

# The Rest of the Law

Exodus: Revelation and Redemption

Exodus 20:22-23:33

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The Ten Commandments were the subject of our study last week from Exodus 20. Josh made it clear that these timeless and universal principles of moral behavior are essential for true liberation. He gave a great overview of the purpose of the Decalogue and explained how these ten laws are not only for God's glory but also for our good. But it is important for us to realize that the Ten Commandments represent only a small fraction of the total legal system God gave to Israel through Moses. The Mosaic Law actually consists of 613 rules and regulations that fill about half of the first five books of the Bible. It is called the Book of the covenant and it is, in effect, an application of the Ten Commandments to the details of everyday life.

The Book of the covenant is not a best seller. Virtually no one preaches on it, and even many who are faithful, regular Bible readers tend to speed read the last half of Exodus, all of Leviticus, and a good part of Deuteronomy because they consider it a graveyard of confusing, contradictory, and irrelevant rules. In fact, some of these laws are considered downright immoral by our society because they are viewed as sexist or racist or involve cruel and unusual punishment.

Obviously, we are not going to be able to correct the widespread ignorance about the rest of the Law in one message, but my hope is that we will at least come away with a basic understanding of the essentials regarding this major scriptural topic. Hopefully some will be motivated to go back and study it further on their own. Typically we would read our text before preaching on it, but these three chapters do not exactly lend themselves to inspiring public reading, so I will simply read a brief sample from the beginning of Exodus 22. I'm going to read from the NIV because it is clearer than the ESV.

## **Exodus 22:1-6<sup>1</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>Whoever steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.*

*<sup>2</sup>If a thief is caught breaking in at night and is struck a fatal blow, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; <sup>3</sup>but if it happens after sunrise, the defender is guilty of bloodshed.*

*Anyone who steals must certainly make restitution, but if they have nothing, they must be sold to pay for their theft. <sup>4</sup>If the stolen animal is found alive in their possession—whether ox or donkey or sheep—they must pay back double.*

*<sup>5</sup>If anyone grazes their livestock in a field or vineyard and lets them stray and they graze in someone else's field, the offender must make restitution from the best of their own field or vineyard.*

*<sup>6</sup>If a fire breaks out and spreads into thornbushes so that it burns shocks of grain or standing grain or the whole field, the one who started the fire must make restitution.*

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<sup>1</sup> Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version® unless otherwise noted.

Now this goes on for three chapters. No wonder no one else on staff wanted to preach this sermon! It's even hard to say, "Thanks be to God" after reading that, isn't it? But hopefully you will be able to say that when we're done.

I begin this morning with the observation that...

## **THE MOSAIC LAW IS A HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL THEME IN BIBLICAL STUDIES.**

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What do we do with the rest of the Law besides the Ten Commandments? Do we relegate it to the dustbin of history? Are these laws parallel to an article that appeared in *Reader's Digest* entitled: "*Here are 50 of the Dumbest Laws in Every State.*" Keep in mind that some of these are obviously outdated but they are all still on the books:

- In Missouri you are not allowed to drive down the highway with an uncaged bear in your car.
- In Massachusetts it's against the law to dance to The Star Spangled Banner.
- In Salem, West Virginia, it's illegal to eat candy less than an hour and a half before church.
- Pittsburgh has a special ordinance that bans housewives from hiding dirt under their rugs.
- In Memphis women can't drive unless there is a man with a red flag in front of the car warning the other people on the road.
- In Chico, California, it is against the law to build, maintain, or use a nuclear weapon within the city limits. An infraction carries a \$500 fine.
- Idaho has a law against the nonconsensual consumption of another human being. (I guess cannibalism is okay if you get permission in advance.)
- And on Tuesday morning I was listening to *Steve and Ted in the Morning* and heard that in West Virginia you can spend up to six months in jail for trick-or-treating if you're over thirteen years old. Keep that in mind on Thursday.

Now my question is whether this is the kind of thing we're dealing with in the Book of the Covenant? Listen to some of these laws:

- "You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk." (Ex. 23:19)
- "Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed." (Lev. 19:19)
- "Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material." (Lev. 19:19)
- "Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard." (Lev. 19:27)
- "You shall not tattoo yourselves." (Lev. 19:28)

But the answer to the question "What do we do with the rest of the Law?" is surprisingly complex and difficult. I have a number of books in my library that focus entirely on this topic. Unfortunately, no two of them agree. In fact, one is entitled, *Law, the Gospel, and the Modern Christian: Five Views*, and features five evangelical theologians, three from our own seminary, and *they* do not even agree.

I want us to ask two questions: what was the Law's purpose, and to whom does it apply?

### ***What was its purpose?***

Some Christians seem to have the notion that obedience to the Mosaic Law was God's plan of salvation in the Old Testament, while faith in Christ is his plan in the New Testament. That is a serious misunderstanding. The Law was never designed to save anyone; rather it had four primary purposes.

First, it was to enable the Israelites, a large and unwieldy group of people (perhaps as many as two million) to survive as nomads in a desert for forty years, and then as newcomers in a land with many hostile neighbors. You can imagine the chaos that could easily have resulted had the Israelites tackled the desert without a clear set of behavioral guidelines. So the first purpose of the Mosaic Law was just survival of God's chosen people.

Second, the Law went further than mere survival and showed the people how to achieve happiness and fulfillment. God's laws, in one way or another, protected the people from harm and thus led to health, prosperity, emotional well-being, and the general enjoyment of life. This is not always obvious on first reading, but I think it can be demonstrated with careful analysis in most instances. Regarding a few of the laws we probably need to simply say, "I don't know *what* that was all about."

Third, the Law was designed to make Israel sufficiently distinct from the pagan nations around them that they would not become assimilated. Circumcision, diet, and dress, are all areas where the Law caused the Israelites to stand out from the culture of the day.

Fourth, and most important, the Law was designed to bring God's people to the end of their rope and drive them to lean solely on his grace. No man, no matter how hard he tried, was able to keep the Law in its entirety. And so the sacrificial system was instituted to provide atonement and to help the worshiper gain an understanding of God's undeserved mercy and grace. This also prepared God's people for the death of Christ as the ultimate, complete, and final sacrifice for sin.

### ***To whom does the Mosaic Law apply?***

Now the second question is even more controversial than the first. I would suggest to you that there are two extreme views among evangelical Christians. One of the extreme views is called Reconstructionism or Dominion Theology or Theonomy, and it has been quite popular in some very conservative Reformed circles.<sup>2</sup> According to this view, at the time of creation God gave man an eternally binding mandate to subdue the earth and establish the kingdom of God on this planet. But as a result of the fall, Adam failed to fulfill this mandate, and Satan thus began to dominate the world.

God then chose one particular nation, Israel, to be his instrument of dominion and gave them his law as their guide. But Israel also failed to fulfill the mandate, for they disobeyed the Mosaic Law, and were therefore excommunicated from their covenant position. In Israel's place God passed his mandate on to the church. This is known as Replacement Theology, Israel being replaced by the church. According to Reconstructionists, Christians should seek dominance over secular culture and subject every sphere of society to the Mosaic Law, essentially setting up a theocracy.<sup>3</sup>

At the opposite extreme from Reconstructionism is a movement called Dispensationalism, which in its more extreme form teaches that the Mosaic Law has *no* application today. The Mosaic Law was completely superseded by the Law of Christ and all we can learn from Moses is how much we have to be thankful for that we're not still under the regulations he gave. Rather than believing that the church is charged with reconstructing society, dispensationalists tend to have quite a pessimistic view of this world, expecting it to all go up in smoke one of these days but with Christians raptured

<sup>2</sup> Among its better known leaders are Rousas J. Rushdoony, Gary North, and Greg Bahnsen.

<sup>3</sup> A reconstructed society would be characterized by the rights of private property, a free market economy, tight limitations on debt, a monetary system based on the gold standard, a social welfare system financed by the tithe rather than taxes, and restitution rather than imprisonment for most criminals, but the death penalty for others.

just before the great conflagration. They have tended to be somewhat passive about the moral and social ills of society, preferring to spend their money and time on missions and evangelism of the lost.

Now if you hadn't guessed it, I accept neither of these explanations of our relationship to the Mosaic Law and believe there is a more balanced view. The Mosaic Law was fulfilled by Jesus Christ and except for the Ten Commandments, which are timeless and universal, it is no longer the code of conduct which God's people are expected to live by. As Paul put it in Colossians 2:14, "Christ canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross."

Our code of conduct today is the Law of Christ, the behavioral guidelines laid out by Christ and his apostles. In that sense I lean more toward the Dispensational view than the Reconstructionist. However, I would argue that the rest of the Mosaic Law has much to teach us and, in fact, includes certain principles that no society can afford to ignore. I would argue further that the Christian *does* have a cultural mandate to be the salt of the earth, i.e. to influence his society and culture. That mandate preceded the Mosaic Law, having been given to mankind in the garden of Eden. We should all be concerned that the institutions of society reflect the principles found in God's law as much as possible. The very success of our own nation over the past two hundred years is due in large part to the fact that Judeo-Christian principles were part and parcel of our founding documents and were once ingrained in our leaders. Sadly today, not so much!

However, I do not believe our mandate is to turn the nations of the earth into theocracies. We live in tension between two kingdoms: the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God. We must render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.

Now I want to turn to the content of the Mosaic Law itself.

## **THE MOSAIC LAW COVERED VIRTUALLY EVERY ASPECT OF A JEWISH PERSON'S LIFE.**

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The Mosaic Law has generally been divided into three parts: the moral law, the civil law and the ceremonial law.

### ***The Moral Law***

The moral law, the Ten Commandments, covered ten areas essential to everyone's relationship with God and man. They are all repeated in the New Testament, incorporated into the Law of Christ, though the Sabbath commandment is no longer tied to a particular day of the week.<sup>4</sup> Last week Josh mentioned our series in 2009, *Ten Stupid Things People Do to Mess Up Their Lives*,<sup>5</sup> where we spent a week on each of the commandments to show how they apply to everyday life. That series is available online for those who would wish to examine how the various commandments apply to everyday life.

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<sup>4</sup> The Sabbath commandment has a universal dimension in that it precedes Moses, going all the way back to creation, where God himself rested after six days of work. The principle of one day in seven is clear, but the New Testament makes it clear that the day doesn't have to be the seventh day (Rom 14:5). The fact that these Ten Commandments are found in both Testaments and in many places in both Testaments constitutes all the proof we need to view them as the universal moral code of God.

<sup>5</sup> [Ten Stupid Things](#) series

### *The Civil and Criminal Law*

The civil and criminal law deals with such areas as property and possessions, health and diet, personal injury, interest and usury, sexual behavior, justice for the poor, and a number of miscellaneous areas. Allow me to share an example or two in each of these categories from our text this morning.

**Property and possessions.** Earlier we read a typical law regarding property rights: If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kills it or sells it, he shall repay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. The difference in repayment is apparently due to the relative importance of the two animals to a Jewish farmer, but the point is that people should keep their hands off other people's property. If they don't, it will cost them dearly. Even if the animal is found safe, verse 4 says the thief must pay back double. Imagine what it might do to car theft in our country if the thief were required to pay back five cars for each one stolen and stripped, and two cars for each one found undamaged!<sup>6</sup>

**Health and diet** is a second area of concern. In Ex. 22:31 God's people are forbidden to eat the meat of an animal torn by wild beasts, presumably because it could become quickly infected with germs. (Clearly the Road Kill Café in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, would not be permitted to operate in ancient Israel!) Later in the Law they are told they could eat animals with a split hoof and that chewed the cud, but not pigs, camels, and rabbits. Aquatic animals could be eaten only if they had fins and scales. Most birds and insects were forbidden as food except for locusts, katydid, crickets, and grasshoppers.

Behind all the dietary rules was God's desire for his people to be healthy. Remember that Israel was a nomadic people living in a desert, constantly moving, lacking refrigeration, and often lacking even adequate cooking facilities. One can imagine the many contagious diseases that could have wiped out large portions of the camp if extreme hygienic measures were not enforced. But apparently by the time of Christ the need for such rules was largely past, for Christ and the apostles made it clear that believers can eat anything they want so long as they are thankful for it. Now that doesn't mean it's *smart* to eat anything you want, but it's no longer a moral issue. This is important today, friends, when certain environmentalists are demanding that we all become vegetarians or vegans. I have no problem with anyone limiting their own diet any way they choose, but they have no biblical right to limit mine. In fact, Paul refers to such views as demonic in 1 Timothy 4:1-5. Look it up.

**Personal injury.** The Law distinguished between murder and manslaughter in Ex. 21:12ff. Murder was a capital offense, but God provided cities of refuge for the one who killed someone unintentionally or in self-defense. This was to prevent a cycle of revenge from taking place. In that same chapter we learn that if a man is injured in a fight but does not die the one who injured him is responsible to pay for the victim's loss of time and his medical expenses (Ex. 21:19).

**Interest and usury.** In Ex. 22:25 we read, "If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him." Later, the people are forbidden to practice usury, which is defined as exorbitant interest, even with

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<sup>6</sup> Another example from verses 14-15 of chapter 22 is when a man borrows an animal from his neighbor and it is injured or dies; he must make restitution. But if he rents the animal he does not have to make restitution; the rent covers the loss. I remember a case years ago in St. Louis when a member of our church borrowed a trailer from another member. The wheel bearings went out and the borrower expected the owner to pay the bill because he claimed they hadn't been properly greased. But the owner argued it was working fine when he loaned it out. Awareness of this law might make borrowers more careful (and renters as well).

foreigners. In other words, they were not to charge any interest to their own poor, nor to charge excessive interest to anyone.

**Sexual behavior** is another major concern in the Mosaic Law. If a young man commits fornication with a girl he is dating he must marry her (Ex. 22:16-17). But if her father is angry and refuses to let them marry, the man still has to pay the dowry, which in that day was about the price of a house. (Now *that* might cut down on premarital sex.) According to Exodus 22:10 adultery is a capital crime, as is sex with animals.

**Justice for the poor and marginalized.** In Exodus 22:21-23 we read: “You shall not wrong a sojourner (an alien) or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry.” And in Exodus 23:6 it warns: “You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit.” The wealthy are not to have an advantage in the courtroom, as they almost always do in our day. But by the same token, the poor are not to get special treatment just because they are poor.

**Miscellaneous laws.** Then there are laws that don’t seem to fit into any category. I mentioned a few of those earlier.

### *The Religious and Ceremonial Law*

The third major category of the Mosaic Law in addition to the moral law and civil law was the religious and ceremonial law, which focused upon Sabbath observance, feasts and festivals, sacrifices, offerings, and the tabernacle and priesthood.

**Sabbath observance** was, of course, required by the Fourth Commandment, but elsewhere in the Mosaic Law it is expanded upon significantly. Not only is every seventh day to be a day of rest, but every seventh year as well (Ex. 23:10), and it applied to the land and even animals. Furthermore, every forty-ninth year (7x7) was a Year of Jubilee, in which all prisoners and slaves went free, all mortgages were canceled, and all land was returned to its original owner. Everyone received a fresh start.

**Feasts and festivals** were another important part of the ceremonial law. Three of them are mentioned in Exodus 23. These were designed to remind the Israelites of God’s great acts in calling them to be a people for himself, and they were to be expressions of gratitude for his faithful provision. All of these feasts found ultimate fulfillment in Christ, as indicated in the New Testament.

**Sacrifices.** There were a number of different sacrifices; each had a separate purpose and was important in the establishment of an open and clean relationship with God. All of them pointed to the fact that God’s grace and forgiveness was essential for the very survival of a sinful people. They also found their ultimate fulfillment in Christ, according to the New Testament.

**Tithes and offerings** were expected of God’s people. While they are only mentioned in passing in our text today (Ex. 22:29-30), they are talked about extensively later in the Law. The tithe was not ten percent, as commonly thought, but actually nearly twenty-three percent of income, but it must be noted that this money was used for more than religious ministry; it paid for welfare and other essential government services. But there were also special offerings from time to time which made it possible for a Jewish person to express gratitude to God for unique blessings. At our Members Meeting next month we are going to focus on just such an opportunity.

**The tabernacle and priesthood** take up a large portion of the Pentateuch. Starting in Exodus 25 and consuming most of the rest of the book plus significant parts of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, we have the account of the design and building of the tabernacle, plus detailed regulations about how worship in it was to be conducted. I just learned that our advent series this year is going to be on the tabernacle, so I will not comment further on that.

Now that we have taken an overview of the content of the rest of the Law, I want to acknowledge that . . .

## **THE MOSAIC LAW CONTAINED SOME TROUBLING ASPECTS, AT LEAST TO THOSE OF US WITH A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY PERSPECTIVE.**

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**Sexism** is one area that is frequently pointed out, i.e. the treatment of women as inferior to men. But some of this alleged sexism is due to the simple fact that the Bible treats men and women differently because God created them different—physically, emotionally, psychologically. Scripture rejects the gender politics sweeping our world today wherein everyone is being judged by a set of standards recently established by a small group of angry cultural elites. These standards have not even met the test of time, but they are being relentlessly applied, even to those who lived 3500 years ago. C.S. Lewis referred to this as “chronological snobbery.”

The fact is the Mosaic Law went much further than any of its contemporary legal codes in protecting the rights of women. For example, Exodus 21:15 and 17 allows for the death penalty for anyone who attacks either his father or his mother or curses either one. A few verses later the penalties for injuring a male servant are the same as those for injuring a female servant.

**Slavery** is another troubling issue in the Mosaic Law. Exodus 21 opens with regulations for Hebrew slaves as well as foreign ones. Slavery is such a repulsive idea to us today that it’s difficult not to be embarrassed that the Bible doesn’t roundly condemn it. But I don’t think we need to be particularly defensive about this issue for several reasons.

First, the slavery allowed in the Mosaic Law was not the horrible, racialized institution known by the same name in modern western countries, almost always victimizing dark-skinned people from foreign lands. It more often approximated employer/employee relationships governed by contract. In fact, it probably shouldn’t even be called slavery but rather servanthood.

Second, this servanthood was, for the most part, voluntary and temporary, and the servant’s rights, welfare, and dignity were protected in many different ways. For example, we learn in Exodus 21:27 that a servant could be set free if his master so much as knocked out his tooth. Since God had brought his people out of horrendous slavery in Egypt, he was not about to allow them to treat each other, or even foreigners, the way they had been treated. Exodus 21:16 indicates that the death penalty was demanded for slave traders.

**The law of retaliation** is a third issue that bothers some. I’m talking about the law that said “you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” (Ex. 21:23-25). While on the surface this legal principle sounds somewhat barbaric and seems to constitute a license for personal revenge, that is not at all the case. It was not a call for private vendettas, but a rule given to the civil magistrates to guide them in resolving criminal and civil cases. Walter Kaiser, leading Old Testament scholar, argues that the law of retaliation was rarely applied literally, but rather was viewed as a mandate that restitution should

match the loss perpetrated in the crime, but not exceed it.<sup>7</sup> Often when people get hurt they want the perpetrator to suffer more than they did. But in God's law the punishment had to fit the crime.

**The death penalty** is frequently prescribed in the Mosaic Law. Capital crimes included premeditated murder, kidnaping, adultery, homosexual acts, incest, bestiality, incorrigible delinquency, striking or cursing parents, offering human sacrifice, false prophecy, blasphemy, profaning the Sabbath, sacrificing to false gods, using magic and divination, and certain cases of unchastity.

Clearly any use of the death penalty is highly controversial in our society, even among Christians. We are told that because the death penalty is irreversible and because it is often used disproportionately against the poor and people of color, it must not be used at all. Of course, a rational alternative would be to use it *only* in cases where guilt is incontrovertible and to correct any biases in the system, but the tide of public opinion has swung so far against capital punishment that we are probably going to see it outlawed entirely in the near future.

But before we conclude that the ancient Israelites were bloodthirsty primitives, we should note that the death penalty was *required* only for premeditated murder. Presumably all the other capital crimes could be commuted, and usually were, if the judge determined there were extenuating circumstances or that the perpetrator could be rehabilitated. The *possibility* of the death penalty being applied, however, marks the extreme seriousness of these actions in the mind of God.

Now perhaps the most important point I wish to make this morning is that . . .

## **THE MOSAIC LAW CONTAINED SOME PRINCIPLES ANY MODERN SOCIETY WOULD DO WELL TO ADOPT.**

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**Personal responsibility.** Sadly, our society has gone a long way toward minimizing, if not eliminating personal responsibility. We have no-fault insurance, no-fault divorce, psychiatric defenses in criminal cases, and many other evidences of the fact that personal responsibility is no longer taken seriously. We have politicians promising to wipe out debts, expunge criminal records, and give all kinds of free stuff. The Mosaic Law, on the other hand, constantly stressed personal responsibility. Each person was responsible for his animals, for his property, and for his actions to make sure that other people weren't unnecessarily injured. If a bull gored someone to death it had to be killed and its meat could not be eaten, but the owner was not held liable unless the bull had a habit of goring people. In that case, the owner was held completely liable as if he had murdered the other person (Ex. 21:28ff). A landowner was held liable if he dug a hole and left it uncovered so that a person or animal fell into it (Ex. 21:33). I believe personal responsibility is a legal concept that should be given much greater consideration than it is in our judicial system today.

**Restitution** is another important principle of which modern man should sit up and take note. Charles Colson, the convicted criminal from Richard Nixon's cabinet who became a great minister of the gospel and advocate for prisoners, argued strongly for restitution rather than incarceration for most non-violent criminals. And that was long before our current crop of politicians on both sides of the aisle saw the political gain in releasing prisoners and allowing them to vote! Think about it: what sense does it make to put an able-bodied man or woman in jail for stealing a car? Why not

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<sup>7</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*

make him work to replace the car (or five cars)? Obviously, we can't do away with all our prisons, because there are some people who are dangerous and there are others who are career criminals. But I'm convinced that the principle of restitution is a valid one. It's found all through the Mosaic code.

**Personal property rights** is a third principle worth noting. If history teaches us anything it is that any political philosophy that attempts to take away personal property rights by force is doomed to failure. The Bible makes it explicitly clear that God owns everything *but* that he has entrusted property and possessions into the hands of *individual* people to be enjoyed and managed well. Any attempt by government or individuals to seize personal property is counterproductive and immoral.

**Protection of the marginalized** is another principle very clearly spelled out in the Mosaic Law, which cannot be ignored without severe consequences. One of the common complaints about justice in America is that it tends to protect the wealthy and well-connected at the expense of the poor and powerless, and certainly there is some truth to that allegation. Not so with the Mosaic Law. Debtors are protected, slaves are protected, the prisoner is protected, the poor are protected, and the immigrant is protected (Ex. 22:21ff). Even the unborn are protected. In a very important passage in Exodus 21:22ff, the unborn child is granted the full rights of personhood.

I like Philip Ryken's summary of these laws:

*So what does God want us to do? He wants us to keep people safe from injury, protect their property, practice sexual purity, show kindness to strangers, care for the poor, tell the truth, pursue justice, love our enemies, take care of his good earth, and do all the other things required in his law. Some of these things are really hard to do—even for Christians—because they are so contrary to the sinful nature. Nevertheless, God commands us to do them. He not only commands us to do them but enables us to do them, and we will enjoy his pleasure when we do.<sup>8</sup>*

## THE MOSAIC LAW POINTS TO THE NEED OF A SAVIOR.

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We mentioned earlier that one of the purposes of the Law was to drive God's people to their knees in utter frustration at their personal failure to achieve purity and integrity and holiness. The law we are under, if I understand my Bible correctly, is the Law of Christ—the Ten Commandments plus the standards laid down by Christ and his apostles, all informed by the rest of the Law we have examined today.

But I don't care what code you are under—the Mosaic code, the law of Christ, the criminal code of the USA, Sharia Law, the code of ethics for your profession, or your own personal standards of right and wrong—you will eventually end up violating that code. It's just human nature that we cannot keep laws perfectly. There is something in each of us that pushes the envelope, causes us to make exceptions for ourselves, and then moves us to justify and excuse ourselves afterwards. When that happens, *we need help*. We need redemption from our status as law-breakers.

The Scripture says in Galatians 4:4, "When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." In effect, God comes and says to us, "I understand your weakness and I have provided a solution for the one who is willing to admit his weakness and desires my help. I have sent a Lamb to be the final, complete, and never-to-be-repeated sacrifice for sins. That Lamb is my Son, the Lord Jesus

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<sup>8</sup> Philip Ryken, *Exodus*

Christ. He died for you, he paid for your sin, and he is able to release you from the penalty of the Law when you turn to him in faith for eternal life.”