

GRACE AND LAW

Be ye holy, even as your Heavenly Father Is holy

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ONE OFTEN HEARS a phrase spoken by someone seeking to legitimize his sin that, "This is the age of grace, so this sin is allowed (isn't so bad/isn't sin/is overlooked by God/ etc.)." The suggestion is made that, because we are now in the New Testament, not in the Old Testament where God gave the Law, God now has and does forgive everything, and that we can do whatever we want (or at least don't have to worry that we might be punished by God for our sin)! Should anyone have the audacity to rebuke a fellow believer for sin, or even just speak against a sinful action, or a disobedience to Scripture, he is accused of being a, "Legalist!"

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

Romans 6:12-19 The BIBLE

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness

Acts 17:30 The BIBLE

17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first

begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

I Peter 4:17 The BIBLE

In the Old Testament (the time before Jesus), God gave the Israelites (who were a brand new country/nation, having just escaped Egypt) the Ten Commandments, and an entire legal system of laws and rules for their new country/nation. And regular sacrifices were demanded by God. Man was expected to live by this system of rules, and to offer the prescribed sacrifices, at various times and circumstances. And, having followed this system as closely as possible, man met his Maker with the hope that God would have mercy on him.

God understood the sinfulness of man, however, and knew that man would never live up to the holiness of God. Because the Holy Spirit was not yet poured out into man (John 14:17), but merely onto some men, man did not have the ability to live God's holiness, God therefore overlooked much of what man did, and provided the Law to rein in, as much as possible, the sinful acts of man; He provided man with a clear set of boundaries outside of which man was not permitted to sin. One could say that this system was a national and civil code of federal and local laws, as much as it was a code of moral directives. It is very important to recognize the difference between these kinds of laws: National/Civil law, as compared to Personal, Moral commandments, and the fact that, in Israel, the two often overlapped.

God **no longer requires**:

- Sacrifices: *Hebrews 10:8-10*;
- Circumcision; *Romans 2:26*;
- Feast and holy days: *Romans 14:4-6*

God **now permits** things He did not permit in the Old Testament:

- Consumption of pork: *Acts 11:6-10*;
- Gentiles to be ministers of God: *Acts 16:1-3*;
- Whatever is necessary: *I Corinthians 6:12*

God permitted certain things under the Old Testament system of Law that He **no longer permits** under Jesus. For instance:

- Divorce: *Mark 10:2-10*;
- Revenge: *Roman 12:19*;
- Multiple wives: *I Timothy 3:2, 12*

It is concerning the **moral** laws of the Old Testament that Jesus said,

17 Think not that I Am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I Am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach

men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:17-20 The BIBLE

It is important to recognize that, Jesus' purpose in coming to earth the first time was a Spiritual one,

16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto Him the Book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And He closed the Book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him.

21 And He began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Luke 4:16-21 The BIBLE

... not a political or legal one.

15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone.

John 6:15 The BIBLE

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence.

John 18:36 The BIBLE

13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?

Luke 12:13-14 The BIBLE

Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man.

John 8:15 The BIBLE

Jesus preached a *heart* obedience to *commandments of God*, rather than a *legal* obedience to *laws of the land!* So when the woman taken in adultery was brought to Jesus (John 8:3-11) He looked at the condition (repentance) of her *heart*, and forgave her, while those around her were looking at her *illegal actions*, and wishing, perhaps quite rightly, according to the law of the land (Deuteronomy 22:20-

24), to stone her. Jesus' purpose on earth that first time was to preach righteousness, not to take political nor legal control. So, just as Jesus had ignored the man who wanted Him to act as judge over an inheritance, Jesus wasn't addressing the fact that this woman was guilty of committing a *crime*; He wasn't a judge over Israel! Jesus' role, during this, His first coming to earth, was that of, 'preacher of righteousness,' and He recognized the fact that she was *repentant* of her *sin*! (If one is to preach righteousness he must also forgive the repentant!) Jesus came the *first* time as *Preacher*; He shall come the *second* time as *Judge* and *King*.

46 I Am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness.

47 And if any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

48 He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

John 12:46-48 The BIBLE

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.

Acts 17:30-31 The BIBLE

17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

I Peter 4:17 The BIBLE

1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom;

II Timothy 4:1 the BIBLE

So, Jesus, Bringer of grace and truth, in no way turned a blind eye to sin! In order for there to be forgiveness there must first be repentance (sorrow for sin) and turning away from that sin! If this weren't the case Jesus would not have had to preach repentance; His death on the cross would have been sufficient! Salvation, said Jesus, requires repentance, and turning away from sin, not continuing in sin!

14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel.

Mark 1:14-15 The BIBLE

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is

at hand."

Matthew 4:17 The BIBLE

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Luke 13:2-5 The BIBLE

11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

Mark 6:11-12 The BIBLE

44 And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me.

45 Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures,

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

John 24:44-47 The BIBLE

Conclusion:

So, while there are matters of civil and national law, that were given to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, and matters of Judaistic sacrifice, etc., that have been superseded by the death on the cross of Jesus, and by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to live a righteous life by the power of God, there is NO law, no matter how, "small," it may seem, that has been or can ever be erased, modified, nor ignored! EVERY moral commandment of God is for eternity, and maintains its importance to the man of God!

17 Think not that I Am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I Am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:17-19 The BIBLE