

Which of the Ten Commandments Did Jesus Repeal?

Greetings RHM Family and Regional Church

As we study the Fourth Commandment it is important to understand the differences between “written biblical law” verses “Rabbinic oral law” also referred to as “hedge laws” If we understand the differences it will help us understand the root of legalism verses truth that sets us free.

Which of the Ten Commandments Did Jesus Repeal?

1. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make any graven image.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it Holy.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.
10. Thou shalt not covet.

The Root of Legalism

The basic challenge is how can man obey the “written laws” of the bible without the detailed instructions contained in the Oral Laws and Traditions of Men?

What is The Oral Law

Rabbinic Judaism holds that the books of the Torah (first 5 books of the bible) were transmitted in parallel with an oral tradition, passed down by scholarly and other religious leaders of each generation. The “Oral Instructions” were recorded in the Talmud (lit. learning) and Midrashim (lit. interpretations). The interpretations of the Oral Laws are thus considered the authoritative reading of the Written Laws contained in the bible.

How Oral Law is Established

Rabbinic sages and teachers basically read from the Torah (written word) forward to what they term is the “Full Torah.” They believe the Full Torah includes the written laws, oral laws and the traditions of their fathers and this comprises the “Full Law” that they follow. They believe their oral law and traditions supersede the actual written Word of God. This means obedience to God’s written laws is not based on a literal reading of the Word of God, but on the combination of written, oral and traditions of the elders thus this now becomes “God’s Full Law.”

A Personal Example Of Rabbinic Oral Law And Traditions

“Remember the Sabbath day to make it holy” (Exodus 20:8). It is clear that the written Law (Torah) regards the Sabbath as an important day. Yet when we read the specific written

biblical laws regulating how to observe the day, you find only a few injunctions like not working, pursuing your own interests, call the Sabbath a delight, honor it by not doing your usual things and pursuing your interests. If you refraining from these few activities it would fulfill the biblical command to make the Sabbath holy (Isa. 58:11-14).

During a visit to Israel I found myself breaking “Rabbinic Oral Law” at dinner in our hotel dining room. We were having supper at about 7 pm on Sabbath. A Jewish couple in our dining room just announced their engagement to everyone in the room. As Goyim (a gentile) I snapped a picture of the happy couple, a hush took over the room! Why? Because I broke an Oral Law on the Sabbath! My camera flash was considered lighting a fire. There are literally thousands of “hedge laws” like this for the laws written in the bible.

These hedge laws were written so people would have to break through the oral hedge before they could break a written law. When you read the scripture closely you will see that Jesus and Paul confronted these “hedge laws” repeatedly. They never once disavowed the “Written Word of God” only the Oral Hedge Laws and The Traditions of Men. For example Jesus was faulted for healing on the Sabbath. The Pharisee’s were not mad about healing they were upset that He broke oral traditions on the Sabbath.

Now that we have a basic understanding of written law verses the legalism of Rabbinic oral laws we can now ask this question, did Jesus’ death on the cross actually repeal any of God’s Written Laws? Let’s discuss how laws are repealed and you decide if God’s written laws were repealed at or abolished at the cross.

Most Christians reject legalism while assuming that obedience to God’s written laws is legalism, yet this is not the true at all. Legalism is rooted in men’s traditions and is not confined to Jewish practices. It can be found in western theology as well. So oral laws and traditions of men are not unique to Rabbi’s and Israel. The root of legalism is not the laws found in the bible, but in the way men build hedges around them.

My Approach To God’s Written Laws

1. There are no bad laws in the Word of God.
2. God would never give mankind a law that was bad for them.
3. The Law of God is not arbitrary.
4. When God speaks to mankind He tells them something that is good for everyone.
5. The scripture is man’s instruction book and God wants to communicate to man about his way of life.
6. Revelation of His Laws will keep mankind from unnecessary hurt, trouble and heartache as we live in this sinful world.
7. I ask myself, what does this mean, what lies behind this commandment and what is the underlying principle God is warning us about?
8. I ask myself how this might actually apply in real life.
9. Grace is not seen as a substitute for law, but rather as a higher motivation to obey God’s laws.
10. If I change my mind God will change my heart.
11. Obedience brings the blessings, disobedience brings the cursings.

Jesus and Paul were not urging freedom from the Law....., but from the laws written by men to enforce the law that was already on stone.....and contained within the written word of

God. If you want to know how to perform the Laws of God ask Him to show you. Try considering the eleven questions I have listed above; *“when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; John 16:13-14 CJB*

Which of the Ten Commandments Did Jesus Repeal?

Was there something wrong with the Ten Commandments? Were they weak legislation in the first place? Did they somehow become obsolete with the passage of time? Some teach the law has passed away if that is true, it would mean the Ten Commandments were abolished. If true there must have been a reason for it. When we do repeal laws, why do we do it? There are many reasons for abolishing laws.

1. The law may be unenforceable.
2. It may be unpopular with the people, and because of massive disobedience it is repealed.
3. The law simply can't be maintained.

The classic example of this was the prohibition of alcohol in the early 19th century. We could point to dozens of examples, but there is still only one fundamental reason for the repeal of a law; it was a bad law in the first place, or it became a bad law in time. For which of these reasons did Jesus repeal the Ten Commandments? Do you see the problem we're dealing with? Its one thing to create a doctrinal argument to the effect that God abolished the law, but it's another matter altogether to explain why such a thing law should be obeyed.

This brings us logically to the next question. The question is simple enough.

What Happens When A Law Is Repealed?

The answer is simple. When a law has been abolished or repealed, it is no longer a crime to break that law. Technically you cannot break it because it no longer exists. An action that previously was considered a crime, worthy of punishment is now deemed acceptable.

During prohibition, you could have gone to jail for having alcohol in the trunk of your car. After prohibition was repealed, that same alcohol made you no more a criminal than a suitcase full of clothes. Once a law is repealed or abolished, there are no more penalties, no more guilt, no fines, no imprisonment not even an admonition from the judge. You cannot break the law, for it is no longer a law.

Perhaps the laws of God are different. Can the Ten Commandments be abolished and yet it still is wrong to break them? If the laws have been abolished then so were the Ten Commandments. John categorically defined sin, so no one could misunderstand: “Sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). What happens to sin, then, if the law is abolished? Listen to Paul's reply: “For where no law is, there is no transgression” (Romans 4:15). Later in the same epistle, Paul affirms, “Sin is not imputed when there is no law” (Romans 5:13).

Let's see if we can understand what this means. Suppose for a moment the Commandment “Thou shalt not steal” is abolished. (if the Ten Commandments are abolished, that law no longer exists). Since there is no transgression where there is no law, then it is not a transgression

to steal. In that case, there is no penalty, no guilt, and no forgiveness needed. If the whole law were abolished, then how do we know what sin is? No law then no sin.

Since no one suggests that it's all right for a Christian to steal, why do theologians in the western church argue that the law which includes the Ten Commandments were abolished? Some argue that "the law of love" keeps us from stealing. But why should love keep us from doing something that isn't wrong anymore? And, if it is still wrong to do it, why argue that the law was abolished?

What Have We Missed In All Of This?

Is it possible that those who advance this argument don't really believe that the Ten Commandments are abolished? But what they really mean is, that Jesus delivered us from imputed punishment of the law (eternal separation) and not from the law itself. We need the law to reveal sin and to clarify what righteousness behavior is. What Jesus did was save us from the curse of breaking God's laws, which brings the second death of eternal separation.

The Sermon on the Mount is one of Jesus' most fundamental teachings. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). How are we to understand this statement? Maybe, Jesus really meant to say it like this, "*Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to abolish?*" To complete (fulfill) the law is not the same as abolish or make the law pass away. His next statement is even clearer: "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."

Some say, "notice that Jesus fulfilled the law, and then it was able to pass away." The Greek word translated "fulfilled" in verse 18 is not the same word as the Greek word for "fulfill" in verse 17. We can even tell the difference between the two Greek words. The word in verse 17 is *plerosai* and the word in verse 18 is *genetai*. Here is how the two verses in context actually read. Ask yourself has this happened yet?

"Do not think that I have come to do away with or undo the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to do away with or undo but to **complete** and fulfill them. 18 For truly I tell you, until the sky and earth pass away and perish, not one smallest letter nor one little hook [identifying certain Hebrew letters] will pass from the Law until all things [it foreshadows] are accomplished." Matt 5:17-18 AMP

Have Heaven and Earth Passed Away Yet?

Have all things written in the law and the prophets come to pass? Of course not. Then let us agree that Jesus meant precisely what He said not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law or the prophets till all these things written in the law and the prophets have come to pass. Jesus continued in the same passage to explain the consequences of what He just said: "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" (Matt 5:19). Now, these would be strange

words if Jesus intended to nail the Ten Commandments to the cross and abolish the other laws written in the bible.

After the giving of the Ten Commandments and after Israel had boldly promised that they would keep the written laws, God said this about them; “They have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29).

Do you think that we should have the Ten Commandments in our schools and courthouses? If the law has been done away with or abolished what good can they serve? I have heard it preached that the law has passed away and we are no longer under the law. Could America be reaping what is preached in the pulpits? Is this removal of God’s laws the reason why it isn’t going well in our nation and especially with the children of our nation?

Contrast Between Letter and Spirit

Speaking of these commandments, Paul said: “And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death” (Romans 7:10).

Listen to Paul as he continues: “And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal sold under sin” (Romans 7:10-14).

Notice how Romans 7:7 alluminates verses 10-14. “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”

Where does “Thou shalt not covet” fit in the scheme of the law? It is the tenth Commandment. We need the law to reveal sin and what righteousness behavior should be. Without it we only have what men say sin and righteousness is, God forbid.....His law is holy, just, and good separating carnal from spiritual.

Jesus delivered us from imputed punishment of the law which brings eternal separation, but not from the law that is holy, just and good. It is vain to argue that the laws of God were abolished. A careful analysis of the Commandments themselves may give us a clue. What religion, denomination or sect, argues that it is permissible for a Christian to lie, covet, steal, commit adultery, kill or dishonor their mother and father?

The Sabbath Was Made for Man

When you think about it, there is only one of the Ten Commandments that is constantly coming into question and that is the fourth commandment: “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” In addition to Jesus’ support of the law, He also went to great lengths to demonstrate the true intent of the Ten Commandments, especially the fourth one.

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath,” He declared (Mark 2:28). Again and again He demonstrated, by both word and action, that the Sabbath is a time of joyous liberation from the burdens of this physical life. It was Jesus’ custom to attend the synagogue each Sabbath and on one occasion there was a man who had a withered hand. Those present watched Jesus closely to see whether He would heal the man on the Sabbath.

Jesus asked the man to stand up and turn to face the assembly. “Is it lawful,” He asked, “to do good on the Sabbath day or to do evil? To save life or to kill?” But they wouldn’t answer. Jesus then told the man to stretch out his hand and it was restored whole as the other hand. Earlier, He had healed a woman bowed over with a spirit of infirmity. Naturally, He healed her on the Sabbath day. When the ruler of the synagogue criticized His healing on the Sabbath, Jesus had harsh words for him: “Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?” (Luke 13:15,16).

In no way did Jesus break the Sabbath Commandment. He actually confirmed the Sabbath and the written laws by confronting and correcting the Pharisee’s misconceptions about them. The blessings of this day were layered in “oral laws and traditions. The Sabbath was made for man and man needs to find Sabbath rest, without it we wear down both spiritually and emotionally leading to physical break downs. We all know that when we are tired and weary the carnal side of our nature begins to emerge. But, when we are rested the spirit man has opportunity to wax strong. Could resistance and disobedience to the “Fourth Commandment” be the root of psychosomatic illnesses that are brought on from weariness, exhaustion, anxiety, depression, fear and frustration? God’s Word says it should be different! Isaiah tells us that renewed strength comes from finding our Sabbath rest.

“And the Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your desire with good things, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. 12 And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in. 13 **If** you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; 14 then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” Isa 58:11-14 RSV

Jesus said it this way in Matthew 28:11; “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. 29 Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. THE MESSAGE.

Grace is not seen as a substitute for law, but rather As a higher motivation to obey God’s laws. We simply change our minds, and God changes our lifes.

Blessings, Pastor Bob Hill

3/15/2009