

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## WITHOUT SPOT OR BLEMISH

*Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them.*

*Leviticus 21:23*

There are no degrees of acceptability with the LORD. HE is an absolute GOD and HE will receive nothing or no one into HIS presence that is not perfectly holy. This truth, when properly grasped, forever dooms those who think that a partial adherence to HIS holy law will gain for them some favor in HIS sight. *“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”* (James 2:10) *“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”* (Gal 3:10) *“Behold, all souls are mine, --- the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”* (Eze 18:4)

There are many well meaning men who will tell us in no uncertain terms that the “ten-commandments” which they define as the “moral law” is our rule of life. We certainly know of none of the commandments, which the LORD gave to Moses for the nation of Israel, whether the “ten” or the other 603, which are recorded in the scriptures, that can or should be disregarded or ignored. These commandments were primarily given in order that sin might be clearly defined and to bring all men who are made to see the glory of GOD in JESUS CHRIST down before HIS feet in worship.

To entertain the notion that any man “can” or “will” keep (i.e.; obey them in their jot and tittle) these commandments, is to deny the scriptures themselves which quite clearly define the departure of all men from a perfect obedience to them. Paul plainly set this forth in his epistle to the Romans when he simply said, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”* (Rom 3:23) Therefore when we look at the commandments (whether the ten or the 603) we must put our hands over our mouths and confess that we are sinful men. This is the exact purpose for which they were given, *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”* (Rom 3:19-20)

The purpose of the giving of the law seems to be quite clear and yet some still view ten of them as being a sort of “checklist” by which we can measure our adherence to morality. If a man insists that he needs this sort of a checklist, then let him hear the words of the LORD who summed up the law: *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”* (Mat 22:37-40)

Any spiritually minded man who reads this must confess with Isaiah, *“Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips”* (Isa 6:5) Out the window goes the notion of keeping this “moral law” and immediately, such a man is caused to seek relief in SOMEONE who might undertake to “obey” this law for him. What can he do to deliver himself from such a dilemma, he knows the law, but he has absolutely no ability to keep it, even in part, (which is no keeping at all) much less in the perfection that is demanded by the GIVER of this law.

So, we conclude that nothing is to be gained by regarding the law as a checklist except to reinforce the notion of self-righteousness which Paul rightly identified as occurring in the Jews. *“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s*

*righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” (Rom 10:2-4) Oh what a great SOLUTION to the dilemma of those who would obey the law but find within themselves an evil heart of unbelief and sin. “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. ---For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” (Rom 7:14-18)*

Paul declares the very basis upon which all of the children of GOD may find rest and hope. “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom 7:24-8:1-3)

The basis upon which all of our HOPE rests, whether it be in our standing before GOD as those who have kept the law perfectly in the righteousness of HIM who is our SUBSTITUTE or in our expectations of measuring up to the standard which HIS law demands in this life, we rest completely in HIM who is our PERFORMER who has delivered us from condemnation and works in us both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure. We have absolutely no confidence in our ability or unfettered desire, to keep HIS “moral law” (as they would define it) but we find great comfort in HIS.

There will always be those who would accuse us of encouraging men to sin even as they did the Apostle Paul. We can but simply answer as he did, “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? ---For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 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. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” (Rom 6:1-14)*

So can we in any wise look for help in the principle of partial law keeping, which even the staunchest advocates of the “moral law theory” will admit is the case. We need perfection and it can be found in only ONE PLACE. The blood of CHRIST which answers all of the condemnation which the law breathes out against the sons of GOD is our HOPE. The righteousness of CHRIST in keeping the law in its jot and tittle has satisfied our conscience with respect to obeying HIS law. HE has made us to live in CHRIST, quite apart from any ability or will on our part, but strictly owing to the grace which has included us in that number whom HE has set free from the law of sin and death.

Just as there will always be those who accuse us of encouraging men to sin, there will always be men who will in their perverted understanding seek to excuse their sin as being no sin at all. Such are not those whom Paul describes as being “*dead to sin*”, but are rather those who are described by Jude, “*For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (Jude 1:4) These are the tares which are sown among the wheat, and they must grow until the time of the harvest. In such time they shall be revealed as “*clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*” (Jude 1:12-13)

What curses does the law denounce Against the man who fails but once!

But in the gospel Christ appears Pardoning the guilt of numerous years.

My soul, no more attempt to draw Thy life and comfort from the law;

Fly to the hope the gospel gives; The man that trusts the promise lives. (Watts, #48, Gadsby) mam