with the first six days designated as work days and the seventh day designated as a day on which no work was done.

There are two Hebrew words in this account that should be understood, because they hold an important key to understanding how God the Father and Jesus Christ view the Sabbath.

The English word 'blessed' is translated from the Hebrew word 'barak', which means 'to kneel', 'to praise' or 'to salute.' This word seems to be used to indicate abundant and effective life and longevity. As used in this account of creation, it means 'to bless', 'to imbue with power for prosperity, success, and longevity'.

The English word 'sanctified' is translated from the Hebrew word 'quadash', that means 'to be hallowed or holy', 'to consecrate', 'to prepare', 'to dedicate.' The verb 'quadash' designates the state of something that is sacred. Therefore, the seventh day of the week is different and set apart from anything that is common or profane.

God's act of sanctifying the seventh day was not just a pronouncement, but was the actual creating of a specific period of time for a divine and holy purpose. This day has God's attribute of holiness as a part of its existence.

Made for Man

From the beginning of creation, God intended the seventh day of the week to be a tremendous blessing for mankind and one of the fundamental aspects of his worship system. Jesus who was the Creator God before he came to earth said to the legalistic Scribes and Pharisees while explaining the nature of the Sabbath, that "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mk.2:27 NIV).

The seventh day of the week is very different from the other six days, because it is a period of time created and set aside (sanctified) from regular time. Moreover, it has a spiritual dimension within its existence. It is obvious from the enormous amount of information that God has had recorded about this particular day, that the seventh day has a very special meaning to God the Father and Jesus Christ and that they intend for all of mankind to eventually observe the Sabbath as holy time.

The Calendar and the Sabbath

The calendar today is not the same calendar that the ancient Israelites used nor is it the one that was used during Jesus' lifetime. In the 16th Century, ten days were dropped from the calendar that is in use today. However, a detailed study of all of the changes to the calendar used today reveals that the seventh-day weekly cycle has never been altered.

Furthermore, the Jews today and throughout history adamantly maintain that they have not lost track of the weekly Sabbath. They claim that they have been

worshiping God on the correct day since their exodus from Egypt. To state that the Sabbath day has been lost is without foundation and discounts the written records of the Jewish people, religious and secular history, and archeological evidence. All of these records provide ample evidence, which shows that time has not been lost and that the Sabbath day is still the day we call Saturday in the weekly cycle.

The seventh-day weekly cycle has never been altered from Creation. Since the Sabbath was revealed to the nation of Israel, the awareness of this holy time has remained with the people of God and is still a part of the world's calendars.

IS THE SABBATH JEWISH?

Some insist that the Sabbath observance is only a part of the Jewish faith and it is not for any other race of people. The Bible, however, clearly states that the Sabbath was created by God on the day after he created mankind and that it was created and set apart to benefit all of humanity (Gen.1:31; 2:2-3).

The seventh day was created thousands of years before the descendants of Judah were called Jews. During that entire time period, it was never called the Jewish Sabbath. Because the Sabbath was created for the benefit of mankind, it is incorrect to call the Sabbath 'the Jewish Sabbath.' It is God's Sabbath!

Keeping of the Sabbath is Important

The Book of Hebrews was written about thirty years after Christ's resurrection and contains the statement that: "There remains therefore a keeping of the Sabbath to the people of God."(Heb.4:9 NIV).

It is without question that both the Bible and secular history record the undeniable evidence that the apostles and the early church observed the seventh-day Sabbath. Therefore, it must be concluded that those who want to follow God today, must also observe this seventh-day as instructed by God's word.

Without an understanding and practicing the first four of the ten Commandment none of the other six can be understood, nor can the intent of any of the other laws of God be understood.

For every effect there is a cause. All of the evil, pain, and suffering in this world is the effect of people breaking the Ten Commandments and other laws of God.

God created his law for our benefit. It was designed to bring us happiness, joy, and prosperity during our lifetime. The ancient Israelites were not willing to accept these laws as an expression of his love; instead, they rebelled in their hearts, minds, and attitudes:

The Creator God said to ancient Israel, "Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!" (Deut.5:29 NIV).

The simple fact, is that, there is no justification in the biblical record for violating God's laws, precepts, and principles. An honest study of the biblical record shows that in order to please God and to obtain eternal and immortal life a person must be practicing God's laws, precepts, and principles to the best of one's ability during this life time.

Will you believe the teachings of Jesus, the prophets, and the apostles, and the early church? The Bible clearly teaches that if you truly love God, you will keep all of his laws, precepts, and principles.

I see that my time is up, if you want to know more about The Ten Commandments or the other subjects that I have briefly touched on in this in this broadcast, Write to me at the at the address given in the following announcement. Until next time this is Bud Cocherell fro Bible. Research .org.

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