

The Covenants, Grace and Law (Part 18)

Does a Specific Verse Nullify a Law? (B)

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Two weeks ago, when I left off, we were expounding the four principles by which we should be able to discern whether a given law is directly or physically applicable to us today. We concluded the first point, which was "*Does the law define sin?*" Perhaps the major purpose of this point is to help us to understand that the Bible's approach to sin is very broad. So broad, in fact, that the apostle John was inspired to write in I John 5:16-17 that all unrighteousness is sin. Most of the modern translations translate that word "unrighteousness" to "wrong doing." All wrongdoing is sin. And I think he means wrongdoing in relationship to the word of God.

The basic concept underlying the word "sin" in the Bible is "failure to live up to the standard." Sometimes it is translated from a word that means to miss the mark, to fall short, to swerve aside, or to go beyond the limit.

God intends that we live by every word of God. This necessitates, then, that we understand that His instruction—His law, as it is called in the Bible—is scattered throughout the entire Bible. It is not neatly contained in one section. So do not be misled that, just because people call the first five books of the Bible "the law of God," that is all there is to it. It is everywhere throughout the Bible!

In fact, we have evidence, for instance, from Romans 15:4 and from I Corinthians 10:11, that the Old Testament was purposely written with the New Testament—New Covenant—church in mind. Therefore, the law—Genesis through Deuteronomy—was written with us in mind. It was not just written for the ancient Israelites who made the Old Covenant with God. It was written with *us* in mind.

Then we got to the second point, which is "*Is there a scripture that definitely states that such-and-such no longer needs to be done?*" The point here is to look for a statement that is specific. I began this point by giving an illustration showing that the Bible is an unfolding revelation. Sometimes it introduces new concepts, but mostly it is building upon and incorporating what has been previously given—not doing away with former things.

There is a general progression from the letter of the law application to its magnification into its spiritual intent. In other words, as we move time-wise towards us here in the present—from the beginning, let us say, towards Jesus Christ and then beyond—a given law's application becomes broader and yet more specific, more specifically or sharply defined, in its intent. And we always need to understand that the intent is always love towards God or love towards fellow man.

I took this approach to show us that the Bible is a continuing revelation as another caution to human nature's proclivity to search for and to concentrate on what we do not have to do—rather than what we should do. But there are some things, which under the New Covenant, we are no longer physically required to do. Today we are going to continue pursuing this point.

Even though there were animal sacrifices used in the worship of God from as early as Cain and Abel, when God made the covenant with Israel only one sacrifice was required. That is shown in Exodus 23:18. It is the Passover sacrifice, which God calls there "My sacrifice." He further confirms, in Jeremiah 7, that the sacrificial system was something that was added later. Sacrifices were not added, but *the sacrificial system* was added. They were sacrificing before the Old Covenant was made.

Jeremiah 7:22 For I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.

How much clearer can you get? He nails it down time-wise—"when you were brought out of Egypt." So that is just prior to the making of the [Old] Covenant. And He is undoubtedly referring to the Covenant. So God did not speak to them nor command them about making burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Jeremiah 7:23-24 But this thing commanded I them, saying, "Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people: and walk you in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

He said, "Obey My voice." If we take that in an extreme literalness, His voice would only include the Ten Commandments because He literally spoke them in the hearing of all of Israel. But it undoubtedly includes what He spoke privately to Moses, and thus what is contained within the terms that are given between Exodus 20 and Exodus 23.

Now, with that in mind, let us go back to the New Testament.

Hebrews 9:8-10 The Holy Spirit thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

These three verses are very instructive in regard to this subject: Is there a definite law, or statement, that such-and-such no longer is required? The subject involves food and drink offerings and different washings imposed until the time of reformation. What God is saying there is that, in His mind's eye, whenever He gave them the meat and drink offerings and so forth, there was a grandfather clause.

Do you know what a grandfather clause is? That is a term that is used in the media today. Usually you will see it written when they are talking about a law that is the process of being legislated. A grandfather clause is something that is attached to the law, which causes it to expire—either under certain conditions, or at a certain time.

This verse says that these things that are the subject of chapter 9 were imposed until the time of reformation. That is, they had a grandfather clause that is given there. And so this statement, then, gives the sense of requirements legally forced on the Israelites but only to last for a certain period of time.

This is not too much different in concept than what we have today with a convicted person. Now, notice the term "convicted person" because we found out there, did we not, in Jeremiah 7 that when these people made the covenant with God, He did not speak about sacrifices. He only said, "Obey My voice." But because they transgressed, something was added. Something was imposed on them. It was as though this was a penalty because they transgressed God's voice. But it was only to last for a certain period of time.

This is not too much different than the concept that we have today when a convicted person is required to check in with a parole officer for a given number of years. Or, they are to perform a number of hours of community service. Or, a person convicted of DUI, being required to attend a driving school and to be restricted in his driving for a certain period of time. (Something along that line.)

So this was imposed upon them, and it was to last for a certain period of time. Considering that, we are going to add two more things to this. Actually, [it is] two parts of one thing. What we are going to add to this is the context. First of all, [we have] the immediate context of chapter 9. The overall theme actually has within its writing the Day of Atonement.

You will notice that from the very beginning he talks about a worldly sanctuary, a tabernacle. He then talks about the things that were inside the tabernacle—the candlestick, the table, the shewbread, the sanctuary, the second veil, the holiest of all, the golden censer, and the mercy seat.

Hebrews 8:11-12 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in [He is talking about entering into the holiest of all.] once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

The theme of the Day of Atonement is reconciliation—becoming at one with God through the forgiveness of sin. That is how we become at one with God. That starts the process off. And so each year, on the Day of Atonement, their sins were symbolically transferred to the tabernacle by having the blood sprinkled on it. The blood contained (symbolically again) their sins. The blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat; and their sins, then, were symbolically transferred to the mercy seat. And they were forgiven. That is the picture that is behind this.

So he says that the tabernacle, and all of its furniture, and all of its ceremonies, and the rituals used to accomplish atonement (at-one-ment with God) were types. They were symbols which stood in place, with good purpose; but only until they were replaced with a more effective reality when it was in place. But Christ went in with His own blood.

Now, we are going to put this into a bigger context; and that is the whole book of Hebrews. The overall theme of the book of Hebrews can be described by such words as better, superior, greater. I will show you how this is shown within the book. Chapter 1 begins by telling us that Christ is greater than angels. Chapter 2 shows us that the goal that has been given to us in the gospel of the Kingdom of God is so far superior to anything that man has ever been offered before that there is no comparison.

In chapter 3, it tells us that Christ is far greater than Moses. Beginning in chapter 4, the comparison is made with Aaron. It goes on into chapter 5, but chapter 4 provides an introduction to that; and that Christ is greater than Aaron. In chapter 7, we find a comparison with the Melchizedek priesthood and the Levitical priesthood. The Melchizedek priesthood is greater, superior, better than.

In chapter 8, the covenant is introduced. The New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant. The theme continues right on into chapters 9 and 10, because those chapters are about the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ to the things of the Old Testament—the tabernacle, its furniture, and all of its ceremonial systems. But they were only imposed for a time, until something better was provided by God.

It is clear then that God's intent with the sacrificial system was that it only be temporarily imposed. Is that clear? This applies to the second point: *Are there verses, or a verse, that definitely and clearly says that something is being set aside?*

Hebrews 10:1-4 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices [That makes it very clear what law he is talking about.] which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. [So then Paul argues?] For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Hebrews 10:18 Now where remission of these [sin] is, there is no more offering for sin.

That is, it is not required to be made any more. What we have here is the announcement of a sacrifice of better, spiritual, and eternal effectiveness which replaces the old—the one that was temporary and inferior. Christ's sacrifice is so effective, Paul says, that it only had to be done one time. Do you see the comparison that he is making? How much more superior, how much better, how much greater? It continues right on through. This theme begins in Hebrews 1:1 and

it does not end until Hebrews 10:18. By that time, Paul's argument regarding the superiority of the things that have been provided for us is over. So we have an announcement here of the superiority of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The old [sacrificial system] did play a part. It foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice, and it reminded of sin; but it did not define sin (unless the offerings themselves were broken). In that case, then, they defined sin in that the people who did it failed to live up to what that law required. There is a dramatic case where that occurred. Remember that Aaron's sons were struck down by lightning when they did not do the offering properly.

The old sacrificial system that foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice reminded of sin, but it did not define sin. These temporary laws did not pertain to idolatry, murder, stealing, Sabbath breaking, coveting, lying, or dishonoring parents. They are now very clearly set aside, because sin is effectively dealt with by Jesus Christ's sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:22 And according to the law almost all things are by the law [again, he means here the law that appears in the first five books] purged with blood [meaning cleansed or purified], and without shedding of blood is no remission.

With that as a foundation—the theme being the purification by blood, [let us go to] the book of Ephesians, in the marriage chapter.

Ephesians 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it: that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

We can find in places where we are cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. Back in I John, it very clearly says that. But this is cleansing in a different aspect, a different place. "Almost all things are purged by blood." Almost all! Not everything is. There are some things that must be purged in another way.

This verse tells us that we are cleansed by the washing of water by the Word. There are things that will be cleansed—things in us, things in our mind, things that have to do with conduct, things that have to do with character, things that have to do with attitude—that are going to be cleansed by water. The word "water" here is symbolic, and it is referring to the Word of God. It is referring to the Holy Spirit.

Can you recall the long discourse that Christ had, that is applied at Passover time, about eating His flesh and drinking His blood? Towards the end of that, He said to that group of people to whom He was speaking:

John 6:63 The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Well, you have on your lap, and you are looking at, the Word of God. And Jesus says there is power there. There is power to cleanse—cleanse a person's mind, because we can only think by what goes into the mind; and what goes into the mind are concepts that are contained in *words*. Words are merely symbols of concepts that we deal with, with which we think by. We turn those concepts into action, into conduct; and that becomes part of our character, part of our attitude.

Now, in other places in the Bible, the Holy Spirit is compared to water and to oil. Both of these have revitalizing, nourishing, cleansing, purifying, and sanitizing properties to them. Everybody knows this. We are very familiar with how we use water to cleanse things. We do not use oil so much to cleanse things; but, again, remember the parable about the Samaritan who cleansed the man's wounds with oil. There is a mollifying affect there.

So, we are washed by the water of the Word of God in conjunction with a new nature that is given to us by God. This begins to get into an area that helps us to understand why studying the Word of God is so important. We need those words in us so that we can think according to those words. And, if we believe those words, they will begin to purify and cleanse the way we think.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, it shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

For those of us who have made the New Covenant with God, it is the Holy Spirit that teaches and brings to remembrance—not the ceremonial law! Remember that we just read in Hebrews how the sacrifices were a reminder of sin. Today the Holy Spirit is the reminder, triggering thoughts in our minds. Because God has made the Holy Spirit available, the various washings that are emblematic of the Holy Spirit are also set aside. Here we have clear statements that the imposition of those ceremonial regulations has been lifted.

Now we are going to go off in a little bit different direction, a little bit of a tangent here. But this clearly applies to the theme that we are carrying through here in regard to "*Is there a definite scripture that says such-and-such no longer needs to be done?*"

John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

We are going to clarify something here. What is the law of Moses? Sometimes people will use this scripture to try to convince you that there is an opposition between the law that was given through Moses and grace and truth that comes through Jesus Christ. That is not what the verse is saying!

The word "but" tends to mislead us. You can see that is in *italics*, and it would be better if it had the word "and" inserted in there because law and grace are not in opposition to one another.

Rather they are in apposition to one another. Apposition means layered upon. It is something in which there is agreement.

Remember I said before that the Bible is a continuing revelation, building upon what was previously revealed. The law came first. There is no doubt about that. And now grace is layered on top of that. They work together with one another. And grace clarifies the proper position of law.

Now, what is the law of Moses?

Luke 2:22-24 And when the days of her [Mary's] purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him [Christ] to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord') and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, 'A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.'

Did you notice something? In verse 22, it says "law of Moses." In verses 23 and 24, the law of Moses is called "the law of the Lord." What are you going to do with that? Why does it say that? It says that because all biblical law is from God—including the ceremonies, including the rituals. Moses merely delivered it.

"Law of Moses" was a generally popular title given to a body of laws considered to be less important than the Ten Commandments, probably because God Himself spoke the Ten Commandments. He did not delegate that to anybody. I think that it is clear that they are on a level, as it were, that supports all other law. But the other was just as much a part of the law of God as was the Ten Commandments.

I know of at least one place, in Galatians, where Paul uses the term *law*, and he probably means the entire Old Covenant, including the Ten Commandments. What are you going to do with that? There is nothing wrong with that. I told you the last time that I spoke that Paul uses the term "law" very loosely, quite broadly.

What I am saying is, again, that we almost have a coveting—a deep desire—to be able to tie everything up in nice neat little boxes and say "*This we have to do, and that we do not have to do*," like it is just as clear as the dividing line between night and day. But that is not the way God chose to do it. He chose to write His Book in a way that, if we really want to understand it, we have to diligently study it.

In a general way, we can say that God spoke the Ten Commandments and Moses delivered the statutes, the judgments, and the ceremonies. However, as originally given, what is generally called "the law of Moses" (and here I am going to give it another title, the civil law of Israel) had no sacrifices. Therefore, since they were added, the law of Moses came to have two distinct parts to it: the civil and the ceremonial. And even they are all mixed together.

Now let me show you something very interesting in the book of Malachi.

Malachi 4:4 Remember you the law of Moses My servant, which I

commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

What makes this so interesting is the context. The context is end time, beginning with Malachi 3: 1, where the prophecy begins about the forerunner to Jesus Christ and then the coming of Jesus Christ. And it proceeds through the ages right down to the end, where he begins talking about those who—at the end of the age—are going to be speaking often to one another. It goes right on over, even into and including the Day of the Lord, when people are going to be burned up.

Think of this context. You and me—we are living in the end time. God's warning to us living in the end time is to *remember the law of Moses!* (*People say, "Well, I thought it was done away."*) Why would He tell His end time church to remember the law of Moses? Because it is not done away! It is that blunt!

We saw very clearly in the New Testament that the ceremonies, the rituals, are set aside. That leaves the remainder of it, that still has jurisdiction over our lives, and to which we are responsible. That civil law is still binding *in its spirit*, as Jesus clearly showed in Matthew 5. That is why He said that not one jot or tittle is going to pass from that law until all be fulfilled.

And I am going to show you, before this is all over, that the ceremonies are not done away with either. We just do not have to physically perform them by making offerings on an altar. Those of you who are familiar with the prophecies, you know very clearly that, in Ezekiel 40-48, they are going to come back into force again. They are merely set aside until God intends to use them again. I am going to define this even more sharply as we go along here.

We are moving towards the conference that was held in Acts 15. But before we get to that, I want to introduce it with what Paul did in Acts 21. I want to do this to set the attitude, so that ours is in agreement with the way the apostle Paul approached even the ceremonies of God's law. The "they" here is the Jews. The "you" is the apostle Paul. And the speaker is James, our Savior's brother.

Acts 21:21, 25 And they are informed of you that you teach all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs?.As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

Verse 25 is a quotation that is taken from the conference in Acts 15. The subject here, according to verse 21, is the customs. The controversy, as we are going to see in Acts 21, did not involve the civil laws. It did not involve the Ten Commandments. Rather it involved the ceremonial additions, as is clearly shown in the context of this chapter by what Paul did.

The context shows you what is *customs* were. That is, what is meant by that word [and with

what] the customs had to do—as demonstrated by Paul making the offerings that were required at the conclusion of a vow. So we are talking about the ceremonies. And it is also entirely possible that the controversy over the customs also involved the oral traditions of the Pharisees—things that they were so devoted to.

There is no evidence that Paul ever taught any Jew to forsake Moses. To do so, he would have to be preaching against God—to do such a thing. There is no evidence that Paul ever told them, "Do not circumcise your children." He did preach that the keeping of the law could not justify a person before God. That is very clear in his writings—that we are justified by grace through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

It is very clear from Paul's own actions here in Acts 21 that though salvation or justification could not be won through the keeping of these things, keeping of them was not destructive unless one depended upon them for justification or salvation.

It is also clear from the context that there was no hesitancy on Paul's part to do this. There is no indication that he argued with James. You can see that there was a unity of mind here. There was nothing wrong with doing these things. There is no indication of reluctance, that somehow or another this was going to destroy Paul's faith in Jesus Christ, or that it would compromise him in the eyes of any Christian who might be viewing this, any Gentile who might be affected by it.

Do you know what that teaches me? It teaches me that the Christians of the first century clearly understood what was being discussed. They clearly understood what we seem to have such a difficult time understanding nineteen centuries later. Again, I mention these things because I want to take steps to help us grasp that nothing this God of love that we worship requires of us is bad for us. Sometimes what He requires may be difficult to bear up under, but it is not destructive to His purpose and it is not thoughtless in any way. Always it is intended to build.

Acts 15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, that it was necessary to circumcise them [the Gentiles], and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

The issue in this conference was whether ceremonial aspects of the law of God were necessary to be physically kept in order to have salvation. We are not going to go through the whole chapter verse by verse, but it might be good for you to read it later on. But at no time was the question of keeping the Ten Commandment ever even raised. Brethren, the Sabbath is not a ceremony (as the Worldwide Church of God would like for you to believe).

Since believing Pharisees are directly noted in verse 5, I cannot help but think that the term "circumcision" may very well include the unwritten oral law that was a part of pharisaic tradition and not part of the Word of God. In other words, the Pharisees wanted the Gentiles to obey them. That is, the oral traditions. That is why Peter used the term "tempt you God" in verse 10. Notice that.

Acts 15:10 Now therefore why tempt you God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to

bear?

In light of that, it is interesting to reflect on Paul again in chapter 21. He did not fear tempting God, making that offering that was taken from the ceremonial law.

Acts 15:19-20 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

These four points were, and are, part of the law of Moses. Interesting, is it not, that they did what I am telling you. They plucked them right out and said, "Hey, these still apply." Do you see what I am getting at here? The apostles did not believe that you just whisk away a whole body of laws. These four laws were part of the law of Moses, and the council at Jerusalem is specifically requiring them of Gentiles.

There is a reason why this is so. [Those four things] were a normal part of the pagan Gentile customs, done as a part of their worship, and were therefore common to their lives. If you want to chase this out later, I will give you the scriptures as to where this appears in the first five books: Leviticus 22: 8; Leviticus 19: 29; Deuteronomy 23: 17-18; Genesis 9: 4 (Notice how they are scattered all over the place.); and Leviticus 3: 17.

I want you to think of the ramifications of what the no-law people are saying. That is, these people who are saying that God just wiped out the whole law of Moses. Do you know what the law of Moses was? It was their constitution! I mean, the whole nation of Israel. (It occupied the same place in their life as the Constitution with the Bill of Rights does to the United States of America.) The church did not have the authority to just wipe out the whole constitution. That is so clear. The church only had authority to deal with the ceremonial aspects that had to do with devotion, justification, and salvation.

Were they about to tell the Christians that they no longer had to obey the civil law of Israel? Absolutely not! But this kind of thinking has led some to conclude that the Israelites had to obey these laws, but the Gentiles did not. This is really getting hairy, because there are people who recognize the validity of what I just told you.

One high official in our former association was reported to be observed eating something unclean in a restaurant. He was asked why, and he replied that those laws did not apply to him because he was a Gentile. This man is a victim of lumping all of these laws into a nice, neat box and concluding, "I do not have to do this because I am a Gentile." Well, I am going to show you, as we go along, that we still do; and so do the Gentiles.

This chapter makes it very clear that circumcision is no longer required. But does that automatically mean that other laws contained in the law of Moses were just also set aside, and they no longer have any bearing on a Christian's manner of life? Was their obedience restricted to just those four laws? Look at verse 21. This was part of the reason why they only quoted four laws. These were of greatest importance right now because the Gentiles were in an area where

these laws directly impacted on their way of life—because it was part of the pagan worship service. But here is why they [the Jerusalem council] did not add any more to this. They wanted to keep the message short.

Acts 15:21 For Moses of old time has in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day.

What does that mean in the context of this chapter, and in the context of this discussion? Maybe this will be surprising to you, but I will tell you what it means. The apostles at Jerusalem fully expected that Gentile converts would attend Sabbath services at the synagogue from time to time, where they would receive further instructions in regard to the law of Moses. Therefore, there was no need for them to instruct them any more specifically at that time.

Do you know that, for the time being, the people in the true church were even paying tithes to the synagogue? They were attending services at the synagogue. Remember, they did not have radio, television, or telephones. They were an infant church, and it took quite a number of years before they were administering to these people in the way that we accept as normal and common. They did not have churches to go to, because they were small congregations and had no elders. So what did they do? They went to the synagogue, and there they received instruction in the law of Moses—which applied to the Gentiles because that is who this was written to. Interesting, is it not? Did Paul think the law of Moses was done away? Not on your life!

Now look at Leviticus 19:31, and tell me "Is this done away?" This command—this law—is it done away?

Leviticus 19:31 Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.

Does that mean we can now consort with witches, just because it appears in the law of Moses? If we follow the reasoning of this official in our former association—that those things do not apply to him because he is a Gentile—that now means to me (if I take what he says correctly) "Because I am a Gentile, I can now consort with witches." You have to extrapolate out from what they are saying. And you know that is not true.

Leviticus 19:32 You shall rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord.

Ah, we do not have to do this now? We do not have to respect somebody who is elderly—because it is part of the old law of Moses that is done away? That is not true, brethren. I am speaking sarcastically. We still have to obey that.

Leviticus 19:35-36 You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight, or in the measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall you have: I am the Lord your God,

which brought you out of the land of Egypt.

Now, you see, because this is done away we do not have to be fair in business. We can cheat everybody, and we can get away with it. Let the buyer beware.

Leviticus 19:16 You shall not go up and down as a talebearer among your people; neither shall you stand against the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord.

Now is it all right for us to gossip and be a talebearer?

Leviticus 19:13 You shall not defraud your neighbor, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with you all night until the morning.

Now we can cheat our employees?

Leviticus 18:23 Neither shall you lie with any beast to defile yourself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion.

Is bestiality okay? I think you know better. How about homosexuality?

Leviticus 18:22 Though shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.

Here is a good one.

Exodus 21:16 He that steals a man, and sells him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

That is, kidnapping.

Exodus 22:22-23 You shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry.

Is it okay now for us to vex a widow or an orphan?

Exodus 22:28 You shall not revile the gods [it means 'a judge' in this

case], nor curse the ruler of your people.

Are those things done away?

If we follow the reasoning of that man, who I guess is still a leader within the church, his position is very easily answered. In Exodus 12, God instructs you and me; and He says there will be *one law* for the Israelite and for the stranger. You do not divide the laws and say, "This is for this person, but it does not apply to that person." There is one law for the Israelite and the stranger. The same law for everybody!

In writing to a congregation in a Gentile city, in Romans 13, Paul told them to be subject to their civil governments that were over them. In I Peter 2, Peter tells us that we are to be subject to every ordinance of man. Brethren, can you see what these laws in the law of Moses are? They are extensions of the Ten Commandments—designed to guide and regulate communities of people in specific areas of life. And it is no wonder that they still apply!

There is equally no wonder that, when Jesus came, He magnified the law; and He stated that not one jot or tittle was going to pass from the law until all be fulfilled. What Jesus did was He broadened the application from specific to its intent. I want you to see the principle of *broadening* so that we understand how to look at these things.

Leviticus 19:19 You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your cattle gender with a diverse kind: you shall not sow your field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon you.

All of these have the same general thought behind them. The one with material—linen and wool—I think is easiest to see this principle. It moves from specific to its intent. It moves from letter to spirit. The specific application involves linen and wool. And it means then that we are not to mix the fibers from a vegetable product and an animal product into the same piece of material.

It expands in its practical application when we understand that mixing animal and vegetable fibers make poor quality. Therefore, the intent—the spirit of it—is to buy the very best quality that you can afford. It still applies. The same is true with the other laws that appear in that little context too. He is telling you the best thing to do is to keep the breeds pure, and not let hybrids develop.

Why was it done this way? It had to do with the Old Covenant and God's intention in His use of the children of Israel and in the Old Covenant. It was not God's intention at that time to save those people. He was producing a historical record so that the Church of God could understand things much more clearly—what He was doing—and make the proper applications to our lives.

Deuteronomy 29:4 [Moses write:] Yet the Lord has not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

The Old Covenant people did not have the Spirit of God. They were carnal. And so God gave them a carnal approach—that of a schoolmaster. Because the life-giving Spirit has replaced that approach, the old administration is also set aside and is replaced by an administration that can give life.

II Corinthians 3:5-9 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also has made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather [or, much more] glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

Perhaps this will make this section more understandable: The subject here is not the doing away with laws but the *change in administration* of existing laws! Remember that Jesus said not one jot or tittle is going to pass. In Hebrews 8:10, where the context is the Covenant, the New Covenant has laws; and they are going to be written in our heart. So the New Covenant has laws. Feed that information back to II Corinthians 3, where there is a change of ministration (or, administration).

What Paul is doing here in this brief section that we just read is making a comparison, showing the superiority of the ministry's responsibility under the New Covenant to the priesthood's responsibility under the Old Covenant. He does that by comparing ink with spirit, stone with flesh, letter with spirit (or, intent), and death with life.

The ministration of death was the civil administration for the punishments of violations of civil law. The laws were not done away. But the Old Covenant administration and enforcement of the law was set aside because the church does not have civil authority. It is so simple.

The church does not have civil authority over the State. But the ministry does have the opportunity to play a large part in the ministering of life to those called of God—through teaching and administering God's Word. So the letter killed because the Old Covenant could not provide for life. Words—even of divine origin—cannot produce life. There has to be a vitalizing Spirit to charge the words with transforming power.

Under the Old Covenant God did not promise His Holy Spirit, forgiveness of sin, access into His presence, or eternal life. What Jesus did is that He raised the civil law from its merely carnal application to the nation of Israel to its spiritual application to the church, which would be drawn from all of mankind—including, of course, the Gentiles.

There is a wonderful time coming.

Ezekiel 11:14-21 Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, "Son of man, your brethren, even your brethren, the men of your

kindred, and all the house of Israel wholly, are they unto whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'Get you far from the Lord: unto us is this land given in possession.' Therefore say, 'Thus says the lord God; "Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come." Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God; "I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.'" And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in My statutes, and keep Mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. But as for them whose heart walks after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, says the Lord God.

This has not happened yet. When He does, Israel will be keeping His laws just like we are—in the power of His Spirit; and they will be converted. They will be under the New Covenant.

Now, let us summarize this sermon. Turn with me to Galatians 5.

Galatians 5:2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

Remember that the overall subject here is justification by faith.

Galatians 5:3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

Understand that, if you read Acts 16, Paul circumcised Timothy. So he is not talking about the actual cutting away of the foreskin. That is something that is certainly permissible. *Circumcision* here stands for following the ceremonial additions to the law for the purpose of receiving justification. It is a symbol that stands for the whole thing. How do I know that? He tells me: "He is a debtor to the whole law." It is obvious, from what we have already covered, that the whole law is not physically binding upon us. The ceremonies do not have to be kept. That is, those various washings, the sacrifices, and offerings.

But, brethren, there is no shortcut to discerning which laws are binding and which are not. Again, we would like things to be tied up in neat little boxes; but God has not chosen to do it that way. We must study—compare scripture with scripture—especially the words and examples of Christ and His apostles. We must also meditate, seeking God's will. And the two points that

we will go into the next time will also be of help in doing this.