

DEREK PRINCE
MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Sermon

Why The Law?



Part 2/4

Which Way to Righteousness – Law or Grace?
By Derek Prince

We're dealing with the theme of law and grace, which in my opinion is one of the great themes of New Testament teaching, and in recent years, at least, one of the most neglected. I'm going to go very quickly through the outline of yesterday's study and then go on to today's.

So I pointed out in yesterday's study that the contrast between law and grace is the main theme of Galatians. In the epistle to Galatians the phrase the law occurs twenty-eight times. This is also a theme dealt with in at least twenty-seven other chapters of the New Testament. In other words, it is a major theme of the New Testament. I then offered you some definitions to lay a foundation. Law in these studies means "religious law viewed as a means to achieve righteousness with God." We are not talking about secular or civil law as a means of preserving social order. I regard civil and secular law as essential and I believe it's the obligation of every Christian to submit to and obey civil law. The key word I think here is Romans 10:4

> "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

"The law for righteousness," that is the law as a means of achieving righteousness with God ended with the death of Christ on the cross.

Where we use simply the law, we mean always "the Law of Moses." However, Paul also points out in Romans 2:14 and 15 that Gentiles that were not under the Law of Moses can become a law unto themselves. They can have their own version of religious law which does the same for them as the Law of Moses does for the Jews. And I pointed out that we are familiar with various forms of denominational religious law such as Catholic law, or the law of the Holiness groups, which are regarded by people in those groups as essential to maintaining righteous with God. So that we are dealing with the same type of thing when we deal with Catholic law or Baptist law or Holiness law—it's the same in essence and its nature as the Law of Moses was for the Jews.

Then we defined grace as "that which is freely given by God, received by faith, without being earned or deserved." The essence of grace is that you cannot earn it or deserve it. If you ever earn anything it is not grace. The only way by which we can receive grace is through faith.

© 1970 - Derek Prince Ministries, International, Inc.

Then I point out there are only two ways known to man to achieve righteousness. It's either by the works of the Law or by grace through faith. Each excludes the other. You cannot combine them. This is perhaps one of the most far-reaching truths that relates to every one of us. You cannot have both Law and grace—be partly justified by one and partly justified by the other. John 1:17:

> "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

And Romans 6:14:

> "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

They're alternatives. You must make your choice. And I point out on this basis there are only two kinds of religion and they start at the source of human history with Cain and Abel. If you want to turn over that sheet if you have it there, we'll quickly look through that outline—the seven points of difference between Abel's religion and Cain's religion. And I firmly believe that every religious person today is one or other of these categories. Every religious person today is practicing the religion of Abel or the religion of Cain. The differences are listed there. I'll just read them out.

1. Abel was by faith—Cain was not by faith.

2. Abel received God's word—Cain rejected God's word.

3. Abel offered a propitiation for sin typified by the shed blood of the lamb—Cain offered his own works but they were the product of the ground which God had already cursed.

4. Abel's offering was accepted by God—Cain's was rejected by God. And I think it's important to see there's nothing in between acceptance or rejection. There's no neutrality.

5. Abel's offering received supernatural testimony from God—Cain's offering did not receive supernatural testimony and that's why he became angry. He knew the difference.

6. Abel's religion produced a martyr—Cain's religion produced a murderer.

7. Abel's religion at the close of the age will produce the bride—and Cain's religion will produce the harlot. You can trace them right through human history from the beginning to the end.

We closed with a brief study of the Law of Moses and I made seven statements about it which are of vital importance, but I'm not going to be able to go into them in detail this morning.

First of all, the Law was given through Moses—only through Moses. At a certain specific point in history, the Law was given. From Adam to Moses there was no God-given religious law.

Secondly the Law is a single, complete, perfect system. Nothing may ever be added to it and nothing may ever be taken from it—not one jot nor one tittle shall pass.

In observing the law it is all or nothing. You've either go to keep all the law all the time or it does not benefit you at all at any time.

Fourthly, Christ fulfilled the law and He fulfilled it in three ways—by keeping it perfectly, by fulfilling its prophecies, and by paying its final penalty which was death. And once you've paid the penalty of death, you are no longer under the law. "He that is dead is justified from sin." The law has settled its account with you when it puts you to death.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. Christ abolished the law as a means of righteousness. God nailed it to His cross and took it out of the way.

Christians are not under the law.

Christians are warned against going back to the law very, very solemnly. In fact Paul says in Galatians 5, "If you be circumcised in an attempt to keep the law Christ is no longer of any effect to you."

Now we'll go on to the second study in our series and the first thing that we will study is the purposes for which the law was given. Then we will study the effects of the law. I have listed here six points under the heading Purposes for Which the Law Was Given. And it's most important to begin with the negative one. The Law was not given as a means to achieve righteousness. God never expected anybody to achieve righteousness by keeping the law. It's most important to see that. This is clearly stated if we turn to Romans chapter three verse 20. Romans chapter three and verse 20. And you'd better keep your finger there because we'll be going back again a little while later. Romans 3:20, the first part of the verse:

> "Therefore by the deeds of the law [the keeping of the law] there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight:"

No human being will ever achieve righteousness by keeping the Law.

And then there are two passages in Galatians which we ought to look at too. Galatians chapter 2 verse 16, only the first part of the verse:

> "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law."

Galatians 2:16, and Galatians 3:11:

> "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident."

This is very clear and specific. No man ever will be justified or achieve righteousness in the sight of God by keeping the Law. The Law was not given to make men righteous. Then why was it given? We come back to Romans 3:20 and the second purpose—to reveal sin. The Law is God's diagnostic. When you go to a doctor today and you say, "Doctor, I feel kind of queer inside and I get dizzy spells," he does not reach up to the shelf, pull down a little bottle of pills and say, "Here, take this." He says, "First of all, we'll find out what's wrong with you." And as a matter of fact, basically going to a doctor today is an agonizing series of tests. They take blood out of you, urine out of you, pump your arms up and do all sorts of other things, and put the whole picture together and come back with an estimate of what's wrong with you. And, of course, it is futile to offer medicine to somebody until you've diagnosed their problem. So the Law is God's diagnostic. It's the thing He uses to show us what's wrong with us. It's most important.

So we read in Romans 3:20:

> "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

All right. What does the Law do? It makes us aware of sin. And then in Romans chapter 7 and verse 7—Romans chapter 7 and verse 7:

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: The only thing that revealed sin to me was the law. And then in Romans 7:13:

> "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."

The purpose of the commandment and of the law was to bring sin out into the open, to reveal sin in its true nature as deceptive and destructive and deadly. Until we really see the nature of sin we're not going to see fully our need of salvation. You've got to know you're sick before you want the doctor's remedy. Jesus said, "I didn't come to call the healthy, but the sick. I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners." And the purpose of the law is to show us the nature of sin, the operation of sin and the effects of sin. That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. That we would see this evil force in all its horrible working and its deadly effects. That's why God gave the Law.

This is of interest to me because when I was a philosopher my main studies were in the philosophy of Plato which I studied at length and great detail for many years. Plato was about the most intelligent man, just by way of intellect, that I have ever encountered in my studies. He was also a tremendous artist with language. In fact, I have never encountered a more intelligent person than Plato. Plato's theory basically was that knowledge is virtue. If only we know what is right, that's all we need. Well that's obviously wrong, because lots of people know clearly what is right and do what is wrong.

Now isn't it amazing that so great an intellect as Plato couldn't see that simple fact? Why didn't he see it? Because he nothing to reveal the nature of sin. He didn't have the diagnostic. We should praise God every day for the Bible, because that's the only book that offers us the correct diagnosis of our problem. So great an intellect as Plato couldn't see it. So we should thank God that in His grace He's made the truth of Scripture available to us. Plato didn't know a word of the Bible. It was never available to him. So the law is given to bring sin out into the open, to show it in its true nature and character.

The third purpose for which the law is given is to reveal man's carnal nature. And we're going to read in Romans 7 verses 14 through 18. But I want to say something which is very far-reaching and in a way simple yet profound. Our problems are the result of two forces at work within us basically. One force is sin.

Now I've spent years meditating on this and in the light of Scripture experience I believe that sin is an evil spiritual power, which is at work in the universe. It's opposed to God. It's deceptive and it's destructive. But in addition to

this evil power that's at work in the universe, our problems are compounded by our own nature inherited from Adam. And in essence, I would say, that nature is a nature prone to disobedience. So we have the subtle, deceptive, destructive power of sin at work, and there's something inside each one of us the somehow comes under the influence of sin and turns in acts of disobedience and rebellion away from the path of righteousness.

Now that something inside us that is so easily affected by sin, the Bible calls "the old man," "the flesh," "the body," "the body of sin," "the body of the sins of the flesh." But whether it speaks of the flesh or the body, it does not in that context mean the physical body, but it means the nature that we inherited with our physical body. Into every descendant of Adam there has been transmitted by inheritance a certain responsiveness to sin—a proneness to rebel. That's the best that I can define.

Now the Law not merely reveals sin. It also reveals the rebel inside me. It's a perfect diagnostic. So when I speak about man's carnal nature, I mean the problem in me. Now let's look in Romans 7:14 through 18:

> "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. [I'm the slave of my own carnal nature.] For that which I do I allow [or approve] not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."

Because I'm the only person here who's had that experience I'm sure. That came to me with great force in the Anglican Church when I was fifteen years old and due to be confirmed. At that point I decided I needed to be a lot better than I was. So I decided confirmation would be turning point and from then on I would be really good. And only when I decided to be good did I discover how bad I really was. And I'll have to say, the harder I tried to be good the quicker I got bad. And after about six months I just gave it up. I decided it didn't work. I didn't know that my problem was explained in the seventh chapter of Romans, and unfortunately there was no one there to tell me. But that was exactly my experience. "For that which I do I don't approve, what I would, what I want to do I don't do; what I hate, that's what I do." What made me conscious of the fact that I hate it? The law. The law pointed out what I should be doing. It said, "Do it." I said, "All right, I'll do it. Watch me." And that's when the trouble started.

> "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. [I say the law is good.] Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. [Do you see how the law has brought sin right out into the open. But look at the next one.] For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) [my carnal nature] dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I haven't any way."

So the Law has laid bare sin and my carnal nature. It's brought out into the light—the two root problems of my life.

All right. The fourth purpose of the Law is to foreshow Christ. Not only does the Law indicate the problem, it foreshows the solution. Luke 24, Luke chapter 24 verses 25 through 27. These are words that Jesus spoke to His disciples after His resurrection when they were still slow to believe that He had risen. Luke 24:25 through 27:

> "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses [that's the Law] and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

You see that the law has a revelation concerning Jesus. And again in verse 44 of the same chapter:

> "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."

Jesus was a real good Jew. Let me just point this out. It's by a parenthetic, but the Hebrew name for what we call the Old Testament is the Tanach which is made up of three initials. (??) for Torah, the law; neveim (??) for prophet; and kuduim (??) for the other writings. And that's exactly the way Jesus classifies it here. The Law, the prophets, and the writings. And He says all these foreshowed Me. So, one of the major purposes of the Law, with its prophecies and with all its sacrifices, was to foreshow Christ. And when your eyes are opened by the Holy Spirit, every sacrifice in the

Law of Moses is a revelation of Jesus Christ without one single exception.

All right. The next purpose—purpose number five was to bring us to Christ. We look now in Galatians 3:24, Galatians 3:24:

> "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

Not by the Law, but by faith. Now the word "schoolmaster" in Greek is pidagogos (?) which gives us the English, pedagogue, but isn't the same as pedagogue. In the civilization of Paul's day, a wealthy man who had children would have a very senior trusted slave who would be charged with the initial education of the children. Before they were old enough to go to school, he would take them under his charge and train them in the basic principles of obedience and good behavior and right and wrong. Then, when they grew old enough to go to the school to the proper teacher, he would accompany them to the school and deliver them to the teacher. That's the word pidagogos (?). And it was generally the case that this senior slave would be rather strict and severe with the children. More strict and severe than the father himself would be with his own children.

So the Law was this senior slave. Its work was to teach us the basic principles of righteousness, of obedience, or right and wrong, and then to take us to the real teacher who's Christ.

It's a most beautiful picture of what the Lord did if you can put yourself into this social system. It was the senior slave that was charged with the elementary education of the children before they came of the age to go to school. Then his purpose, his responsibility was to take those little children, deliver them to the place where'd they'd get their real education. So the Law was the senior slave that looked after people before they were able to go to school, but the real teacher was Christ. The Law was our schoolmaster is completely the wrong word—our sort of like a governess, you know. I wonder whether any of you ever had a governess? I had governesses for a good many years. I wore them out rapidly, one after another. It's a kind of old tradition, you know. It's rather passed out nowadays. But I'm sure that at least in the southern part of the United States until quite recently, governesses were probably fairly familiar. Well that's the type of picture.

All right. Going on to point number six. Stay where you are in Galatians, Galatians 3:23:

> "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed."

Another purpose of the Law was to keep Israel a separate nation shut up unto the purposes of God, which were to be fulfilled in Christ. And in a certain sense, although Judaism is not the Law of Moses, far from it. Judaism has continued to have the same effect for nearly two thousand years. It's kept the Jews a separate group of people. No matter where they go—the United States or Arabia or Argentina or Britain—it doesn't matter. They're kept shut up because God still has a purpose for them.

My wife is a Dane, and she's often said to me, "If you scattered all the Danes amongst the other nations of the earth, in a hundred years you wouldn't find a Dane. There'd not be one left. They have been assimilated." But you see, the miracle is for two thousand years the Jews have been scattered and never been assimilated. As a matter of fact, that's part of the prophecy of Balaam. I don't know where you recall that. When he looked out over Israel and he said, "The people Israel shall dwell alone, they shall not be reckoned amongst the Gentiles." God's ideal purpose was that they were to dwell alone in their own land. But even when they lost their land, they still never were reckoned amongst the other nations.

So the law kept Israel shut up to the revelation of Christ and grace that was to follow. We just recapitulate those six purposes for which the law given and then go on to the effects of the law.

Purpose Number One—Negative, not as a means to achieve righteousness.

Purpose Number Two—To reveal sin. Purpose

Number Three—To reveal man's carnal nature.

Purpose Number Four—To foreshow Christ.

Purpose Number Five—To bring us to Christ.

Purpose Number Six—To keep Israel a separate people.

Now let's go onto the effects of the law. What does the law do in people? And I found this as I went through this study, one of the most astonishing themes I've ever studied anywhere in the Bible. I could hardly believe what I was reading. I had to read it through again and again to

convince myself I'd really got it right. Because when you've been through this list of the effects of the Law, it should cure you forever of ever wanting to live by religious law. If it doesn't, then you need to go to a psychiatrist, that's all I can say.

All right. The first thing the Law does is stir up sin. Romans chapter 7, we'll be back in Romans a lot of times, Romans chapter 7 verse 5. Romans 7 verse 5:

> "For when we were in the flesh, the motions [or passions] of sins, which were by the law, [did you ever notice that?] did work in our members..."

What enabled the motions of sin to work in our flesh? The Law. What stirred up sin? The Law. Romans 7:9, this is one of the most extraordinary statements in the Bible in my opinion—Romans 7:9:

> "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment of the law came, sin came back to life, and I died."

I want to offer you three ways of interpreting that, and you may freely take your choice. You may take all, one or none. But I've spent years meditating on that verse. How could Paul say, "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, sin came back to life, and I died"? Well, I'll offer you three possible ways. Paul, as you and I are, is a descendant of Adam, and he's talking about himself in Adam. "I was alive in Adam to God, but when the commandment came it brought sin to light and I died." If there'd never been any commandment, Adam would never have sinned. Have you ever thought about that? Baffling isn't it? If God had put Adam in the garden without any restrictions, Adam couldn't have sinned. But when he was confronted with a commandment, that's what prompted sin. So I was alive in Adam—you were, I was—without the commandment. When the commandment came, sin came to life, I died.

Then again, Paul was an Israelite, and Israel were delivered from the bondage of Egypt, not by the Law—have you ever realized that?—but by grace through faith in the blood of the Passover Lamb. The Law came about fifty days after the Exodus. And Israel were alive unto God a redeemed people saved by grace. But when the Law came, what happened? What's the first thing they did when they came under the Law? They worshiped the golden calf. That's right. They immediately broke the first commandment. What caused that? The commandment. What did the commandment do? Stirred up sin. Sin was dormant. They were living by faith. Oh, how much there is to this. I wish I could go into it. God got them out by grace, but He tested them. He said, "Now, what are you going to do now? Are you going to go on by grace, or are you going to earn your way to the Promised Land?" So they said, "We'll earn it." And the next few days, disaster came. And have you ever considered this? There was no barrier between Israel and God until they said, "We'll earn it." And then God said to Moses, "Put bounds around the mountain. Don't let the people come near." You see, the Law doesn't bring anybody near to God. It keeps them away from God.

How foolish Israel were, weren't they? They could have gone on in grace all the way to the Promised Land. How foolish you and I are. You know that? My conviction is there's hardly a single Christian that at some point in his experience has not made the same mistake. Saved by grace and then I'm going to earn it. And what happens? You lose your joy, you lose your peace, you become a slave. And you soon become a nasty, edgy, critical typical religious type.

All right. There's one more application. Paul—if ever anybody was saved by grace it was the apostle Paul. You'll agree with that. There he was on the road to Damascus, just about to deal with every follower of Jesus, and right in the middle of the journey Jesus sovereignly revealed Himself to Paul. Paul didn't ask Him to do it. And He said to Paul, "I want you."

Now this is supposition. I cannot prove it, I don't attempt to. But after a while Paul went back to Tarsus. And if it hadn't been for Barnabas we might never have heard of the apostle Paul. It was Barnabas who went to Tarsus and fetched Paul. What was Paul doing in Tarsus? You know what I think he was doing? I think he was a good, regular attendant in the synagogue. I think he was back under the Law. There were no riots in Tarsus. Nobody stoned Paul in Tarsus. No trouble there. People don't object to the Law, but they fight grace like mad.

Now this is my opinion. But what I want to emphasize is this, gradually over the years I've come to the conclusion that what we consider to be a strange experience in a few people is actually the great danger that threatens every believer. We get saved by grace and then we think, "Now I've been cleaned up, I'm pretty smart, I've memorized fifty-three passages of Scripture, and I have my quiet time every morning, I'll make it by my own efforts." And the end is a disaster.

I really believe this is—I believe this is the greatest single hindrance to walking in the Spirit. I've preached—I've got a series of messages on Romans "The Way into the Spirit-Filled Life," I choose Romans eight as the picture of the Spirit-filled life. But I compare it to a coffee percolator. You can say what you like, but I believe there's a difference between instant coffee and perked coffee. Don't offer me instant and tell me it tastes like perked. All the TV commercials will not convince me of that. Now some people want instant holiness and instant liberty. They just want to jump from Romans chapter one into Romans chapter eight. But I don't believe it works that way. I believe it you want to live in Romans chapter eight, you've got to got through "the percolator," which is chapter two, chapter three, chapter four, chapter five, chapter six and chapter seven. And there's something to deal with in every chapter. And the last phase of the percolating process is Romans chapter seven. What's the problem? The Law.

For years I could not understand why right there in the middle of Romans, after grace had been so clearly set forth—Paul devotes a whole chapter to dealing with the Law. But I find it's true to experience. Paul deals with sin in Romans three. In Romans six he deals with the old man. Well you think, that's the end, but it isn't. The final hurdle you have to clear is the Law. And looking back over my life, I think it's taken me over thirty years to clear that hurdle. I just really begin to feel now for the first time I have some concept of what grace is. I just trust that people who follow after me will not take so long. And I don't believe they have to, because I've learned my lessons the slow, hard way. You know what I found today? God is moving in such a sovereign way by His Spirit, that things that it took people like me ten years to learn, new converts learn in one year. And that doesn't make them any smarter than we were. It just means God is moving in a different way. All right. So the Law stirs up sin. That took us a long time to deal with that, didn't it?

The next fact about the Law is that it strengthens sin. First Corinthians 15:56:

> "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."

Did you hear that? Isn't that an almost frightening statement? You know what about grace—it frightens people? The thought of, "You mean I don't have any set of rules to keep? What will I do?" It really frightens people. They feel kind of naked, alone, Where do I go now?

All right, the other Scripture there is Romans 6:14 which you ought to know by heart by now. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

If you're under the Law, sin will have dominion over you. It's the Law that strengthens the dominion of sin over you.

The third fact about the Law is that it produces transgression. Romans 4:15 where two statements here, so we'll stay there for a few moments.

> "Because the law worketh wrath [I know you want to say r-a-t-h, but I say r-o-t-h]: for where no law is there is no transgression."

"To transgress" means to step over a line that's been marked out. The Law marks out a line and says, "You mustn't step over it." Where the line has not been marked out, there is no transgression. You're not a transgressor without the Law. And transgression, Paul says, produces wrath on the part of the one against whom we transgress. So the Law produces transgression and therefore divine wrath.

Now I like to illustrate this by a kind of familiar incident from anybody's family. Mother goes out for a little while to the grocery store and she leaves little Sarah Jane at home, about four years old. And when she comes back, Sarah Jane has been into every one of mother's beauty creams and polished the shoes with them. So of course, mother's upset, but, after all, Sarah Jane didn't know any better so she just says, "Don't do that again," and it's all over with.

Next time she goes to the grocery store she pauses in the doorway and wags her finger at Sarah Jane and says, "Now one thing don't forget. Don't you touch my beauty creams." Well, of course, Sarah Jane being like you and me, there's only one thing she's interested in doing from that moment onwards, which is the beauty creams. So back comes mother from the grocery store and all her expensive Elizabeth Arden is on her black patent shoes and guess mother's reaction. It's wrath. She's mad. And we'll draw a veil over what happens to Sarah Jane. You see. The Law produces transgression and therefore wrath. You can't deny it. I mean you may think, "Well it seems strange," but it's true.

Point number five. The law causes condemnation. Turn to Romans 8 the opening verses:

> "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, ... [verse 3] For what the law could not do, [for the law cannot set you free from condemnation.]"

The Law brings you under condemnation. And talking about the Romans 8 percolator, the first step, the primary requirement, to live in Romans 8 is in verse 1, "There is therefore now no condemnation..." As long as you live under condemnation, you cannot live in liberty. Anybody that's under condemnation is really the prey of the devil and does not know true spiritual liberty. So, before you can enter into liberty, condemnation must be abolished once and for all. The law causes condemnation.

All right. Point number six: the Law keeps us under Satan's dominion. We'll turn to Colossians 2 and now we'll read verses 14, 15 and 16. We cannot go into the background of this, which would take a long while, but this reveals what God accomplished through the death of Christ on the cross. And in verse 14 it says:

> "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us [that's the Law], and he took it out of the way and nailed it to the cross."

Terminating it forever. So God abrogated the Law through the death of Jesus. And then it says:

> "He spoiled principalities and powers..."

That's Satan's spiritual dominating forces. He stripped them of their ability to dominate us. Why? Because as long as we were under the Law we were guilty. And as long as we were guilty, we were under Satan's dominion. You see? So we have to be delivered from the obligation of the Law before we can be delivered from the dominion of Satan. As long as we're under the Law, we're under the dominion of Satan.

Now some of these statements will seem very shocking to you, but you just go over them again and again. See, every natural human being feels that the way to be righteous is to keep the Law. And it requires a radical transformation inside us before we'll abandon that. Just going to a gospel service and hearing Billy Graham preach and going forward and making a decision isn't going to make that radical transformation. It's got to go much deeper.

Point number seven: the Law brings a curse. Galatians 3:10:

> "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse [everybody who's trying to keep the Law is under a curse]: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the look of the law to do them."

If you're under the Law, you've got to do the whole Law all the time, and if you don't you're under a curse.

All right. The Law produces a double enmity. Turn to Ephesians chapter 2, beginning at verse 14. We have to read verses 14, 15 and 16. We'll comment on them only briefly.

> "For he [Jesus Christ] is our peace, who hath made both one, [we talked about both yesterday— who is both? Jew and Gentile.] who hath made Jew and Gentile one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition [which stood in the temple of Herod preventing Gentiles from having any closer access to God], having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man [neither Jew nor Gentile], so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

If you look in verses 15 and 16 there is a double enmity produced by the law. To take it in its logical order, the Law produces enmity from God to man. Because we are under the Law we don't keep it, we're transgressors. So it brings enmity between God and man. But in verse 15, when Paul talks about the enmity there, he's not talking about enmity between man and God, he's talking about enmity between those under the Law and those not under the Law. And this is also true: being under the Law produces enmity between those under the Law and those not under the Law. This, in my opinion, is the basic problem of the Jewish people.

I remember talking to the secretary of the Hebrew University who was my teacher in Hebrew in 1947, just before the State of Israel came into being. And he was

explaining to me (which was the traditionally accepted Jewish point of view) that the problem of the Jews while they were persecuted was because they were just a little different minority in every area of the world. And that once they got back and had their own country, the enmity would cease. "Well," I said, "if the enmity is purely sociological, you may be right. But if it's spiritual, you'll be wrong."

Well, I'd like to know if anybody thinks the enmity towards Israel has ceased. See, the root problem is that the Law separates one company of people and distinguishes them from all others. And they feel in their hearts they are superior to other people. I'm a Gentile, and I know I was what you'd call an educated, sophisticated Britisher. But in my mind there was a deep, underlying mistrust of the Jews. I had two or three friends who were Jews, but it was kind of —it always surprised me. I will also tell you this. In the heart of the Jews there's a deep underlying mistrust of the Gentiles. It's mutual. Okay. What's the cause of it? What's the enmity? Paul says it's the Law. That's what creates the enmity.

I'll give you a very simple, sort of homely, illustration of this. At one point, for reasons which we don't need to explain, my wife and I went on the Weight Watcher diet. And we had a dear lady who devoted herself to our service, came to our house and lived with us just to cook Weight Watcher food for us. Really comical, because she had to confess to us later that at night she sneaked out to the refrigerator and cheated. She was so convicted that about two years later she had to come to my wife and tell her that. But anyhow, for several weeks we lived on these... And you know Weight Watcher, everything's got to be measured to the last leaf of lettuce and the last beet root and everything. And believe me, Weight Watchers works. I'll endorse it anywhere as a means of slimming, if you keep it up. Well, you know, I observed my own inner reactions, and after about a month I would walk around with a rather superior attitude and look at people and say, "They ought to be on Weight Watchers." Have you noticed that the real successful Weight Watcher is a real evangelist? They'll go everywhere and tell, "I'm on Weight Watchers. It's done this for me. I lost two pounds last week."

And then I thought to myself. What about the Jews? They've been leading a peculiar separated life with different diets and different other things for three thousand five hundred years. Can you imagine what that's done to them? No wonder they have a struggle to come out from under that. But there it is. It is a fact. The law produces enmity. It divides—divides God from man and man from his fellow-man.

We'll have to go on. Point number nine: the Law produces bondage. And that's such a nice religious word that I put "slavery" in parenthesis. You know, nobody minds being in bondage, but being a slave sounds different. All right. Galatians 4, Galatians 4 verses 24 and 25. Now Paul is writing to the Galatians who were trying to go back, or go under the Law of Moses, and he compares Abraham's two wives and two sons—Hagar, who was the mother of Ishmael, Sarah who was the mother of Isaac. And in this allegory he says Hagar corresponds to the covenant of the Law made on Sinai and Ishmael corresponds to the works of the flesh or of the Law. And he says Hagar was a slave woman and produced a slave. The Law produces slavery. Let's read it. Well, we'd better read—we'll start from verse 21 and you'll see the point of it. Galatians 4:21:

> "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a slave woman, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the slave woman was born after the flesh [by Abraham's own natural ability], but he who was of the freewoman was by promise [by supernatural fulfillment of a promise which went beyond Abraham's own physical capacity]. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants [law and grace]; the one from the mount Sinai, which brings forth slaves is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in slavery with her children."

The Law produces slaves. All right?

And then also Romans 8:15, we'll look there. Romans 8:15 and we need to read it in conjunction with verse 14, for 14 describes the life of grace and faith, and 15 warns us against going back to the other alternative.

> "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God [children of God]. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear..."

That's legalism. Don't go back under the Law. We talk about the bondage to drugs or alcohol and it's very real. But when Paul talks about bondage, he's talking about religious law. And he warns us we didn't receive the spirit that makes us a slave to fear. The spirit says, "Do this. Don't do that. If you don't do that, you're a sinner. If you do that, you'll go to hell." How many of you from a religious background remember being brought up like that? Basically, I'll say something which may be very challenging: For many centuries the basic motivation of Catholicism was fear. It's the spirit of bondage or slavery to fear. And believe me, that doesn't mean I'm not including the Protestant. I'm just making that statement. We're so used to that we think religious must be like that. Not so.

And Number ten: it produces persecutors. Galatians 4:29, Galatians 4:29. This is continuing the parallel between law and grace, and Ishmael and Isaac. Just the one verse, Galatians 4:29:

> "But as then he that was born after the flesh [Ishmael] persecuted him that was born after the Spirit [Isaac], even so it is now."

Listen. If you are a child of God walking in the Spirit, your persecutors will be the religionists, the people who only know religious law. You'll offend them, you'll frighten them. They'll get upset. It's fantastic the reaction of the religious legalist to grace. You know, when John Wesley went through Britain, through England, preaching the gospel of free grace, he arrived in Cornwall and a man there got what the Methodist call "assurance." He suddenly believed, and in those days it was a very hard thing to believe, that his sins were forgiven. You see, they were so used to the religious legalism that the concept that you could actually know your sins were forgiven was astonishing. It took Wesley years to achieve it for himself. So this man went around testifying that he knew his sins were forgiven. Well, you wouldn't think that would disturb people. But it turned the whole community against him. You know what they did? They press-ganged him into the British Navy. He was made to go into the Navy, left his wife and children behind. Why? Because he just told people he knew his sins were forgiven. It scared the whole religious community. See, grace always frightens legalism, and they'll always react.

Basically, we don't need to fear the secular world. The persecutors of those who walked the way of grace are those who keep the Law. Who persecuted Jesus and the apostles? The religious legalists. Who persecuted the true witnesses of Jesus for nineteen centuries? The religious legalists. It's Ishmael that persecutes Isaac and it will be to the end of the age. Going back to Cain and Abel. Why did Cain kill Abel? Because Cain was under the Law. He was the product of the flesh. The flesh and the spirit are at enmity.

Well, I'm going on rather lengthily. I want to finish this outline if I can. Let's just recapitulate as quickly as possible the effects of the Law.

Number one, it stirs up sin.

Number two, it strengthens sin.

Number three, it produces transgression.

Number four, therefore also wrath.

Number five, it causes condemnation.

Number six, it keeps us under Satan's dominion.

Number seven, it brings a curse.

Number eight, it produces a double enmity between God and those under the Law and between those under the Law and those not under the Law.

Number nine, it produces slavery.

All right, now then, we'll just take a few more moments and just try and sum it up. You've said all this and you say, "Well why then the law? If the law then just produces all these problems, why did God ever get us involved in the law? Why did it ever come? What's the ultimate purpose?" And as I said before and I will repeat: I believe the Law is God's divine diagnostic. And God is aiming through it at laying bare our root problem. And I've suggested that the root of our problem can be summed in the word self-dependent. And it's the hardest thing to come to the end of, is depending on yourself. And I suggest that the inner motivation of sin, in its essence, is the desire to be independent of God. And I turn you to Genesis 3:5. Genesis 3:5, the final temptation of Satan that persuaded Eve and therefore Adam to disobey God:

> "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof [the forbidden fruit], then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil."

Now whereas it says "gods," the Hebrew is Elohim, which is the normal Hebrew word for God, and I'm sure that what Satan said and what Eve believed was, "You will be like God. You'll know good and evil." Now, is it wrong to be like God? We could easily understand if he'd tempted her to

adultery or murder. We have said that's bad. But isn't it very good to want to be like God? Depends what your motive is. What he said in essence is, "If you know the difference between good and evil, you'll no longer need to depend on God. You can make your own decisions and run your own life." And the essence of the sin was the desire to depend no longer on God. And that is the root in every ego. It's the desire to do my own thing, to go my own way, not to have to depend upon God. The one person who perfectly sets forth the opposite is Jesus. He said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself. As the living Father has sent me and I live by the Father." If you want the picture of Jesus, it is total continuing dependence on His Father. And that's what God wants of every child of God. The great enemy is self-dependence, self-reliance. I can do it.

Compare Jeremiah 17 verses 5 and 6.

> "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD."

This is exactly parallel to the curse of the one who's under the Law: "Cursed is every one that is under the law." What's the essence? The man who trusts in man, himself, makes flesh his arm—relies on his own carnal nature, and in so doing his heart departs from the Lord. He comes under a curse. How much religious activity in all our churches is under that curse? We're trusting in man. We're making flesh our arm, and whether we like to acknowledge it or not, our heart has departed from dependence on the Lord. And the result is flesh. And Jesus said, "Flesh can only beget flesh." That's all we ever propagate. Along that line is flesh. And then the next verse, I think, should be a warning. Maybe some of you are there.

> "For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited."

Let me also point out to you, and I'm drawing this to a close now, in Habakkuk—you may not know Habakkuk had much to tell us but—Habakkuk chapter 2 and verse 4. This is the key verse on which Paul based his doctrine of justification by faith. It's quoted three times in the New Testament in Romans, Galatians and Hebrews. Habakkuk chapter 2 verse 4—the latter part of the verse is quoted in the New Testament. So it's a key verse and I'll read the whole verse. Habakkuk 2:4:

> "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith."

Now you know, for many years I couldn't understand how those two halves of that verse went together. And then just recently God opened my eyes and I realized that there are two alternatives. You can humble yourself and in faith depend on the Lord, or you can trust in yourself and your soul is lifted up in arrogant religious pride. And there are only those two alternatives. Everyone is in one category or the other. And then if you like to look also in Romans 3:27, Romans 3:27:

> "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."

If I'm always doing the right thing in my own strength, I can boast. But if I'm simply trusting in the grace of God and depending upon Him, I have nothing to boast of. Faith excludes boasting. And if you look also in Romans 10:3, Romans 10:3. It's one of the key verses in this passage talking about Israel:

> "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."

You see, while we are seeking to establish our own righteousness we are not submitted to the righteousness of God. The root of it is pride. "I don't need God's grace. I keep the six hundred and thirteen commandments of Judaism." That's the essence of it. And you'll notice that religious people will always multiply commandments, because it inflates their ego. "My dear friend, you've only got ten commandments. What's that? I've got six hundred. I spend my life worrying about my six hundred commandments and look how religious I am."

All right. Now turn to 1 Corinthians 1:26. We've got two more Scriptures. First Corinthians 1:26. Paul is writing to the Christians at Corinth and he says:

> "Ye see your calling [see the kind of people that are in with you], ... how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."

Has God any prejudice against people who are wise or mighty or noble? No, He loves them all. Why is it that there's a small proportion of those who are wise or mighty or noble? Because who are wise, mighty or noble normally trust in themselves. That's what makes it difficult. I've listed here five things that men commonly trust in rather than depending on the grace of God.

Number one is wealth.

Number two is nobility or social position.

Number three is education or knowledge. And note that it was knowledge that was the original temptation. "You will be like God knowing good and evil. You won't need God because you will have enough knowledge of yourself."

Number four is power.

Number five is religion. And that's the biggest stumbling block of all. "I've got my religion. Why do I need grace? I'm a good Lutheran. I'm a good Catholic. I'm a good Baptist. Why do I need the grace of God? You think people aren't like that? Believe me, the churches are full of people like that.

All right. Turn to Matthew 3:10, the last Scripture. Matthew 3:10:

> "Now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees."

I offer you this comment. The root is self-dependence. The Law laid bare the root, the gospel lays the ax to the root. But if you haven't laid the root bare, you can't lay the ax to it. God hasn't wasted anything. It's all done with a purpose.

Praise God. I really believe I've seen it. That's our root problem—self-dependence, and it's taken me, as I say, over thirty years to clear away all the religious language and institutionalism and get down to the thing that matters.

© 1970 - Derek Prince Ministries, International, Inc.

Sermon

Transcript: MA-1082-100-ENG
Last Updated: 16 Sept 2026
Website: Derekprince.com/en/resources



© 1970 - Derek Prince Ministries, International, Inc.