

# THE LAW OF GOD

## MISCELLANIES 3



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*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

The Law of God Miscellanies 3  
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## The Law of God Miscellanies 3: Introduction

Welcome to Part 3 of our 3-part series on the Law of God.

In this series we are sampling excerpts from God's Law in an effort to show the scope, beauty, and relevance of the Law of God for Christian life.

We must not neglect God's Law. The Spirit of God uses the Law to unlock all the rest of Scripture, point us to Jesus, and guide us along the path of full and abundant life. In this series we hope you will find much encouragement and guidance in making daily reading and meditation in God's Law part of your spiritual disciplines.

We're pleased to make this resource available for personal or group study at no charge, and we hope you will find this series helpful in realizing more of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom of God.

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## 1 Stewards of the Lord

*“The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.”* Leviticus 25.23

*The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness,  
The world and those who dwell therein.* Psalm 24.1

*For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?* 1 Corinthians 4.7

*Reflect and discuss.*

1. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 4.1, 2. What is a steward? What do stewards do? What is the measure of good stewardship?

2. How much of what we possess should we regard as a stewardship from the Lord? What does this require of us?

*Think about it.*

Economics – called “the dismal science” – is a discipline that deals with stewardship. We come into possession of goods and skills and are presented with opportunities to do something with these. The important questions that we answer in each economic activity relate to the objective and quality of our stewardship.

We may identify a variety of ends which people embrace with respect to their stewardship: themselves and their own pleasure, their heirs and legacy, their country or cause, the greater good, and so forth. Schools of economic thought differ based on how they think about stewardship. If good stewardship is gaining as much as I can for myself and my loved ones, that will dictate a different view of economics than if my understanding of stewardship is something more like “from each according to his ability to each according to his need.”

Obviously, one’s views of economics matter. God knows this, and His Law and Word outline a view of economics and stewardship which He charges His people to embody.

In Biblical economics our stewardship is always unto the Lord. The earth is His, and everything in it (Ps. 24.1). Every good gift comes from the Lord, and all that we have we have received from Him (Jms. 1.17; 1 Cor. 4.7). Thus everything must be received, employed, developed, used, and enjoyed unto the Lord, according to His pleasure and purpose, and for His justice and glory.

For everything is His, and He has entrusted to us a measure of “talents” (Matt. 25.14-30) which He expects us to invest according to His interests, priorities, and objectives. The Law of God supports the idea of private property – hence, the eighth commandment – but, at the same time, it insists that loving God and our neighbors requires that we use our possessions, time, and wealth in ways that advance the divine economy of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit (Rom. 14.17, 18).

We must not insist that anything we have is our own, to do with as we like. All that we have is from and belongs ultimately to the Lord. We must desire and seek whatever is pleasing to God in all our use of His gifts, so that, at all times, His purposes may be satisfied, and His pleasure may be engaged.

This means that the guiding and defining principle in all economic activity must be neither profit nor personal

advantage, but love. And love – for God and neighbors – is what the Law of God is all about.

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. Read the parable of the talents, Matthew 25.14-30. What did the master have in mind when he issued those talents to his servants? Is stewardship a matter of “more and more” or something else? Explain.
2. Meditate on Ephesians 5.15-17. Notice that Paul says *the* time, not *your* time. Every moment of time comes from God like a new talent. What are the keys to good stewardship of time?
3. Meditate on Colossians 3.23, 24. How can you see that this passage is related to the parable of the talents, Paul’s teaching about stewardship and time, and Leviticus 25.23?

*“A steward’s duty is to administer well the things that have been entrusted to him. The things of the master’s are not the stewards but the reverse—what is his really belongs to his master.” John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

*Help me to be a faithful steward with all that You have entrusted to me, O Lord, so that...*

*Pray Psalm 24.1-5.*

As you pray, thank the Lord for everything He has entrusted to your stewardship. Seek the kind of heart and hands that will allow you to use these things well, so that you know more of the Lord’s blessings and enter more deeply into His pleasure.

**Psalm 24.1-6** (*Foundation: How Firm a Foundation*)

The earth is the Lord’s, as is all it contains;  
The world and its peoples He daily sustains.  
He founded it fast on the seas long ago,  
And bid gentle rivers throughout it to flow.

Oh, who may ascend to the Lord’s holy place?  
And who may appear to His glorious face?  
All they who are clean in their hearts and their hands  
And true in their souls with the Savior shall stand.

A blessing all they from the Lord shall receive  
Who seek Him and on His salvation believe.  
For these are His people, the children of grace,  
Who earnestly, eagerly seek for His face.

## 2 Training Ground

*“Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.” Deuteronomy 5.16*

*Reflect and discuss.*

1. It only makes sense that children should honor their parents. Why?
2. What are the responsibilities of parents in teaching their children to honor them?

*Think about it.*

This is the second giving of this commandment (cf. Ex. 20.12), and here it is doubly reinforced. In both the command and promise sections of the fifth commandment, the Lord reinforces His Word.

First, the commandment is given, then Moses declares that the Lord had previously commanded this word to them. It's as if the Lord were saying, “I've told you once, and I'm telling you again.” While the Deuteronomy record is the second giving of *all* the commandments, this is the only one that includes such reinforcement. We should give it the special attention God intends.

Then the promise section of the commandment is reiterated and expanded, adding the phrase “be well with you.” It thus appears this commandment has special significance, standing as it does at the head of the second table of the commandments, which outlines the requirements of neighbor love. Having outlined the ways of loving God (commandments one through four), Moses now turns to the requirements for loving our neighbors. And he wants the people to understand that the home is the indispensable training ground for knowing God and enjoying His blessings.

Loving our neighbors is learned as we honor our parents. Honoring our parents grows out of loving God. As we grow in love for God, according to His Law, we will be willing and able to honor our parents. And in honoring our parents – with whom we live, whom we see every day, and who remain our parents throughout the course of our lives – we learn what is required for honoring and loving our neighbors.

It is not hard to see how the breakdown of the family in our day has led to the decline in love for neighbors. Yet the breakdown of the family is a consequence of failing to love God as He commands. This, in turn, is in no small part a result of the Church's failure to teach the Law of God.

The social cloth of our society has become threadbare because love for God has been forsaken, honoring parents is considered an option, and thus the skills of neighbor-love that a healthy and safe society requires have by many never been learned. And many who did learn them have become persuaded that the culture of narcissism is a better place in which to flourish than the culture of mutual respect and self-denial which they learned at home.

We cannot love our neighbors if we will not love God, for loving God teaches us to honor our parents, in which framework we learn to love our neighbors as ourselves. This failing, we forfeit the promised blessings of the Lord, and, rather than things being well and good in our native land, they are fraught with disrespect, uncertainty, and rampant self-seeking.

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. Why is loving God a necessary precondition for honoring our parents and loving our neighbors?

2. God attaches the blessings of His covenant – His precious and very great promises (2 Pet. 1.4) – to obeying His commandments. Obedience does not *earn* God’s favor; obedience *discovers* God’s favor. What’s the difference?

3. The *land* is often a symbol of all the promises of God. It is also a symbol of everything God has entrusted to His people (recall yesterday’s *Scriptorium*). What does this suggest about how we should teach children to honor their parents?

*“The formation of the children is then the prerogative of the parents. Therefore honor your father, that he may bless you. Let the godly man honor his father out of gratitude and the ingrate do so on account of fear. Even if the father is poor and does not have plenty of resources to leave to his sons, still he has the heritage of his final blessing with which he may bestow the wealth of sanctification on his descendants. And it is a far greater thing to be blessed than it is to be rich.” Ambrose of Milan (333-397 AD)*

*This commandment never ceases. I know that I must honor my parents always, Lord, so help me to do so. For I believe that as I do, You...*

*Pray Psalm 78.1-7.*

Pray for Christian parents, that they may teach God’s Law to their children. And pray for the children, that they may learn, obey, and set their hope on the Lord.

**Psalm 78.1-7** (*Foundation: How Firm a Foundation*)

Give ear, O my people, attend to my word,  
Dark sayings and parables sent from the Lord,  
Things we have before by our fathers been told,  
Which we would not dare from our children withhold.

The glorious deeds of our God in His might,  
And all of the works He has done in our sight,  
Together with all of the words of His Law,  
Would we on ourselves and our children bestow.

Lord, let all our children arise and declare  
The truth of the Lord every day, everywhere,  
And set all their hopes in God’s wonderful Word,  
And never forget all the works of the Lord.

### 3 A Distinctive People

*“You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.”* Leviticus 18.4, 5

*“Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’”* Deuteronomy 4.5, 6

*Now it shall come to pass in the latter days  
That the mountain of the LORD’s house  
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,  
And shall be exalted above the hills;  
And peoples shall flow to it.  
Many nations shall come and say,  
“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
To the house of the God of Jacob;  
He will teach us His ways,  
And we shall walk in His paths.”  
For out of Zion the law shall go forth,  
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.* Micah 4.1, 2

*Reflect and discuss.*

1. When are the “latter days” (“last” days)? How did Peter understand that idea (Acts 2.14-17)?
2. Churches today are not held in as high esteem as in previous generations. Why do you suppose this is so?

*Think about it.*

God intended Israel to be a distinctive people, different from all the unbelieving peoples among whom they lived. By keeping His Law, they would demonstrate a measure of wisdom and understanding that would be the envy of all the nations. We get a glimpse at what this was supposed to look like in 1 Kings 10.1-25.

But because the people of Israel did not have a heart for God or His Law (Deut. 5.29), they were never able to realize their calling or the promise of God’s covenant, that they should be a blessing to all the nations of the earth (Gen. 12.1-3). The day of having a heart for God and becoming a distinctive people would have to await the giving of the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 36.26, 27).

While God’s people will always experience areas of overlap with unbelieving cultures – because of the operations of God’s common grace – God intends us to show in every area of our lives how knowing Him makes us different. God’s Law provides the footprint for a culture and society where love, justice, decency, civility, and fruitfulness can abound.

Micah’s vision of the “latter days” foresees a time when the people of God would carry His Law, in all their words and deeds, into every area of society and culture. In every area of their lives, they would demonstrate such wisdom and understanding, and relate to people with such self-denying love, that the effect would be for “many nations” to “flow” into the Lord’s house – into His Church.

But where is that happening? Our neglect of the Law of God has compromised our witness for Jesus. There

is little about us in the way of wisdom, understanding, or love to attract the unbelieving world. We have lost our distinctiveness, at least, that distinctiveness which God intends for us.

The promise of the New Covenant is life in Jesus Christ. He has fulfilled all the Law, both by bearing its wrath against our sin and by fulfilling all its righteous demands. We do not need to keep the Law in order to *be* saved. Rather, because we *are* saved, we turn to the Law to help us along the path of wisdom, understanding, love, and full and abundant life in Jesus Christ.

And as we do, our light shines, our salt makes savory, and our leaven wields transforming power. And people will flow up to the mountain of the Lord's house, seeking wisdom, understanding, and love from Him.

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. Are wisdom, understanding, and love the sort of things people are seeking in our day? Explain.
2. Meditate on Deuteronomy 30.1-10 and Ezekiel 36.26, 27. How would you describe the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Law of God? Can we expect fruit from the Spirit's indwelling presence apart from the Law of God (cf. Rom. 8.5-9)? Explain.
3. How does living according to God's Law make a person "distinctive" in his or her daily life and work?

*"This evangelical law and apostolic preaching began with Jerusalem as with a fountain and traveled across the whole world, offering irrigation to those who made their approach with faith. It is also possible to see the divine houses situated in the middle of cities, villages, fields and remote areas, conspicuous for their size and beauty, so that they are illustrious and famous even on the highest mountains." Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD)*

*Pray Psalm 125.1-5.*

The writer of Hebrews says we have come to this holy mountain when we come to Jesus and His Church (Heb. 12.22-24). Let this psalm lead you to pray for the churches in your community.

**Psalm 125.1-5** (*St. Gertrude: Onward, Christian Soldiers*)

All who trust in Jesus, strong as Zion stand!  
Naught shall ever move them from their promised land!  
Like the hills surrounding safe Jerusalem,  
Christ surrounds His Church and holds her in His mighty Hand!

*Refrain, v. 1*

All who trust in Jesus, strong as Zion stand!  
Naught shall ever move them from their promised land!

Wickedness shall rest not on this holy land;  
Sinfulness shall never come forth from their hand.  
Trusting in the Savior, firm in His caress,  
Ever shall His favor on this holy city rest.

*Refrain*

Lord, do good and care for those upright in heart.  
All who turn to evil shall from You depart.  
Sinful men may increase; send them, Lord, to hell!  
Save Your people, let your peace abound in Israel!

## **4 The Law Our Tutor**

*Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.* Galatians 3.24, 25

*Reflect and discuss.*

1. What is the role of a tutor? How do you know when a tutor has done his job?
2. What is the responsibility of one who is assigned to a tutor? How do you know when that person has learned?

*Think about it.*

The function of a tutor is to instruct and prepare. Those who submit to a tutor are expected to learn. The tutor and the learner work together to prepare the learner for the next phase of life.

The Law is our tutor to bring us to Christ. The Law brings us to Christ in two ways. First, it illuminates the sin in our hearts. It shows us that we do not love God as He requires, and that we do not love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Thus the Law condemns us and exposes us as under wrath, in need of someone to deliver us from what we deserve before God.

Second, the Law portrays the beauty of holiness, justice, and love, which describe God and are required by God. The Law teaches us what to strive for in the way of holiness, and that we are insufficient in ourselves to attain that standard.

So the Law points us to Jesus, Who became a curse for us, even as He fulfilled all the righteousness God requires. The Law points us to righteousness; Jesus is righteousness.

The Law thus teaches and prepares us for Jesus. Coming to Him, we learn true righteousness by focusing on Him and living according to His Word. Jesus teaches us to learn of Him (Eph. 4.17-24). Learning of Him involves following Him in the way of His commandments and all His Word, beginning with that same Law which taught us to look to Jesus in the first place (1 Jn. 2.1-6).

This being so, in what sense are we “no longer under a tutor”? We are no longer under a tutor because we now belong to the Master, and He has given us His Spirit to lead us into all truth and transform us into His image (Jn. 14.12-14; 16.8-14; 2 Cor. 3.12-18). We are no longer under a tutor in that we are now called to make disciples and to teach the things of God to others (Col. 3.16). The Law of God is not *all* the truth of God. It remains an essential part of God’s truth, but it can only be rightly understood as the Spirit leads us into *all* truth, so that in the light of all the truth of God, each part of His truth conforms us increasingly to the image of our Master.

The Law is our tutor, and as those called to make disciples, we teach the Law by our lives and words, and thus both know and point others to Jesus.

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. If you were assigned to a tutor to teach you basic mathematics – adding, subtraction, division, and multiplication – would you lay aside what that tutor taught you as you moved on to algebra, geometry, and physics? Explain. How does this illustrate the Law’s role as a tutor in bringing us to Christ?
2. In your calling to make disciples – by your testimony and witness and with your fellow believers – what

role should you assign to the Law of God?

3. Why do we need all the rest of Scripture, and the Holy Spirit, to help us understand the Law and how it leads us to Jesus?

*“Now it was necessary that the law be given, as it fulfilled our need of a custodian. And it freed us from our previous impiety, taught us knowledge of God and then brought us to Christ the Lord as though to some wise teacher, so that we might be instructed by him in perfect learning and acquire the righteousness that is through faith.” Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD)*

*Lord, let me not forget what my tutor has taught me as I strain toward Jesus; instead, let me...*

*Pray Psalm 40.5-8.*

Recount God’s wonderful saving works to you, and commit yourself to Him as verses 6-8 indicate.

**Psalm 40.4-8** (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

Blessed are all who trust in You, turning both from lies and pride.

Countless wonders, Lord, You do, and Your thoughts with us abide.

Lord, Your worth who can declare? None with You can e’er compare.

Offerings You do not require – open now my ears, O Lord –

What from me do You desire? Firm delight to do Your Word.

Take my life in ev’ry part; write Your Law upon my heart.

## 5 Duty and Desire

*“If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband’s brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her.” Deuteronomy 25.5*

*Reflect and discuss.*

1. Should we expect that we will always be willing to obey whatever God requires of us in His Law (and all His Word)? Explain. What might keep us from obeying the Lord’s commandments?

2. What’s the difference between duty and desire? Ideally, what should be the relationship between these?

*Think about it.*

Duty trumps desire and all other affections. Duty lodges in the conscience and serves as a default value against self-centered thinking or feeling. The people of Israel, to survive intact amid hostile pagan nations, needed to bring their sense of duty into line with their desires. Otherwise, their hearts would surely lead them astray (Deut. 5.29).

Obligations to community, legacy, family, and even the nation were more to be respected than the desires of the heart in the situation outlined in Deuteronomy 25.5-8. Duty is a value and thus must rule in the soul above all affections or ideas. Love can grow out of duty fulfilled. The duty to obey God should, as we fulfill it, lead to greater love for God. So also fulfilling one’s duty to family, community, and legacy can help to nurture love for neighbors.

Love is doing the right thing and not merely satisfying desires. We must not allow ourselves to be captive to desires, because these may be misguided. Duty, on the other hand, is spelled out by God, so that we know what actions are required of us, whether or not we feel like performing them.

The statute outlined in Deuteronomy 25.5-10 would have seemed strange to those ancient Israelites. It was intended only for a time and was subject to change and modification as external conditions and circumstances changed (cf. Ruth 4). The main point of this Law is not about marrying widows within the family. God cares about widows. In ancient Israel, God determined that this was the wisest course for ensuring their wellbeing and for preserving the name and legacy – including property – of their deceased husbands.

God cares for widows today. That has not changed. The way He commands us to care for them has changed, but God’s love for widows has not (cf. Acts 6.1-6; 1 Tim. 5.3-16).

Nor has the duty He assigns to the believing community changed. The duty remains; the manner of fulfilling it has changed because of the new conditions of the New Covenant. Caring for widows in families and churches today may not be convenient. Indeed, it may be costly. But God requires it. We submit to His duty and look to Him to bring our affections properly into line.

Particular applications of the Law of God change over time; the principles embedded in them do not. Only the Holy Spirit, speaking in all the Word of God, can lead us in applying those eternal principles in the unique situations and circumstances of our lives.

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. Read Ruth 4.1-12. Here the statute of Deuteronomy 25.5-8 is invoked, but it has been somewhat changed. Clearly, God blessed the judgment of the elders as they looked to His Law to understand this situation. But has the *principle* in that ancient statute changed? Why might the actual *practice* of the statute have changed?

2. Read 1 Timothy 5.3-16. The Law concerning widows has changed, but the *principle* remains the same. Explain.

3. Why is it important that we understand what God requires of us – what our *duty* is? What should be the relationship between duty, feelings, and ideas?

*“And what will be said, if instructing others, someone neglects his own family, though he has greater capacities and a higher obligation to benefit those near? Will it not be said: ‘Aha! These “Christians” are affectionate indeed, who neglect their own relatives!’ ‘He is worse than an infidel.’ So what? One who does not benefit those far away benefits even less those nearer. What is meant is this: The law of God and of nature is violated by him who does not provide for his own family.” John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

Pray Psalm 146.1-10.

As you pray, let the Lord bring to mind specific people for whom you should intercede.

**Psalm 146.5-9, 10** (*Hallelujah! What a Savior!: Man of Sorrows*)

Blessed are they whose hope resides in the Lord, Christ at His side.

By Him heav’n and earth abide –

God forever reigns in Zion!

He is faithful evermore; He gives justice to the poor,

Feeds the hungry from His store –

God forever reigns in Zion!

Jesus sets the pris’ner free, heals blind eyes that they may see,

Lifts those burdened painfully –

God forever reigns in Zion!

He the righteous loves the best; wand’rers in His grace are blest;

Needy ones in Him find rest –

God forever reigns in Zion!

## 6 Right to Command

*“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.” Exodus 20.2, 3*

*Reflect and discuss.*

1. What gives someone authority over other people, to tell them what to do? What is authority? Why is it necessary?
2. What dangers are inherent in authority? How can those dangers be checked?

*Think about it.*

God has the right to command, and that for two reasons.

First, He is the Creator of all that exists, every person and thing, and everything we as people depend upon for daily existence. He made it all, and it all belongs to Him. He can do with it as He pleases (Ps. 135.5, 6).

Happily, God’s work of creation shows that He is infinitely wise, good, and powerful. We do not have to worry that He might abuse His authority over the world He has made and love (Jn. 3.16). God remains the gracious and benevolent Owner of all that He created, including the very time in which we live.

Second, God has the right to command because He is the redeemer of the world, and especially of those He takes to Himself as His people. He has mercy on those He saves. He sets them free from their bondage to sin and brings them out unto Himself in the Kingdom of His own dear Son. In Jesus, they realize and enjoy God’s favor and the promises of His covenant.

Even those who do not receive His grace, He continues to love (Matt. 5.43-48). If He did not, they would enjoy nothing of the many good things which come to them in life.

God has a right to command. He made us; He sustains us; and He has redeemed us. We have a duty to obey, and to obey without having to understand God’s *reasoning* for all His commandments. It is enough that we understand *His meaning* and *our responsibility*.

As creatures, dependent on Him for every good and perfect gift; and especially as the redeemed of the Lord, our duty is to understand His will and to perform it faithfully, consistently, and gladly. To neglect the commandments of God is a grave sin and can bring the discipline of the Lord against us for believing that we know better than God how our lives should be lived (Heb. 12.3-11).

God has the right to command, because all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Him, and He has bestowed that mighty authority on Jesus Christ.

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. Meditate on Matthew 28.18-20, Colossians 2.2 and 3, and Hebrews 1.3. How would you describe the *authority* our Lord Jesus wields? By what right does He possess such authority?
2. Meditate on Psalm 33.1-12. We fear the Lord, Who loves us; but we do not fear His authority, how He might wield it. Why (Rom. 8.1; Heb. 12.3-6)? How should knowing this help us whenever we are faced with the temptation to sin?

3. The Law of God derives from God's authority. What are the implications of this for us?

*"In the first commandment of the Decalogue, just as the worship and service of the one Lord God is most clearly commanded, so for adoration and service to be shown by the faithful to any creature is most vehemently forbidden." Fulgentius (467-532 AD)*

*Lord, I recognize Your authority to command; help me daily to submit to that authority, so that...*

*Pray Psalm 33.1-12.*

As you pray, dwell on the grounds for God's authority mentioned here. Give Him appropriate thanks and praise.

**Psalm 33.1-7** (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

Sing with rejoicing in the Lord,  
for praise becomes His righteous ones!  
With harps and songs raise grateful words,  
and let new songs of praise be sung!

Joyfully shout! His Word is true;  
He does His work in faithfulness.  
His love prevails the whole world through;  
the Lord loves truth and righteousness.

God spoke and heaven came to be,  
and all its hosts His Spirit wrought.  
He heaps the waters of the sea;  
the deeps their dwelling place are taught.

## **7 The End of the Law**

*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.* Romans 10.4

*Reflect and discuss.*

1. Would the world be better off without the Law of God? Would the Church? Explain.
2. The Law is the path, the end of which is fullness of life in Jesus Christ. Jesus came to give us full and abundant life. Can we expect to realize fullness of life apart from the Law of God? Explain.

*Think about it.*

Paul says that Christ is the “end” to which the Law would lead us. He is using τέλος here in the sense of purpose, outcome, or result. Christ does not end the Law, in the sense of doing away with and replacing it. Paul has dismissed that possibility in Romans 3.31 by saying that the righteousness of Christ does not do away with the Law but establishes it.

Rather, He shows us why the Law was given, that we might be like Christ. As Baltimore is the end to which Interstate 70 leads, Jesus is the end to which the Law leads. If you see Jesus as He is, full of splendor, glory, majesty, and power, you will gladly receive from Him the map He has provided to bring you on your journey to His presence. Take up the Law of God as a map for life. Follow it step by step, negotiating its instructions, counsel, and directives in faith and obedience. Know that, as you do, you come closer to Jesus each day (cf. 1 Jn. 3.1-3).

Our journey in the faith will be determined by our relationship to the Law of God. Ignore or neglect the Law, and you will end up sidetracked or stalled in your journey. You will not increase in Christlikeness, and full and abundant life will elude you. Your journey, rather than be an exciting adventure of faith and obedience, will become tedious, dull, and unfruitful. You may cling to the hope of your final destination, but your journey there will be nothing to write home about.

Christ shows us what keeping the Law produces in us: Christlikeness! We must see Jesus, exalted in glory and ruling over all God has made, and ourselves as being transformed into His image and likeness. The clearer and more constant our vision of Christ, and the more we delight in Him, the more we will follow His map to its glorious destination and end.

Keeping the Law is not the end. It is the means to the end, which is becoming more like Jesus day by day (Ps. 1).

*Meditate and discuss.*

1. Read Psalm 1. Who meditates in God’s Law day and night? What is the effect of this?
2. Read Matthew 5.17-19. Why did Jesus fulfill the Law? Why does He call us to learn, obey, and teach it? Is understanding and obeying God’s Law important for life in the Kingdom of God? Explain.
3. What would you say to someone who insisted that Jesus brought an end to the Law, and we do not need to obey it any longer?

*“Christ furnishes believers with holy righteousness, because he is ‘the end of the law,’ and the law prepared the way for Christ by showing that he was the fulfillment of it, the salvation of mankind.” Apollinaris of Laodicea (310-392 AD)*

*Pray Psalm 22.22-31.*

How should we respond to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (vv. 1-21)? Thank God for all His Word, by which “He rules over the nations.”

**Psalm 22.23-28** (*Darwall: Rejoice, the Lord is King*)

All you who fear the Lord, now praise His holy Name!  
You children of His glorious Word, declare His fame!  
We stand in awe of our eternal God, and on His mercy call.

For He has not despised the anguish of our King,  
Nor from Him hid His eyes, Who knew such suffering.  
Let praise arise from all who love and serve the Ruler of the skies!

The suffering King shall eat and praise with us the Lord.  
Forever we His praise repeat and trust His Word.  
Praise God above, all you who keep His vows and who His mercies love!

All nations shall repent and hasten to the Lord;  
All those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.  
The Lord is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Why do we need the Holy Spirit and all the rest of Scripture to be able to understand the Law of God?
2. Why has God given us His Law? Is it because He wants us to be unhappy and oppressed? Explain.
3. What is the relationship between Jesus, His Kingdom, and the Law of God?
4. Why should Christians learn, obey, and teach the Law to others?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from these studies? How are you applying that lesson in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.