

**Call to Obedience #263  
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From the front of the sanctuary to the back of the parking lot.

## **The Christian and the Law**

**By Reimar Schultze**

“Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?  
Why go ye about to kill me?” (John 7:19).

“And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I  
do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him...if thou wilt enter into life,  
keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:16–17).

I have heard of a parking lot attendant who said, “Christians are the most difficult people to park. I signal them to park in one place, and they park in another.” As we have a Christian parking problem in public places, so we do in our church sanctuaries. Have you ever heard of a pastor who has asked his congregation to please move forward and actually see it done? These born-of-God believers sit where they want to sit, and they shall not be moved.

### **The Curse of Anti-nomianism.**

At the head of this problem is what scholars of old called anti-nomianism, which means an anti-Law attitude. This attitude that “I don’t have to” or “I don’t want to” is in the heart of just too many Christians. While at the surface, this appears to be just a lack of politeness, in depth, it is nothing short of rebellion, and the prophet Samuel said that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Now I know what you will do the next time your pastor asks you, “Would you please move up a row or two,” don’t I?

This anti-nomian attitude is firmly embedded in our modern theology. It simply states, “We are no longer under the Law. Christ has made us free from the Law of sin and death.” In other words, we can now do as we will, as we did what we willed before we found Christ. The only difference being that now we get rewarded with heaven for doing what we will, while prior to conversion, we were doomed for hell for doing what we willed. With this theological thinking, is it any wonder that often, the born-again Christian does not live any better than his unsaved neighbor? That is to say, he is not easier to park than an unbeliever.

Friend, when we get serious at last, dead serious, do we really think we can break the Ten Commandments without consequences? Do we really believe that we can have other gods than the God of Abraham? Does our salvation really free us to adopt the gods of sports, pornography, money, and fame while holding onto the doctrine, “it is all by grace and none of works”?

Do we really believe that we can take the name of the Lord in vain by saying, “the Lord told me,” whenever we want to do or have something that is really just our will?

How about “Remember the sabbath day...” (Ex. 20:8)? Are we excused from that? Can the church function as a body when each member takes off in a different direction each Sabbath Day, making corporate worship impossible? When we all rest on a different day, can we follow the admonition, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...” (Heb. 10:25)? Did the early Christians meet together on the first day of the week to worship, or did they not (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2)?

“Honour thy father and thy mother...” (Ex. 20:12). Is that word of God still binding or can we rightly disregard it and be blessed anyway?

“We are no longer under the Law! It is all by grace and none of works.” Oh, how beautiful this sounds, but what devilish doctrine that produces. If we are no longer obligated to the Law, we can kill, we can commit adultery, we can steal, we can bear false witness, and we can covet our neighbor’s house and wife and scheme to get her even as King David did.

Oh, my friend, if we take out the laws of God, what kind of Christianity do we produce but a lawless, immoral, adulterous, and criminal society that deserves nothing less than to be locked up in jail? If this is the Christianity we promote, we had better increase our police force, build more prisons, and produce more divorce lawyers. If this is the Christianity – a lawless Christianity – we are worthy of another flood to consume us all, or of another downpour of fire and brimstone from heaven as Sodom and Gomorrah experienced.

Now, are you ready to move up when the preacher asks you to do so? Are you ready to park where the parking attendant signals for you to park? Are you ready not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together on the Lord’s Day? Are you ready to hold on to your spouse until death separates you? Are you ready to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, having no other gods beside him?

### **Law Is the Basis of Justice.**

“...I had not known sin, but by the law...” (Rom. 7:7). Without Law, there is no knowledge of sin. Without Law, it is impossible to separate good people from bad people or the righteous from the unrighteous. Without Law, judges are helpless and will go out of business, prisons will become superfluous, policemen would be sent home, and guns would be found in every home. Law is the basis of justice. The reason why we all don’t have guns in our homes is because we have laws and judges and policemen. Would there be a heaven and hell without Law, without justice? How would you separate the righteous from the wicked without the Law?

God is the Supreme Judge, and he has always governed by Law, and he will do so until the end of time. “And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works” (Rev. 20:13). We are saved by faith, but we will be judged by our works! The final Judgment will be based on our works of obedience.

This is brought out clearly by the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1–13). All of these virgins were pure, washed by the blood of the Lamb—that is why they were called virgins. All had lamps—the light of God—meaning that they were all saved by faith. They were all looking forward to the coming of Jesus, the Bridegroom. But only five of them obeyed by staying prepared. Then the Judgment came, and only those who had obeyed were allowed to enter the wedding feast. The others were shut out forever! We are saved by faith, but judged by works, by obedience to the commands of God!

So then, let us get into the history of Law. In the first 2500 years of biblical history, there was no divinely written code of Law. The Ten Commandments were given to Moses 2500 years after Adam. Can you imagine this long period of humanity without a divine, written, legal code? Can you image God not giving man any idea of right and wrong for 2500 years? I can’t!

How, then, did God judge men during these first 2500 years? He judged them by the laws written in their hearts. Paul says of this period of history and of all those who never heard the Ten Commandments today:

“When Gentiles who have not the [divine] Law do instinctively what the Law requires, they are a law to themselves, since they do not have the Law. They show that the essential requirements of the Law are written in their hearts and are operating there, with which their consciences (sense of right and wrong) also bear witness; and their [moral] decisions (their argu

ments of reason, their condemning or approving thoughts) will accuse or perhaps defend and excuse [them] On that day when, as my Gospel proclaims, God by Jesus Christ will judge men in regard to the things which they conceal (their hidden thoughts)” (Rom. 2:14–16, AMPLIFIED).

What was the basis of God’s judgment on all of mankind in the days of Noah? By what law did God decide who was to drown and who was to ride in the ark? By his laws written on human hearts, their conscience also bearing witness!

My friend, no one is born an atheist, and no one is born without an inner moral compass. No one! And the day will come when God will judge us by how we responded to this moral compass within! He did it before, and he will do it again. Romans 2:16 in the King James Version puts it this way, “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.” The phrase, “the secrets of men” refers to that which you know inside of yourself right well!

No, the people in Noah’s day did not have a Law written on stone, “Do not commit adultery,” but they knew well within that it was a sin to commit adultery, and God judged them accordingly and drowned them for having broken that and other laws. It does not say in our Bible that dancing is wrong, but you know in your heart quite well that it leads to lust, to spiritual adultery, and often to physical adultery. So also God judged men in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

There is no justice without Law. There is no judging without Law. All judgment is based on Law.

Now, as to the second period of the history of Law. This begins with Israel at Mount Sinai. Here, God speaking out of fire, from above a smoking, trembling mountain, gave all humankind the Law on tablets of stone so “that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful” (Rom. 7:13) and holiness exceedingly holy. How much greater the judgment on those now who violate not only the laws written in their hearts but also those laws written on tablets of stone?

### **Jesus and the Law.**

This gets us into the third historical period of Law. At one place or another, Jesus quoted all of the Ten Commandments. The most prominent support Jesus gave to the Ten Commandments is in Matthew 19:16 and following. Here comes a gentleman, asking what he has to do to have eternal life. And surprisingly to the anti-nomians, Jesus answers, “...if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” Of course, he meant the Ten Commandments as this text shows (vv. 18–19).

In this passage, life does not refer just to spiritual life here on earth for a season, but to divine life for eternity, life beyond the great Judgment. This life is unattainable without obedience. You can’t get it with a rebellious, anti-nomian attitude! Jesus then gave the man seeking eternal life some of the Ten Commandments as specific examples.

Didn’t our Lord also say, “If ye love me, keep my commandments,” and “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (John 14:15; 15:10). Obedience to God’s commandment kept Jesus in God’s love and it will keep you in God’s love.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus further strengthened and deepened the Ten Commandments. For example, he said, “That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:28). Jesus did not do away with the Law. Rather, he underlined it! He said it is life and love.

### **The Apostles and the Law.**

With the first apostles, we enter the fourth and final stage in the history of Law. Remember, the very first thing Dr. Luke says about the early church is that she “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42). That is what we should do. The apostolic doctrine, in reference to the Law, is this:

1. By the Law, no man can be justified (Rom. 3:20). That is, no man can save himself. No man is good enough to save himself. We all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

2. Christ Jesus alone satisfied all requirements of the Law, and, therefore, he only could become the atonement for our sins (Rom. 5:8–9).

3. If we receive Jesus Christ into our hearts by repentant faith, then through Christ, we shall live in obedience to that which he requires, and sin shall no longer reign over us. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John 3:9).

4. The apostles supported the Law, reminding the Christians that if they love the Lord their God with all their heart and their neighbor as themselves, they will keep the Law: they will have no other gods, they will not kill, nor steal, nor bear false witness, nor covet their neighbor’s wife (Rom. 13:8–10).

Hence, in every period of the history of Law, the Law remained a friend of God. Let it become your friend, also. And you will end up sitting in the front of the sanctuary and parking in the remotest corner of the parking lot...and walking the streets of gold in the kingdom of God!