

The Lord and the Law

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus lived and died while the Law of Moses was in force (Gal. 4:4-5).

Galatians 4:4-5 (NASB95) — 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Yet, He brought blessings that were not fully realized under the Law (John 1: 14-18, esp. vs. 17).

John 1:14-18 (NASB95) — 14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’ ” 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

John 1:17 (NASB95) — 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

Accordingly, the Book of Hebrews affirms that Christ offers a better sacrifice, institutes a better covenant, which is enacted upon better promises. As a result, believers have a better hope, a better possession and a better resurrection.

JESUS FULFILLED THE LAW

Christ said, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill...” (Matt. 5:17-20). In other words, Jesus did not come to demolish, or dismantle the law of Moses, but rather to bring it to a state of completion and finish its work (Rom. 8:1-4).

Matthew 5:17-20 (NASB95) — 17 “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 “Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Romans 8:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

He fulfilled the Messianic prophecies contained in the Law (Matt. 1:20-23; 2:14-15; 2:22-23; 4:12-16; 8:16-17; 12:15-21; 13:34-35; 21:1-5; 26:55-56; etc.).

*Matthew 1:20-23 (NASB95) — 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 “She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” 22 **Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:** 23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.”*

*Matthew 2:14-15 (NASB95) — 14 So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. 15 He remained there until the death of Herod. **This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:** “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”*

*Matthew 2:22-23 (NASB95) — 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee, 23 and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. **This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets:** “He shall be called a Nazarene.”*

*Matthew 4:12-16 (NASB95) — 12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; 13 and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14 **This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:** 15 “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— 16 “The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great Light, And those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, Upon them a Light dawned.”*

*Matthew 8:16-17 (NASB95) — 16 When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. 17 **This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:** “He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.”*

*Matthew 12:15-21 (NASB95) — 15 But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. Many followed Him, and He healed them all, 16 and warned them not to tell who He was. 17 **This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:** 18 “Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. 19 “He will not quarrel, nor cry out; Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. 20 “A battered reed He will not break off, And a smoldering wick He will not put out, Until He leads justice to victory. 21 “And in His name the Gentiles will hope.”*

*Matthew 13:34-35 (NASB95) — 34 All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable. 35 **This was to fulfill what was spoken through the***

prophet: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world."

*Matthew 21:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. 3 "If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." 4 **This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:** 5 "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your King is coming to you, Gentle, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.' "*

*Matthew 26:55-56 (NASB95) — 55 At that time Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a robber? Every day I used to sit in the temple teaching and you did not seize Me. 56 **"But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets."** Then all the disciples left Him and fled.*

He faithfully kept the requirements of the Mosaic Code, living in harmony with its commandments and precepts (Matt. 8:1-4; Luke 17:11-14; cf. Lev. 14:1-4; and also Matt. 17:24-27; cf. Exod. 30:11-14; 38:24-27).

Matthew 8:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. 2 And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." 3 Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Luke 17:11-14 (NASB95) — 11 While He was on the way to Jerusalem, He was passing between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As He entered a village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him; 13 and they raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 When He saw them, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they were going, they were cleansed.

Leviticus 14:1-4 (NASB95) — 1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. Now he shall be brought to the priest, 3 and the priest shall go out to the outside of the camp. Thus the priest shall look, and if the infection of leprosy has been healed in the leper, 4 then the priest shall give orders to take two live clean birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop for the one who is to be cleansed.

Matthew 17:24-27 (NASB95) — 24 When they came to Capernaum, those who collected the two-drachma tax came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the two-drachma tax?" 25 He said, "Yes." And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect customs or poll-tax, from their sons or from strangers?" 26 When Peter said, "From strangers," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are exempt. 27 "However, so that we do not offend them, go to the sea and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for you and Me."

Exodus 30:11-14 (NASB95) — 11 The Lord also spoke to Moses, saying, 12 “When you take a census of the sons of Israel to number them, then each one of them shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord, when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. 13 “This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as a contribution to the Lord. 14 “Everyone who is numbered, from twenty years old and over, shall give the contribution to the Lord.

Exodus 38:24-27 (NASB95) — 24 All the gold that was used for the work, in all the work of the sanctuary, even the gold of the wave offering, was 29 talents and 730 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. 25 The silver of those of the congregation who were numbered was 100 talents and 1,775 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary; 26 a beka a head (that is, half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary), for each one who passed over to those who were numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for 603,550 men. 27 The hundred talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary and the sockets of the veil; one hundred sockets for the hundred talents, a talent for a socket.

He fulfilled the demands of the Mosaic Law regarding obedience, and was thus qualified to offer Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin (Matt. 3:13-17; John 4:34; 8:28-29; Heb. 7:26-28; 1 Pet. 2:21-24).

Matthew 3:13-17 (NASB95) — 13 Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. 14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” 15 But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him. 16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

John 4:34 (NASB95) — 34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

John 8:28-29 (NASB95) — 28 So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. 29 “And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

Hebrews 7:26-28 (NASB95) — 26 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

1 Peter 2:21-24 (NASB95) — 21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

JESUS EXPLAINED THE LAW

Jesus explained the Law, setting aside misconceptions and offering clarification regarding its demands (Matt. 12:1-14).

Matthew 12:1-14 (NASB95) — 1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. 2 But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, “Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath.” 3 But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, 4 how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? 5 “Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent? 6 “But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here. 7 “But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 “For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” 9 Departing from there, He went into their synagogue. 10 And a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—so that they might accuse Him. 11 And He said to them, “What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? 12 “How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” 13 Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand!” He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.

JESUS REPLACED THE LAW

By living faithfully according to the Law, Jesus thus fulfilled its demands, and replaced the Old Covenant with one that is New and Better (Luke 16:16-17; Col. 2:13-17; Eph. 2:14-18; Heb. 10:1-14).

Luke 16:16-17 (NASB95) — 16 “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. 17 “But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.

Colossians 2:13-17 (NASB95) — 13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him. 16 Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— 17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

Ephesians 2:14-18 (NASB95) — 14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to

you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; 18 for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

Hebrews 10:1-14 (NASB95) — 1 For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, “Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, But a body You have prepared for Me; 6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure. 7 “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come (In the scroll of the book it is written of Me) To do Your will, O God.’ ” 8 After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have not desired, nor have You taken pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the Law), 9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second. 10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. 14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

The gospel of Christ supersedes and supplants the Law of Moses (Matt. 4:17, 23; 9:35; Mark 1:14–15; Luke 4:42–43; 8:1; 16:16).

Matthew 4:17 (NASB95) — 17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matthew 4:23 (NASB95) — 23 Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

Matthew 9:35 (NASB95) — 35 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

Mark 1:14–15 (NASB95) — 14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

Luke 4:42–43 (NASB95) — 42 When day came, Jesus left and went to a secluded place; and the crowds were searching for Him, and came to Him and tried to keep Him from going away from them. 43 But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.”

Luke 8:1 (NASB95) — 1 Soon afterwards, He began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with Him,

Luke 16:16 (NASB95) — 16 “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.

Disciples of Christ preach that same message (Matt. 10:5–7; 24:9–14; Acts 8:12; 20:25–32; 28:30–31).

Matthew 10:5–7 (NASB95) — 5 These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; 6 but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 “And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’

Matthew 24:9–14 (NASB95) — 9 “Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10 “At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. 11 “Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. 12 “Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. 13 “But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. 14 “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Acts 8:12 (NASB95) — 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

Acts 20:25–32 (NASB95) — 25 “And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. 26 “Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 “For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. 28 “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 “Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. 32 “And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Acts 28:30–31 (NASB95) — 30 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

CONCLUSION

Let us be thankful for the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the Law, explained the Law, and replaced the Law.

Following His example, let us be obedient to the divine standard under which we live, and by which we will be judged (John 12:44-50).

John 12:44-50 (NASB95) — 44 And Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. 45 “He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. 46 “I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in

darkness. 47 "If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. 49 "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. 50 "I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."