

We've been learning the past few nights about **where sin began** and what it is. **We saw that it began in heaven** – a perfect place where everyone did the will of God. We saw how **Lucifer**, the great arch angel was no longer content to bring glory to God but wanted God's glory for himself. He rebelled, and began to raise questions among the angels about the character of God. This led to war in heaven in which Lucifer and his angels were cast to the earth.

We saw how **mankind was tested** on the same point. Would they follow God's will or would they follow their own? Of course they sinned against God losing the open relationship they had with Him and were condemned to die.

In our last lesson together we learned that because of **God's love for us**, he was **not prepared to let us die**. He made a way to remove the sin that was between us and him – WHY? It was so that anyone who accepted this gift could spend forever with Him! We learned that when Jesus Christ returns he is coming to take us home to **heaven forever! A place where God's will and character are celebrated**, a place without sin and suffering, a place where there is no crying or pain, sickness or death. A place where righteousness dwells.

In this study we're going to take some time to understand better what the will and character of God is, because just as it was a crucial test for mankind there in the garden of Eden, we find it is also going to play a crucial role on the earth just before Christ returns.

We've already learned what the key issue at the end of time is going to be. Do you remember what it is? **WORSHIP**. The key issue just prior to the return of Christ is whether or not we are going to worship Jesus Christ in Spirit and in truth, or whether we will worship the Antichrist.

We saw that these two are fundamentally different in spirit. We learned that the spirit of **Jesus Christ** was **Not my will, but God's will be done**. And the spirit of the **antichrist** was **Not God's will, but mine be done**. In fact we learned that the antichrist power would seek to change God's laws and turn people away from a knowledge of God.

In fact the Bible predicted this very thing that is happening today.

2 Timothy 4:2

*²Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. ³For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their **itching ears** want to hear. ⁴**They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.***

They shall turn from truth. The greatest argument against Christianity is person who claims to be a Christian, but their life says something else. **Jesus called them hypocrites. Those who love to carry the Name of God, but will not do the will of God or follow the Word of God.** It is this situation that has caused the Christian church to look so weak in the world. Today people will laugh at Christianity. Even Christian young people are disgusted, **the reason being, they hear a lot of religion, but don't see it demonstrated.**

To preachers, God says to preach the WORD. It's not easy! **Everyone loves a preacher who says "it's all right to continue in your sin." God understands your sin.**

You see, many people want God, but they want God to fit into their life. Instead the Bible teaches that we are to fit into His life. Everyone who wants Jesus as Saviour, must also take him as LORD.

But the Bible says woe to the preacher who compromises truth to please people! (In fact it's one of the fastest ways to get rich – start a church and tell people what they want to hear.)

But we're not to bring God's standard down to fit our lives. The standard of God remains the same! The **Bible does not need changing – we do!**

I want us to look at a text that is very sobering. Let's turn to Matthew 7:21-23.

Matthew 7:21 ²¹"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who **does the will of my Father** who is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

What kind of people are we talking about.

Not just people who reject Jesus knowingly. This group includes believers, who wanted to be saved, and who thought they were saved.

You see, a lot of religious people are going to be lost. Why are they going to be lost?
(V21)**They did not do the will of God the Father.**

These are believers, they just aren't obeyers. Hearers, but not Doers.

Maybe they went to church every week. They prayed, preached, and did a lot of good things for other people. **In fact, they might not have been doing anything wrong, they just refused to do what was right** - They didn't do what God had asked them to do. They did not do "the will of the Father" and therefore were lost.

Probably the most important question we could ask is; "What is the will of God?" Wouldn't that be a wonderful thing to know? Every person here – God has a will for your life – and He has shown it to us.

Let's look at a couple of texts

In Psalm 40:8 David gives us the answer, ⁸ *I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."*

This verse says that God's will and God's law are connected. In the New Testament Paul said the same. Romans 2:18, ¹⁸ *if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law;*

God's will is being instructed out of the law. God's law is His will.

Let me ask you a logical question. If a person was to say to God, "Not MY will, but YOUR WILL be done." What will God's will look like in that person's life as God's will is done? God will make them like **Jesus Christ right? In fact that is the spirit of Jesus Christ – not my will but Yours be done!**

And so if we want to know what a Christian looks like, we should be able to look at the life of Christ to find out. Doesn't that make sense? It's obvious!

Did Jesus have the character of God? YES. Was Jesus always obedient to the will of God; did he keep the law of God perfectly? ABSOLUTELY. In fact that is what qualified him to die in our place.

Alright, now I want to put up a text that may startle you.

Hosea 4:1-2,

¹ *Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. ² There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.*

God has a problem with his people. Why?

⁶ *my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.*

Because we have forgotten the law of God!

I would suggest that the reason for all the prevailing corruption in New Zealand today is because we have forgotten God's law, and are no longer doing the will of the Father. Now all governments have law. It's the will of government that you obey the laws. All societies have laws. It is the will of each society that you obey the laws. Why? Its because without law you have anarchy. So God gives law also, that there will be harmony among His people.

In fact, that is exactly what God wants; harmony. Harmony with you and God and You and everyone else.

The **first four** commandments are about our relationship with GOD.
The **last six** commandments are about our relationship with OTHER PEOPLE.

When we think of the law of God, we discover it is the only part of Scripture God did not trust man to write! In fact the Bible says it Exodus 31:18

Exodus 31:18 ¹⁸ *When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.*

You see His Law is hugely important to Him. His Law is HIS WILL for us, and as such it is a **REVELATION of His character.**

You can see why the Devil HATES God's law, and since he first broke it, it has been his work to destroy God's law. Today he has almost done that.

God's Law used to be the foundation of our society, but not any more. As a result we are seeing all kinds of breakdown in the harmony that once existed, as people move further and further away from a knowledge of God's will for us. Effectively we have said "Not Your will anymore God, we have a better idea."

But what is incredible, is that despite it's significance to God, even Christian people are saying, "The law is no longer important" or, "The law was nailed to the cross" In fact, even preachers and pastors are saying the same thing!

I believe a lot of this arises from the misunderstanding of the significance of His Law, and just how long it's been around. Let me ask you how long has God's will been around? Since the time of Moses?

Genesis 26:5,

⁵ *because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws."*

Abraham kept God's law long before Moses and Israel. And don't forget we talked about Lucifer himself. Why was he cast out of heaven? There were no tablets of stone back then. But think about it, in rebelling against God Himself, and exalting himself to the place of God, **He broke at least three commandments:**

- (1). The first commandment, because he wanted to be like God.
- (2). The ninth commandment, because he lied to the angels.
- (3). The tenth commandment, because he coveted God's throne.

Now let me ask you a question; If Lucifer was put out of heaven for breaking the law, do you think we're really going to get in breaking it?

Let's take a minute and see what the Bible says about this law.

Psalms 119:142, ¹⁴² *Your righteousness is everlasting and your law is true.*

The law is the truth. Now if the law is the truth, why would God want to do away with the truth?

Psalms 119 Verse 172, ¹⁷² *May my tongue sing of your word, for all your commands are righteous.*
The law is righteousness.

Let's see what the New Testament says.

Romans 7:12, ¹²*So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.* Paul says the law is holy, just, (fair) and good!

Very few things in the Bible are called holy. God is holy, so is His law, and we ought to be careful how we treat holy things! In fact the Law and God are very similar. Look at this side by side showing the similarities.

GOD VS LAW

God is Spiritual (1 John 4:24)	His Law is Spiritual (Rom 7:14)
God is Love (1 John 4:8)	His Law is Love (Matt 22:37-40)
God is Truth (John 14:6)	His Law is Truth (Ps 119:142)
God is righteous (1 Cor	His Law is righteous (Rom 7:12)
God is Holy (Isa 6:3)	His Law is Holy (Rom 7:12)
God is Perfect (Matt 5:48)	His Law is Perfect (Ps 19:7)
God stands Forever (James 1:17)	His Law stands Forever (Ps 111:7,8)
God is Good (Luke 18:19)	His Law is Good (Rom 7:12)
God is Just (Deut 32:4)	His Law is Just (Rom 7:12)
God is Pure (1 John 3:3)	His Law is Pure (Ps 19:8)
God is unchangeable (James 1:17)	His Law is Unchangeable (Matt 5:18)

Given how closely God's Law resembles God's character, why would Jesus do away with it? Because that's what people say he did right? Let's see what Jesus himself said about the law. Matthew 5:17-19 ¹⁷***Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*** ¹⁸*I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.* ¹⁹*Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

"Until heaven and earth disappear!"

The next time you either hear or are tempted to think the law has been done away with, I want you to do something for me. Stomp your foot on the ground. If the earth is still there, so is the law!

Listen to Psalm 111:7-8, ⁷ *The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.* ⁸ *They are steadfast for ever and ever, done in faithfulness and uprightness.*

God's law is forever and ever!

Let me approach it another way. Do you believe that we have sin in our world today? If you answer that question with YES, then the law has not been done away with. I'll prove it to you...

1 John 3:4, ⁴*Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.*

Sin is lawlessness (transgression of the law)! If there is no law, then there can be no sin!

Romans 4:15, ¹⁵*because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.*

That is why I believe the devil is trying so hard to do away with the law of God. You see, if you do away with the law, then you do away with a knowledge of sin. Because he knows that if people have no knowledge of sin, they will never know their need of God's forgiveness. **So the very fact that we have sin tells us there must be law.** It's impossible and irrational to even suggest God's law could be done away with!

So the next thing we need to know then, is WHY does the law reveal sin? What is the purpose of the law?

Romans 3:20 *²⁰Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*

That's the purpose of the law. It cannot justify or save you. If you could be justified by obeying the law, you would not need Jesus.

The law cannot save you! **That is not its purpose. What is it for? It gives the knowledge of sin.** The law simply tells you what you should and should not do. James tells us the same thing:

James 1:23-25 *²³Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.*

The law is like a mirror. God says take my law like a mirror, look in it. If you have dirt or sin, the mirror reveals it! Now, can the mirror clean up my dirt? No. The purpose of the mirror is to make me aware that I have dirt and need to wash it away.

If I want to get clean, I need cleansing from Jesus! (Lesson #12) Really the mirror does me a favor! I get cleansed by the blood of Christ, and I come back to the same mirror. The same mirror now says, **"Your face is clean!"**

Let's make it practical. **Here's a man who is committing adultery.** He looks in the mirror, it says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." It tells him he's got dirt in his life. What does he do then? **He goes to Jesus, he is cleansed, forgiven, and justified. When he comes back and looks in the mirror or law it says, "You are clean!"**

That is how Paul can say in Romans 8:1 *" Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ²because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*

That's the purpose of the law.**Alright, so here is the next question...If we are not saved by the law, then why should we keep it?**

John 14:15, 16, 21,

¹⁵"If you love me, you will obey what I command. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—

Vs 21 ²¹Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

Jesus says, "Do you love me? Then keep my commandments!"

The 10 commandments are simply a test of love. The same test that faced Adam and Eve in the garden. Do I love God enough to worship Him and follow His will, or do I love myself more and will do things MY way.

John said the same thing in 1 John 5:2-3,

²This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. ³This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

You see some people say, "All you have to do is believe." James 2:19 answers this. *¹⁹You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder*

The devil believes too! But true belief arises from a love for God, and surrender to following His will – something that hasn't changed a bit because God never changes!

So the next time a preacher tells you the law is done away with, just go to his church and steal his offering that day and see if the law is really done away with.

Now a very solemn text. 1 John 2:3, 4,

³We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. ⁴The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

If people say they know God and don't keep His commandments they are liars and do not have the truth!

Well, I want to take a minute and show you why so many are confused about this subject .

Have you heard that the 10 Commandments have been done away with, and we are living under a new covenant, or not under the law? Let's read the **3 main verses** that are used to do away with the law of God. Besides these, we will read four verses which establish God's law.

These will help us understand why some people teach that we do not have to keep the law.

LAW ESTABLISHED

James 2:10-12, ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker. ¹²Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom

To some that seems to contradict:

Matthew 5:17-19, ¹⁷"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven

LAW DONE AWAY WITH

Colossians 2:14-16, ¹⁴having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. ¹⁶Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day

Here's another:

Eph 2:15, ¹⁵by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,

That Bible SEEMS to be saying two different things doesn't it? Let's read another one.

Let's look at one more.

1 John 2:3, 4, ³We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. ⁴The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him

Rom 6:14, ¹⁴For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace..

So how in the world do we reconcile all these verses? Actually, there is a simple answer. **The Bible speaks of two laws.** God's law of ten commandments; and Moses' law, or the "law of ordinances."

Here is a simple comparison of these two laws. **Understanding this simple truth makes this subject very clear.** Let's see both of them individually. First God's Law.

Exodus 31:18

When the Lord had finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, He gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

This was the ten-commandment law of Exodus 20, and this law, written on stone, was placed *inside* the ark of the covenant.

Deuteronomy 10:1-2,

*¹ At that time the LORD said to me, "Chisel out **two stone tablets** like the first ones and come up to me on the mountain. Also make a wooden chest. ² I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. Then you are to **put them in the chest.**"*

Now secondly, Moses' law was written by Moses *in a book!*

Deuteronomy 31:9, 24-26,

*⁹ So **Moses wrote down this law** and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel.*

Vs 24 *²⁴ After Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end, ²⁵ he gave this command to the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD: ²⁶ "Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God. There it will remain as a witness against you.*

Moses' law was written with Moses' **handwriting**, then placed in the **side** of the ark. **It was against the people**, and it was called the **"book of the law."**

Does this begin to make sense? Sure. **Moses' law** can be read for the most part in **Leviticus 23**. It dealt with ceremonies, sacrifices, feast days, ceremonial Sabbath days, and meat and drink offerings. All these things had to do with the Jews as God's chosen people and all pointed forward to when Jesus would come. Christ was the substance of all that Moses' law pointed forward to.

In other words, Moses' law and all its requirements **was to lead the people to look forward to the coming** of the promised Messiah who would be the ultimate fulfillment of it. You remember the Sanctuary pointed to Jesus! But what happened when Jesus died on the cross? It ended. The sanctuary service was finished.

With this background, we are prepared to re-examine a couple of these earlier texts that were in question

Colossians 2:14 FIRST ONE

¹⁴having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross

Clearly the "handwriting of ordinances, that was against us" was *Moses' law*. The meat and drink, and sabbath *days* were those referred to in Moses' law.

Ephesians 2:15 SECOND ONE

¹⁵*And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

The same goes for **Ephesians 2:15** and the law of "ordinances".

As long as one keeps the two laws separate, there is no confusion. Moses' law was temporary, and Jesus fulfilled it and thus it was done away with. But you see, we can no more do away with God's ten-commandment law than we can do away with God Himself.

God's ten-commandment law is a transcript of His character.

Alright, now that, that is clear, let's come to the third text that is often used.

So what does it mean when the Bible says we are not under the law, but under grace?

Let's look at Romans 6:14 THE THIRD ONE

Romans 6:14, ¹⁴*For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

But does this mean that we don't keep the law?

Paul, realizing people might think that quickly added verse 15,

¹⁵*What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!*

What does it mean "not under the law, but under grace?"

Example of being pulled over for speeding:

If I receive grace, does that mean I get to go 100mph?

I'm even MORE obligated to go the speed limit.

One of my favorite passages is 1 John 5:2-3

²*This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.* ³*This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome*

Perhaps the problem is that people are afraid that God's will for their lives is going to be burdensome! Whatever the reason, as I talk with people, often they will say at this point, **all that law stuff is the old covenant**, we are under the new covenant now. Have you heard that?

Well, let's see what the Bible says about it.

Hebrews 10:15-16, ¹⁵*The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: ¹⁶"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."*

The new covenant is not doing away with the law of God, it is writing the law of God upon our hearts. When His law is in our hearts, it will be natural for us to obey it because we love Him! Wherever you go in the Bible, God's law of Ten Commandments is upheld.

There in heaven in the beginning.

There in Eden as mankind was created.

Evident in the life of Abraham

Given in stone to Moses and the Israelites.

Upheld in the life and words of Jesus Christ.

Part of the early church

It will characterize eternal life with God – because it's a revelation of who HE IS!

But there's one group of people we haven't mentioned yet – what does the Bible say about his people living in the end of time?

Revelation 12:17, ¹⁷*Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.*

Revelation 14:12, ¹²*This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.*

You see, in this great battle between Christ and Satan, as time draws to a close we've learned that God is calling His people to stand with Him and follow Jesus Christ. On the other side is the antichrist, who does away with God's law and calls people to worship him.

We're going to see in further studies that it is God who wins the final battle and puts sin and suffering and all that come with it away forever.

What if we took God at His Word. Believed that He is a God who has our eternal interests at heart, and were able to say, God, I trust You.

I can see in the Bible the incredible love that you must have for me that you came to save me from sin and death. I respond by worshipping you and say, Not my will anymore, but Yours be done in my life.

God's law is a wonderful blessing. The more you come into harmony with it, the happier you will be.

Next Study #7- The Devil's Greatest Deception