

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. For the next 5 days two teachers will explain God's work through the law, God's work through our death and resurrection and God's work through the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's teaching is: A DISCIPLE KNOWS GOD'S WORK THROUGH THE LAW – PART 1. We will study the Old Testament moral law, ceremonial law and civil law.

(S) **POINT 1. GOD'S MORAL LAW WRITTEN IN THE HEART FUNCTIONS AS A JUDGE.**

First. God's moral laws are built into every human being. In Romans 2:14-15 Paul writes, "When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them." The purpose of the moral law is to teach all people *how they should relate to God and to other people*. When God created man, he wrote his moral laws on the heart of every man and gave man a conscience to remind him of these moral laws. God's moral law was thus by nature inherent in man. Adam knew by himself, through his own completely clear and holy consciousness, what he had to do in order to keep God's law. He knew that there was only one God and that he must worship, serve and obey him alone. He knew that God had forbidden man to show disrespect to his parents, to kill, to commit adultery, to steal, to lie and to covet what belongs to others.

(T) Second. God's moral laws faded through sin. However, after Adam fell into sin, the following generations of people more and more forgot God's moral laws or twisted their meaning and application. Although the Gentile nations did not have the written Old Testament Law, they nevertheless did by nature the things required by the law. They proved that God's laws, which were written on the hearts of all human beings, were not totally destroyed by sin. Their consciences also prove that they knew the difference between right and wrong. Therefore, the Bible says that all people are guilty of transgressing God's laws and have no excuse. Romans 3:19 says, "Whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God."

(S) Third. God clarifies and extends the law. When God chose Israel as the nation through which he intended to reveal himself to the other nations, he gave Israel the written Old Testament laws. These laws not only *clarified* God's moral laws that had been worn out by sin in man's consciousness, but also *added* new laws, which have become necessary due to sin. Due to sin, God clarified *the moral law* and added *the ceremonial law* and *the civil law* to it.

(T) **POINT 2. GOD'S CEREMONIAL LAW ONLY FUNCTIONED AS A PREPARATION DURING THE OLD TESTAMENT PERIOD.**

First. The purpose of the Old Testament ceremonial laws before the first coming of Christ. Because the whole human race had fallen into sin, *the atonement for sin* became an absolute necessity! God added the ceremonial laws that included sacrifices of atonement in order to teach his people how to *approach* the absolute holy and righteous God without getting destroyed and how to *worship* and *serve* him.

(S) Second. The contents of the Old Testament ceremonial law. Old Testament ceremonial law stipulated rules and regulations with respect to four areas of worship and service: holy persons, holy places, holy times and holy actions. The holy persons consisted of the priests, who had to bring sacrifices of atonement (1 Chron 6:48-49), and the Levites, who had to make music and serve in the temple. The holy places consisted of the Tent of Meeting and later the Temple in Jerusalem. The holy times consisted of the feasts and the Sabbath. The holy actions consisted of the circumcision of boys, the ceremonial washings, the eating of clean foods, the offering of sacrifices, the bringing of firstfruits of the harvest and the bringing of tithes. However, Hebrews 8:5,13 and 10:1 teach that the regulations of the ceremonial law in the Old Testament were only *a shadow of the real things that were coming* in the New Testament Hebrews 9:8-10 teach that the ceremonial laws in the Old Testament were *external regulations* that applied only until the time of the New Testament and *illustrations* of the things that happened in the New Testament. In Matthew 5:17 Jesus Christ said that he had come at his first coming in order to *fulfil* the ceremonial law of the Old Testament.

(T) Third. The shadows of the Old Testament ceremonial laws became realities at the first coming of Christ. According to Hebrews 7:23-28, the only *priest* of Christians is Jesus Christ. According to Acts 17:24-25 and Ephesians 2:21-22, the only *temple* of Christians is the worldwide body of believers, also called the Church. According to John 1:29 and Romans 3:25, the only *sacrifice of atonement* of Christians is the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. According to Romans 2:28-29 and Colossians 2:11, the only *circumcision* of Christians is the circumcision of their sinful hearts. According to Hebrews 4:1-11, the only *Sabbath* of Christians is when

they enter the eternal rest in heaven. According to Mark 2:18-22, the *fasting and mourning* of the Old Testament believers has been changed to the feasting and joy of the New Testament believers. According to 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, *tithing* to support the temple worship in the Old Testament has been replaced by the generous giving of Christians in the New Testament. According to Mark 7:19 and 1 Timothy 4:3-5, Jesus Christ declared “all kinds of food clean” to eat.

(S) Fourth. After the first coming of Christ the ceremonial laws have all been cancelled. Colossians 2:14 clearly teaches that Christ *cancelled* the Old Testament ceremonial law with its requirements and set Christians free from its regulations. Moreover, Ephesians 2:14-23 clearly teaches that Christ *abolished* the regulations of the ceremonial law from the Christian Church. The ceremonial laws of the Old Testament may never be reintroduced into the Christian Church, because they would again bring divisions among Christians!

(T) **POINT 3. GOD’S CIVIL LAW ONLY FUNCTIONED AS A PREPARATION DURING THE OLD TESTAMENT PERIOD.**

First. The purpose of the Old Testament civil laws before the first coming of Christ. After God chose the insignificant nation of Israel to be the community through which he wanted to reveal himself to the nations in the world, social and legal laws for the theocratic nation of Israel became a necessity. God added the civil laws in order to teach his people how *to function as an orderly and just community* amidst the nations.

(S) Second. The contents of the Old Testament civil law. The Old Testament civil law stipulated rules and regulations that regulated the government, the social relationships, the legal and penal system and the military system, especially warfare. For example, the regulations concerning the civil government included regulations concerning the leaders of the Israelites, its tribes and clans, and regulations for the king of Israel (Numbers 1:2-3,16, 2:2,17,34, 27:15-23, Dt 17:14-20). The regulations concerning the social system included regulations concerning the Hebrew slaves, sexual transgressions, marriage violations, involvement in occultism, mistreating the weak and the alien and rebellious children (Ex 21:1-11, 22:16-31, Lev 19-20, Dt 21:18-21, 22:13-30, 23:15 - 25:19). The regulations concerning the legal and penal system included regulations about the protection of property, personal injuries and murder (Ex 21:1 - 23:9, Lev 19:15, Dt 16:18-20). The regulations concerning the military system included regulations concerning the drafting for military service in Israel, the making of war and the total extermination of the seven wicked Canaanite nations (Lev 18:24-25,28-30, Dt 7:1-11, 18:9-12, Ps 106:34-37).

(T) Third. After the first coming of Christ the civil laws of the nation-kingdom of Israel have superseded by the New Testament teaching about the kingdom of God (John 18:36) and its present earthly manifestation in the Church (Galatians 6:16). One. God does not have two programmes, one for the nation-kingdom of Israel and another for the Christian Church. God has only one plan, which includes believing Jews and believing Gentiles from every nation on earth (Eph 1:9-14, 2:11-22). In John 10:16 Jesus Christ clearly teaches that there is only *one flock and one shepherd*. While Jews, who do not believe in Jesus Christ, are excluded from the kingdom of God (Mat 8:11-12, 21:43-45), everyone, who believes in Jesus Christ from every nation in the world, will be included in God’s kingdom. Two. The regulations in the kingdom of God and its present earthly manifestation in the Christian Church are for example the new regulations concerning the civil government of the nations. Matthew 22:21, Acts 4:19, 5:29, Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-23 teach that every civil government should rule people within the assigned limits that are set by God. They should rule people with justice, as is taught in the Bible and they should punish evildoers. The new regulations concerning the social system in the kingdom of God are taught in Matthew 5-7, 1 Corinthians 6:12 - 7:40, Ephesians 4:17 - 6:11, Colossians 3:18 - 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12, James 2:1-13, 5:1-12. Every society should uphold God’s institutions of marriage, the family and the Church. Every society should have a moral order, fight crime, immorality, drug abuse and injustice. Every society should have a value system and thus a legal system that is based on the Bible. New regulations concerning the legal system are taught in 1 Corinthians 6:1-10, Hebrews 10:34 and 1 John 5:17. And new regulations concerning the Christian view of military affairs are taught in Matthew 26:52-54, Luke 6:27-28 and John 18:36.

(S) **POINT 4. GOD’S MORAL LAW CONTINUES TO FUNCTION DURING THE NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD.**

First. The purpose of the written moral law. Due to centuries of sin, people had forgotten God’s moral laws or had deliberately twisted them to suit their own sinful aims. Therefore God finally gave his moral commandments *in written form* to Israel. The Old Testament moral law stipulated rules and regulations with regard to how all people should relate to God and to one another in order to please and glorify God.

(T) Second. The contents of the Old Testament moral law. It is summarised in *the Ten Commandments*, which are written in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. It is very important to notice that God gave the moral law in the context of grace. In Exodus 20:2 we read, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” Only after God had graciously saved his people from their enslavement, he gave them ten moral rules to teach them how God required his people to live as his people in this world. God’s people must be

different than the people around them! God never intended the Old Testament laws as a means by which the Jews could be justified! The Bible clearly teaches that no one will be justified by trying to keep God's laws! God's intention for the moral law was and still is to show his people how they should live as his people in this world and how to please and glorify God.

(S) The first commandment says, "You shall have no other gods before me." The first commandment *forbids polytheism, idolatry and occultism*. The Lord is the only living God and believers must be completely dedicated to him alone. **One. The first commandment teaches that there is only one God.** Through the prophet Isaiah, God says, "I am the Lord, I am the first and the last; apart from me there is no God" (44:6, 45:5). In Mark 12:29, Jesus says, "The Lord, our God, the Lord is one." And in 1 Corinthians 8:6 the apostle Paul says, "For us there is but one God." The only God is the God of the Bible! **Two. The first commandment forbids occultism.** Occultism is the believe in spirits and using their powers to do things. In Deuteronomy 18:9-13, the Lord says, "Do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations. Let no one be found among you who ... practises divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or cast spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord." The sorcerers were not allowed to live (Ex 22:18) and a man or woman who was a medium or spiritist in Israel had to be stoned to death (Lev 20:27). People who visit mediums and spiritists will be exterminated by God himself. In Leviticus 20:6 God says, "I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists ... and I will cut him off from his people." This commandment has never changed. **Three. The penal law of Israel enforced the first commandment.** In the Old Testament, the penal law of Israel forbade the worship of any other god than the God of the Bible. Those who disobeyed were killed. Believers in the Old Testament may not invoke the names of other gods (Ex 23:13). Whoever sacrificed to another god, had to be destroyed (Ex 22:20). Any prophet, who tried to seduce people to worship another god than the God of the Bible, had to be put to death (Dt 13:1-5; 18:20). Any family member, who tried to secretly seduce believers to worship other gods than the God of the Bible, had to be stoned to death (Dt 13:6-11). Any town which had introduced other gods than the God of the Bible, had to be completely destroyed. However, the New Testament forbids us to put such people to death, because the penal law of Israel does not apply to the people of the New Testament.

(T) The second commandment says, "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything." The second commandment *forbids making any idols or images of any god*. The Israelites came out of Egypt, where they saw how the Egyptians worshipped idols resembling birds in the air, bulls on earth and fish in the water. **One. The second commandment forbids the worship of God in another way than what the Bible teaches.** People may not worship anything that man has made and that can be seen, heard, touched or felt. God is Spirit and those who worship him, must worship him in truth and in Spirit (Jn 4:24). They may not worship him in their own way or in the way of a false prophet. **Two. The second commandment enforces the destruction of your own idols.** With regard to idolatry, the believers in the Old Testament were commanded to "break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles, and burn their idols in the fire" (Dt 7:5). In 2 Kings 23, king Josiah pulled down the altars of the idols and smashed them to pieces, smashed and burned the idols, ground them to powder and scattered their dust over the graves, desecrated the idol places by covering them with human bones, tore down the shrines, slaughtered all the idol priests, and got rid of the prostitutes, mediums, spiritists, all the so-called *household idols* as well as all other detestable things in the whole country. In the New Testament in Acts 19:19 we read about people who turned to Christ. "A number of them who practised sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly." Christians should destroy all their *own* idols, especially when they make of their career or money or power or fame an idol. God will destroy the rest.

(S) The third commandment says, "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God." The third commandment *forbids the wrongful use of the name of God*. Other commandments in the Old Testament explain this. A prophet, who presumed to speak in God's name anything God has not commanded him to say, had to be put to death (Dt 18:20). Swearing falsely by God's name is forbidden (Lev 19:12). Cursing God is forbidden. In Leviticus 24:10-16 God says, "If anyone curses his God, he will be held responsible; anyone who blasphemes the name of the Lord must be put to death. The entire assembly must stone him." The religious teachers of the Jews have mistakenly translated the second verb *to blaspheme* as *to mention* and thus forbade people to even mention the name of the Lord at anytime. However the two verbs *to curse* and *to blaspheme* are parallel. God does not forbid the mentioning of his name, but only the cursing or blaspheming of his name. Believers in the Old Testament and New Testament may use the name of the Lord when they pray to God or speak about God in a respectable way.

(T) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Choose one of the moral laws of God and practise it as an expression of your gratitude and love for what God has done for you. Listen tomorrow to part 2 of God's work through the Old Testament Law. We will continue to study the meaning of the Ten Commandments and study the New Testament view of the Law.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and make disciples" and Internet on www.etc

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to "Discipleship training on the air".