

The Teachings of Jesus 3rd Q 2014

Lesson 10: The Law of God

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for ios and android. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app! **Be sure and type in Come and Reason Ministries** and search in your app store as another unofficial app with our logo is out there.

Sep 27: Class Potluck Picnic 1:00 P.M. – At the Pavilion at Student Park in Collegedale. Plates, eating utensils, napkins and drinks will be provided, please bring food, friends, and lawn chair. Many of our class have responsibilities at local churches and don't often make it to class, but don't let that keep you away from the potluck – We want to see you!

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, will be conducting a workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 10,11: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Vallejo SDA church in Glendale, CA.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public

Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon.

The Weekend of **Jan 10, 2015:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven, formerly Elmshaven, SDA church.

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NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN.**

SABBATH

When you hear the word "law" what comes to mind? Try asking people and see what answer you get? I have asked thousands and the predominant answer is: "Rules, regulations, ordinances." Then ask them what is God's law, and you will often hear, "God's rules, regulations and ordinances."

But is it really so? What do you understand God's law to be? What do you understand to be the main thrust of this week's lesson?

That Jesus did not come to change God's law – why is this a point that needs to be made at all?

Would they make the point that Jesus didn't come to change the law of gravity? Then why do they emphasize Jesus didn't come to change God's law? Because they view God's law as some list of rules, similar to manmade laws. Its evidence of the infection from Rome. I think it would be so much more

effective to teach the truth about God's law – the law of love, then no one would consider it could be changed.

Ellen White, one of the founders of the SDA church, understood this. Her very first words in the *Conflict of the Ages Series* are, “‘God is love.’ 1 John 4:16. His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be.” (PP 33)

The Bible writers also understood God's law to be love:

- Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Rom 13:10)
- The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Gal 5:14)

As Jesus said, the entire law is summed up in love for God our fellow man. (Mt 12:37-40)

This love is not sentiment, or emotionalism, it is the very element, code, or principle that life is fabricated upon. Ellen White explicitly wrote that God's law of love is the principle of life:

- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. ***For God is love, and love is life.*** COL 258 (emphasis mine)
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth *the great principle which is the law of life for the universe*. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. ***And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.*** DA 21 (emphasis mine)

Satan began a war in heaven – and one of the main focal points in his attack against God was against God's law.

Can Satan change God's law? So how can he attack it? By teaching that God's law is something that it is not and infecting the minds of intelligent beings with false ideas about it.

The evil one taught that God's laws are the kind of laws created beings make – rules, regulations, ordinances – thus diverting loyal minds away from God's true law of love. And lowering God from that of Creator, He who constructs the fabric of reality, to a being no better than us, one who can only make rules and then use power to enforce those rules.

When one understands God's law as the design protocols upon which life is constructed to operate, one realizes that deviations from it are incompatible with life, and such deviations require the Designer to heal and restore the deviant (sinners) to harmony with it, lest death ensue.

But deviations from imposed rules are not incompatible with life and require the ruling authority to inflict death lest unpunished rebellion ensue. This is Satan's view of God – that God is no different than us and makes rules, like we do, and then inflicts punishment to enforce those rules. Ellen White describes her understanding of how the war in heaven began:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. ***Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;*** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. (DA 761.4 emphasis mine)

When mankind deviated from God's law, God's law did not change, God did not change, but humankind was changed. Thus Christ came to earth to fix what Adam and Eve did to God's creation. Christ did not come to fix God or God's law, but to actually heal and restore His creation back into harmony with God's design for life (God's law).

And Christ spent the majority of His time healing. Why? Because the laws of health are design laws. A doctor cannot get a patient well in violation of the laws of health, but must do something in the patient to restore him back into harmony with the laws of health. No appeasement, no payment, no legal pardon is of any value without actually restoring the patient to harmony with the laws of health. This was Christ's mission to restore humanity to harmony with God's law of love, the law upon which life is constructed to operate.

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. *I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.* (Heb 8:10 emphasis mine)

But Satan counterattacked all Christ accomplished. The man of sin arose and infected the church with Satan's view of God's law. (2Thes 2:3) Constantine converted and the truth of God's law of love was replaced with Imperial Rome's concept of law and government. Rather than understanding God's law as the design protocols upon which our Creator constructed life to operate, Christianity embraced the lie *that God's law is like Rome's, an imposed set of rules, with no inherent consequence, thus requiring the lawgiver to police breeches in the law and inflict punishment for disobedience.*

Eusebius (263-339 CE), the first church historian, documents how Christianity exchanged God's law of love for an imposed Roman construct: "With the Roman Empire monarchy had come on earth as the image of the monarchy in heaven."¹

Christians lost sight of God's law of love and accepted an imposed legal system modeled after human governments.

This idea of an imposed law altered the view of God held by Christians and changed how Christianity functioned. Christians went from a body of believers who lived communally, shared their possessions to help each other and died as martyrs, to an organization of Crusades, Inquisition, burning dissenters at the stake, and active participants in genocide (Nazis in Germany and Christians in Rwanda). Every doctrine of the church has been impacted by accepting the dictator view of God and His law.

Today we stand at the very precipice of eternity and “The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the *law of God*. Upon this battle we are now entering--*a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah*, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition.” (GC 582 emphasis mine)

How do you see God’s law?

But evidently many people think Jesus did come to change God’s law. Where would such an idea come from?

- Jesus definitely didn’t abide by the Jewish understanding of law when He was here
- Jesus changed many of their legal practices
 - He cleansed the temple from buying and selling
 - He healed on Sabbath
 - His disciples pulled heads of grain on Sabbath
 - He changed Passover to Lord’s Supper
 - He spoke to women and Samaritan women
 - He associated with tax collectors and prostitutes – and consider even today – what might we think if our conference evangelist, when traveling, stayed in the home of a prostitute? Didn’t Jesus do this?

What was Jesus doing? He was operating upon design law and overthrowing imposed rules. But the Jews couldn’t see it and accused Him of being lawless.

If one holds the idea that God’s law is imposed, rules, regulations, like humans make, then one doesn’t see any reason it can’t be changed – it is just that God is the only one authorized to change it.

Thus, I have heard arguments that God made the Sabbath holy, and no where do we find where God changed the sanctity from Sabbath to Sunday, thus Sabbath is still holy. Or, we honor the day God commanded us to honor – if God changed the day of worship we would worship on the day He tells us, but God hasn’t so we stick with the Bible Sabbath.

What is the basic problem with these arguments? They argue from a human level of understanding, that God’s law is nothing more than a list of rules imposed by the ruler of the universe, and as sovereign God has a right and we are obliged to obey. But since the law is nothing more than rules, God is free at any time to change His law.

What is the problem?

God's ways are not our ways – His ways are higher than our ways. The Bible says God never changes, He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow – thus God's law can never be changed, for if it were to be changed the universe would cease to exist. Matter would destabilize, galaxies would unravel, the integrity of molecular bonds would disintegrate. Everything we know would be destroyed.

Read third paragraph, “It is important...” Did Jesus argue for the “perpetuity of the Decalogue”?

Or, was Jesus talking to an audience that was completely incapable of hearing that the 10 Commandments were a temporary measure, added because of sin and are only need for a very short time in the history of the universe?

If Jesus had said such a thing, what would have happened? They wanted to stone Him for challenging their traditions, how much more if He actually suggested the 10 Commandments were added?

Were the 10 Commandments added or were they always in existence?

What evidence for either side of the argument?

- Did angels need a law that if they sinned the results of their sin would pass down three and four generations?
- Was there a Sabbath before the creation of this earth and sun?
- Did angels need a law to honor their mother's and father?
- The 10 Commandments are an adaptation of the law of love, especially **codified for fallen human beings**. Adam and Eve in Eden didn't need a law to honor their mother and father. The 10 were not written for Adam and Eve in Eden, they were written for sinful humans why?
- The law was added so that the trespass might increase. Rom 5:20
 - What law reveals sin? The 10 Commandments and Paul says it was added.
 - Why was this necessary? Because sin dulls the mind and people need the law to help diagnose what is wrong, like and MRI for the soul.
- What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. Gal 3:19
 - What was the purpose of the law? To act as schoolmaster, to diagnose and protect until the Remedy came
- We know that the law is good if one uses it properly.⁹ We also know that the **law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels**, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers,¹⁰ for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurors—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim 1:8-11

The idea that the 10 Commandment law was added is what the founders of our church taught. Here are three quotes:

- If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. And had the people practiced the principles of the Ten Commandments, there would have been no need of the additional directions given to Moses. {PP 364.2}
 - Was there a law prior to Sinai – yes
 - Was it written in 10 Commandment form? No!
 - What was the law prior to Sinai? The law of love.
- I am asked concerning the law in Galatians. What law is the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ? I answer: Both the ceremonial and the moral code of ten commandments... "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). **In this scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law.** {1SM 233, 234}

Which law then was added? The 10 Commandments and the ceremonial system.

What was God's law like in heaven before sin?

- But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, **the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of.** In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. {MB 109.2}

Why was the idea that God had a law something the angels never even considered? Because it is the protocols upon which life is built, and it never occurs to do it otherwise. If someone said – it is a law that you shall not jab thy eye with a pencil – wouldn't you say? I never considered that a law. Why not? Because it makes such perfect sense. Yes, I am free to jab myself in the eye with a pencil – but the only result is pain and suffering. This is how it is with every violation of God's law because God's laws are not rules they are the protocols of life and health. Thus the angels never considered there was a law.

This battle over God's law is still raging today. What has prevented God from clearing this issue up here on earth?

Human beings continue to think through our own way of doing things and ascribing to God our methods, our ideas, our concepts, rather than seeing God as God – as Creator, Builder, Designer of the universe.

SUNDAY

Read third paragraph, “The fact that Christ...” Do you find this paragraph helpful? What is the message of this paragraph?

What do you understand “binding” to mean?

I looked it up in the dictionary and it means:

- imposing an obligation
 - The contract is legally *binding*.
 - The parties agreed to settle the dispute through *binding arbitration*.

Is this how God’s law works? Some binding rules put upon us?

What problems arise when we present God’s law this way?

- We misrepresent God, so people don’t actually know Him
- Thus trust in God is undermined
- Obedience under such a construct stems from fear, not love, thus it actually causes one to become more of a rebel
- It leads to legalism in our behavior and our theology
- We make rules for behavior and have loopholes to those rules
 - The Jews in Christ’s day had a Sabbath rule you couldn’t walk more than $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from your home. But if you have a second home within a half mile of the first you can walk to it, and then go on another $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. What constitutes a home? Anywhere you have lunch the day before. So, if on Sabbath you want to walk somewhere more than a mile away all you need to do is drop a lunch every half mile and you can walk to where you want to go.
 - There was another rule they had; if you were traveling on Friday with your donkey, and the Sabbath arrives before you take the burden off your donkey, you are not allowed to remove the burden on Sabbath, but you can loosen the straps and whatever falls off is allowed. If a Gentile comes by the Gentile can remove the burden from the donkey, but you are not allowed to ask or indicate in any way that you need him to do so.
 - When I was in medical school there was a Jewish friend in my class. We did our surgical rotation together. One Friday evening we were in surgery and came out after Sabbath began. In the doctors lounge the TV was on. He loved to watch Memphis State basketball and a game was on, but the TV was on the wrong channel. He couldn’t change the channel because it would “spark” meaning it would start a fire on the Sabbath, so he asked me to change the channel for him. It was okay to fill the mind with worldly things from TV on the Sabbath, as long as one didn’t change the channel and make a spark.

- All of this leads to conceiving of God as a dictator, and the plan of salvation as a system of legal requirements.

There are many destructive results to presenting God's law as "binding" in this way.

But, if we present it as binding, in the same way the law of gravity is binding, the laws of physics and health are binding, then all of these problems evaporate. You see, no loophole gets one around the results of jumping off a bridge, or shooting IV heroine, or cheating on your spouse, or stealing from your employer. All violations of design law result in damage to the one in violation. The only option is healing, recreation, restoration to God's ideal, which is God's plan of salvation.

When we present God's law like this, then people realize it is for our actual good, health, wellness to live in harmony with the design.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, "After establishing..." did Jesus establish the perpetuity of the 10 Commandments or the perpetuity of God's law of love?

Will the 10 Commandments ever be "wrong"? No – they will always be "right" but will they always be needed?

Why or why not?

The 10 Commandments won't be needed when the law is again written on the heart, when we operate in harmony with it. Thus the MRI is not needed where no sickness exists.

What was Christ doing in the Sermon on the Mount? He was demonstrating that the rules, which point out behavior, are exposing a sickness of character, a condition of being that is out of harmony with God's design for love. Thus, while they said, adultery is sin, Jesus said lust in the heart is the real problem.

Read last paragraph, "What's fascinating..." What about the meaning of the last sentence, "Law-keeping, in and of itself, as an end in itself, leads to nothing but death if the law is not understood as an expression of what it means to be saved by grace."

What kind of law are they talking about? Is that sentence consistent with these Scriptures:

- In the **way of righteousness there is life**; along that path is immortality. Pr 12:28
- He who pursues **righteousness and love finds life**, prosperity and honor. Pr 21:21
- The **law of the Lord** is perfect, **reviving** the soul. Ps 19:7

What do these passages mean? Just as we read from EGW earlier, that God's law is the law of life, life is actually built upon it.

Can one live outside of God's law, or in violation of God's law? What are they talking about then?

They are thinking within a system of imposed rules, and they know that keeping rules can't save us, but in their model they have a solution, the rules also require a perfect sacrifice to pay the legal penalty, and thus we must have God's grace send Jesus to die to pay our penalty. Then we can have our records adjusted to say we are pardoned, or righteous, or innocent and thus we are legally saved. All legalism, all false, all manmade and based on Rome's infection to Christian thought.

Imagine a metaphor of the entire world being infected with tuberculosis. Everyone is sick and dying, coughing, fevers, fatigue, spitting up blood. There is a religious group who realizes this is not how God designed it. And they teach God will one day destroy all disease. Therefore, God keeps careful records, recording every slight defect, and when He returns He will investigate every case and if you don't have a clean record He will destroy you, because this disease must be destroyed. So, this group teaches that God sent His Son, who was TB free, and His record is free of any defects or symptoms or sickness. And if we accept Him as our personal Savior, He will photocopy Jesus' medical record and put it in our chart and when God investigates our record He will only find a record of perfect health, no recorded evidence of any sickness, symptoms or defects.

But, all the people who rely on this are not actually taking their TB meds, thus they continue to have coughing, fever, spitting up blood, just like all those people who don't belong to this religious group and don't claim to have Jesus' record applied to their record.

What is the application? In Christianity today, there is just as much addiction, pornography, domestic violence, child abuse, teen pregnancy as in non-Christian homes. Why? Because God's plan is to heal the heart/mind/character, to restore His design law into the person. But that plan has been replaced with a false legal lie, that our problem is in our legal standing before God and in what is written in our heavenly records and the solution is to have the blood of Jesus applied to our record to erase the record of sin. Thus, we claim the blood to get legal pardon, but don't partake the remedy to actually get well.

Is it any wonder Christ hasn't yet returned? He doesn't want any to be lost. He wants all to be healed, restored, saved, so He waits for the truth to go forward so people will actually be healed in heart/mind/character.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "In this passage..." thoughts? What about today? How do Christians understand adultery today?

What does it sound like the lesson is teaching? Does it sound like the lesson is teaching that adultery is more than “overt physical sexual act”?

Then in the last paragraph it states, “Christ corrected the misuse of this passage by uplifting the sanctity and permanence of marriage: the only cause for divorce, before God, is “sexual immorality” or “fornication” (in Greek porneia literally “unchastity”).”

Would this include in the heart and mind or only the behavior?

What is adultery?

- Does the victim who gets raped commit adultery?
- Does a married soldier injured in combat and has his genitalia destroyed, who leaves his wife to move in with his nurse, loving her sleeping with her, giving his heart to her, but not committing physical fornication, commit adultery?
- Why were the children of Israel called an adulterous nation? Was it only if they worshipped a fertility god? Or if they worshipped any god other than Yahweh?
- Does a person whose spouse committed adultery, also commit adultery by dating someone else before the divorce is final?
- When is a marriage over, when the state says it is, or when the individuals involved end it in their hearts?
- When does God recognize a marriage is over, when the state says it is or some other criteria?
- Does God recognize the marriage certificates for homosexual couples? If God doesn't recognize these state issued certificates, then does he recognize state issued divorce certificates, or see someone as still married where the state hasn't issued a divorce certificate?
- I have a patient who filed for divorce from her husband 18 years ago. He is an attorney and has played legal games to prevent the divorce from ever being finalized. She can't get a state divorce certificate, should the church recognize her as divorced and give her a church wedding to someone else?
- Why does the church give authority to the state's divorce certificates and thus won't allow the woman above to remarry, but does not give authority to homosexual marriage certificates?
- What about in countries where polygamy is legal, and a man has marriage certificates from the state for more than one wife? Should the church recognize this? Why or why not?

What does the Bible mean when it says if we violate the law in one point we violate in all points?

If a person tries to murder their spouse have they committed adultery?

WEDNESDAY

The lesson points to the interaction of Christ with the Pharisees over Corban, a tradition of dedicating one's wealth to the Temple, but you could keep it until you died. This meant that one couldn't use it for one's parents.

Read 3rd and 4th paragraph, “It seems as if the Pharisees...” What is the motivation for Corban – love for God or selfishness? There is no problem with dedicating resources to God’s service, the problem is when it is done for selfish purposes. Any examples of how this can be done today?

- Musicians performing for fame not to praise God
- Speakers speaking for money, fame, position, recognition, not to teach others
- Pastors pastoring for a paycheck, not as a calling
- People giving tithes and offerings because they believe if they do God will bless them and they will get more for themselves
- Going to church to get votes to get elected to office
- Say a certain prayer every day for 30 days believing one will have their influence expanded

What do you think of Christ’s comment that they should have honored their parents without leaving the tithe of mint and herbs unpaid?

My wife has a basal plant in a pot on our porch that she gets fresh leaves from to use in cooking. Should she pull every 10th leaf and bring to church and put in the offering plate?

Why would Christ say this? Several points:

- It was more of an agrarian culture, some of the individuals may have made their entire livelihood from producing and selling herbs
- But more likely, the people already believed it was required to do so. In that setting, what would have happened with His audience if Christ had said there is no need to pay tithe on your herbs? He would have lost His audience.

Is God concerned with mint leaves? No, God is concerned with hearts that love, hearts that are honest, integrity, devotion, loyalty.

What does it mean to honor one’s parents? Does it mean doing what they say?

If you are an adult, and your parent is an alcoholic and wants you to pick them up beer on your way home from work and drop it off at their house – do you dishonor them if you refuse? Why or why not?

- How about if a parent wants to talk to you on the phone every day of the week?
- I had a patient who was married for 40 years when she came to see me. Her husband, every Sunday of their marriage, picked up his mother, went to church with his mother, sat with his mother, went home and had lunch and spent Sunday afternoon with his mother. He stopped after work on his way home every day to have dinner with his mother. My patient was finally fed up with it and wanted her husband to go to church with her, have dinner with her, go on vacations with her. Was this man honoring his mother? Would he dishonor his mother if he stopped doing these things?

Where do you draw the line?

The Bible teaches that when a person marries they are to leave their parents and cleave or unite with their spouse. This means the spouse becomes the number one human in their affections and loyalty, even over the parents.

I have seen many families damaged when this doesn't actually happen. If you are considering marriage be sure you are marrying someone who is capable of loving you more than themselves, and they have the ability to put you number one in their human relationships. If not, do not marry them.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, "The rich young ruler..." Can one be saved in violation of the law? Then is the rich young ruler correct salvation comes from following the law?

It all goes back to how you understand law – imposed rules – you are lost, lost in fear, insecurity, short-comings, legal religious systems that don't save.

Design law, then we realize Christ lived the law perfectly, revealed truth to restore trust, and when we trust Him the Spirit comes and transforms us, we have greater insight, comprehension and intelligent choose to cooperate freely with God because it makes so much sense. We desire to live in harmony with how God constructed life to operate, which is obedience to His law.

FRIDAY

Read third paragraph, "Jesus, the express..." this is so well stated, what does it mean?

Discuss questions 1 & 3

¹ S.L. Greenslade, *Church and State from Constantine to Theodosius* (London: SCM Press, 1954).