

BRIEF PERSPECTIVE ON THE LAW

The great thing about law is that it does not apply to us if we do not break them. So, most of us feel quite 'safe' about not breaking 'serious' laws like murder and treason. Our perspective of the law seems reasonable until we read about the interpretation of the One who gave the Law. We cannot pick and choose which laws we think we can obey and not break. James was explicit in his style of writing 'For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws (NLT)'.

The reflective person will know that he cannot keep God's Law even for a femtosecond (that is one quadrillionth of a second). So, there is not an iota of a chance of obtaining righteousness through obeying the Law.

God, in His wisdom and timing, gave the Promise long before the Law. The Promise of the blessings of God (includes righteousness, sonship, provision, the Spirit's empowering, etc..) was entirely dependent on God to fulfil.

Like Abraham, we only need to believe. Believe that Jesus died for us on the cross to save our from our sins.

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WARMING UP

1. Which is the most absurd law that you have come across?
2. What is one episode (if any) of suffering the consequence as a result of breaking the law?

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read Genesis 12:1-3, 7, 15:6,

Galatians 3:15-18 - The Promise preceded the Law

3. What were the promises that God made to Abraham? Through Whom was the promise in Genesis 12 fulfilled?
4. What was the basis of Abraham righteousness (Gen 15:6)? Similarly, how did we obtain the blessing of righteousness?

Read Galatians 3:19-25, Rom 2:12-16 - The purpose of the Law

5. How did Paul describe the role of the Law (verses 22, 23)? Did the Gentiles have an escape clause not to obey the Law since the Law was given to the Jews (Rom 2:14-15)?
6. If loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength is the greatest commandment in the law, what then is the greatest transgression?
7. How does the law point us towards Jesus?

Read Galatians 3:26-29 - the Promise fulfilled

8. How do we appropriate the promise?
9. What are the effects and implications of our faith in Jesus?

MOVING FORWARD

The wrong belief that the Galatians had was that they needed to do something other else than faith in Jesus.

Rejoice that Jesus has done it all for us.

Be watchful for ideologies that detract from the work of Jesus on the cross.

LIFE TOGETHER

The church is a community of people whose commonality is Jesus.

Having experienced the grace of God, let us allow the compassion of Jesus to move us to reach out to our neighbours who are still imprisoned by the Law until they come to faith in Jesus.

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These notes are primarily for the Into the Passage portion, and are to be used just as guidelines or commentary notes. Most of them are my own thoughts, so take that with a grain of salt. Let the Word of God lead you to truth, not these notes.

INTO THE PASSAGES

Read Genesis 12:1-3, 7, 15:6,

Galatians 3:15-18 - The Promise preceded the Law

3. What were the promises that God made to Abraham? Through Whom was the promise in Genesis 12 fulfilled?

The promises to Abraham were three-fold, the land promise, the nation promise and the spiritual promise and all have been fulfilled and are being fulfilled. The land promise was appropriated when Joshua conquered the land. The nation promised was fulfilled when the family went into Egypt but came out as a nation. The spiritual promised was fulfilled when Jesus died to redeem the nations for God.

4. What was the basis of Abraham righteousness (Gen 15:6)? Similarly, how did we obtain the blessing of righteousness?

Abraham believed God and his faith in God was credited to Abraham as righteousness. We are righteousness on the account of our faith in Jesus, who died for the sins of the world.

Read Galatians 3:19-25, Rom 2:12-16 - The purpose of the Law

5. How did Paul describe the role of the Law (verses 22, 23)? Did the Gentiles have an escape clause not to obey the Law since the Law was given to the Jews (Rom 2:14-15)?

The law was our guardian, keeping us in prison until we came to faith in Jesus. Although the written law was given to the Israelites through Moses, the Gentiles know what is right and wrong instinctively as God had written the law in people's hearts. That people (who are God's creation in His image) have a sense of right and wrong show that God's law may be known in a different way, other than the written form.

6. If loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength is the greatest commandment in the law, what then is the greatest transgression?

Credit to Martin Luther who thought differently to many people. He reasoned that if the greatest commandment is to love the Lord, our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. The greatest transgression is NOT to love the Lord, our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

7. How does the law point us towards Jesus?

Practically, we should have experienced the anguish, desperation and guilt of sinning against God as a result of the law. Our ONLY recourse is to turn to God's saving grace in Jesus. Only Jesus lived that perfect and sinless life. Only Jesus is worthy to die for the redemption of the world.

8. How do we appropriate the promise?

We appropriate the promise by faith.

9. What are the effects and implications of our faith in Jesus?

Later on in chapter 5 of Galatians and elsewhere in the bible, we are exhorted to live out our life of faith by the power of the Spirit. It is clear that a life of faith transform a person to be increasingly Christ-like. This life of faith is not characterized by acts of the sinful nature. Paul was explicit in verse 21 of chapter 5 that those who continue to live according to the sinful nature will not inherit the kingdom of God.