

November 10, 2021

The Law Cannot Save

Having seen that sincerity and righteousness cannot save, we now come to Paul's third argument, the law cannot save, **Romans 10:4-5**. The Jews had been given the law of Moses. We refer to it as the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Specifically, the Mosaic laws are outlined in Exodus through Deuteronomy. On a broader scale, the law refers to all of scripture. During Jesus' earthly ministry, the Old Testament was the only scripture they had. It included the books of the law, the books of history, the books of poetry, and the books of the prophets. Prior to the advent of Christ, the Jews followed or were under the Mosaic law. The Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes were the priests and religious rulers. They zealously kept "the law" which by this time included many man-made traditions. Jesus condemned them as having a zeal for the law outwardly, but not following the intent of the law in their heart. Read **Matthew 23** and **Luke 11:37-54**.

After the resurrection of Christ, many of the Jews continued to emphasize the importance of the law. Even when they acknowledged faith in Christ, they still wanted to hold on to the law. Paul frequently addressed this difficulty in his epistles. Salvation is not by the law, nor is it through Christ and the law. Salvation is by faith alone, apart from the law. It is important to understand, Christ did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill the law, **Matthew 5:17**.

Does that mean the law has no place in the life of the believer today? No. The law is still important today as it reveals our need for salvation. The law was never meant to save, it was the purpose of the law to reveal man's inability to meet God's perfect standard of holiness. Consider **Romans 3:19-22,28** and **Galatians 2:16**. What is the purpose of the law? The law condemns all men as sinners, thus the need for Christ's sacrificial death on Calvary's cross.

Last week we looked at the faith of Abraham in Galatians 3. Let's return to **Galatians 3:10-14**. Can the law justify a man in the sight of God? According to **Galatians 3:19**, wherefore then serveth the law? In **Galatians 3:21-24**, is the law against the promises of God? The schoolmaster was both a teacher and a disciplinarian. Education cannot take place where there is no discipline. Spiritually, the law is our disciplinarian, revealing our sinfulness and total inability to save ourselves. Dr. James Brooks says, "There are only two ways by which men expect to enter heaven. One is by doing, the other is by believing." All systems of religion can be reduced to one of these two.

There are times when those who hold to and preach high standards of conduct are labeled as legalists. In most cases, this is an incorrect application of the term. A legalist is one who believes keeping the law is necessary for salvation. In essence, salvation is by doing, not believing. If a person believes the maintaining of Christian standards is necessary for salvation, then yes, they are a legalist. If, however, a person believes the maintaining of Christian standards is the outflowing of a life of holiness after salvation, they are not legalists. Consider **I Peter 1:15-16** and **II Peter 3:11**. This life of holiness is the new life created in Christ Jesus unto good works, **Ephesians 2:10**. **II Corinthians 5:17** reveals that in Christ we have a new life. Paul goes into more depth in **Ephesians 4:21-32**. As you consider the difference between the

life of the saved and the unsaved, what differences do you believe should be evident? How does **Romans 12:1-2** apply to this discussion? Are there areas in your life that still resemble the world? What can you do to change to become more Christlike?