

**Responding to Our LORD – “The Law of God”**

07/11/2021

**Scripture:** (Exodus 20:1-20 ESV)

And God spoke all these words, saying,

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

“You shall have no other gods before me.

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.”

Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.”

**Scripture:** (Matthew 22:34-40 ESV)

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

## Sermon:

Following the exodus from Egypt, Moses led the Israelites, the people of God, to Mount Sinai to worship the LORD and receive further instructions from Him.

The LORD had chosen and claimed them, the children of Israel as a people for Himself (Ex 19:5).

The LORD had redeemed His chosen people, He rescued them from their bondage to an oppressive, foreign ruler who did not respect the LORD.

At Mount Sinai, the LORD gave His people His Holy Law, the *Torah*, which they are to obey. There is a great similarity to the LORD's instructions given to Adam in the garden, in this moment. God placed Adam in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it, told him that he may eat from any tree in the garden, except for one. He was given a purpose and a rule: a law to obey. There God established with Adam a covenant of works: obey and live, disobey and die. At Sinai this covenant was broadened in detail and scope, as the LORD renewed it with Israel, through their covenant mediator, Moses; made more exacting and particular, less ambiguous but more difficult, yet just as futile for ordinary man to keep.

All of Adam's work, his obedience, and his worship were intended to glorify the LORD, the Creator and Maker of Heaven and Earth purposefully, because the LORD alone is God. Adam's failure resulted in the exile of mankind from the LORD's presence, and our bondage and enslavement to sin. The people of Israel also failed to keep God's covenant, so they were banished and exiled from the land and they were eventually destroyed as a unified people and family.

At Mount Sinai the LORD God came down from heaven to meet with His chosen people. The LORD drew them near to Himself, He brought them back into His presence. So, it was necessary for the LORD instruct His people in how they were to live, interact with others, and worship Him; to instruct them in the way of holiness, so that they might once more enjoy fellowship with Him, continue in His Way, and remain in His presence.

In short, at Mount Sinai God told the people exactly what they needed to do and not do, so that they might live and remain in His promised land: a land similar to the longed for Garden, a land “*flowing with milk and honey*” (Ex 3:8). The LORD told His people just how He expected them to respond to all the great things which He had done on their behalf: for them to obey and be blessed by living in the land, in His presence; or disobey and be cursed, exiled, banished, and death, far away from the LORD's presence. The covenant at Sinai is the same covenant of works which the LORD had first established with Adam: the same requirement of obedience, and the same penalty of death and separation from God. The children of Israel had an opportunity to try again, to correct the mistakes of their forebear Adam; but like Adam, they also “*sinned and [fell] short of the glory of God*” (Rom 3:23), until the second Adam, the last Adam, came and kept the whole Law down to the last “*jot and tittle*”, who dotted every “i” and crossed every “t” (Rom 5:14-21; 1 Cor 15:22, 15:45).

Let us fast forward now to Jesus' day, to the Roman Province of Judea, some two thousand years ago. The Jewish people believed that they were now, finally living in full obedience to the LORD. They felt that they had learned from the divine lessons received, given due to their ancestor's disobedience, idolatry, and sin. They had been brought back to the promised land from their exile in Babylon. They had rebuilt the Temple and re-established what they believed to be correct, God honoring worship. Yet these Jews living in Judea, were not their own masters, they were held in bondage by foreigners in what should have been their own land and home: first by the Greeks, then the Selucids, {*the Hasmonean kings were a Jewish Dynasty established by Simon Maccabee, the brother of Judas Maccabeaus both Levites*}, and now the Romans with their Herodian puppets {*The Herodian dynasty were ethnic Edomites, the descendants of Easu and historically antagonistic against*

*Israel (particularly when coming out from the wilderness during the exodus; then later during the Babylonian conquest, before they were conquered in turn). they may have held the title of King of the Jews, but they were certainly not Jewish Kings.*}. The Jews believed that they had done and were doing all that the LORD required of them; now, they were merely waiting on God to do His part, for Him to send them the Messiah to make all things right: right as the Jews believed things should be.

Of the many social-political-religious groupings of Jews in that day, the Pharisees were among the most religiously strict Jews *{the Essenes were even more so, but they were also a separatist group, intentionally diverging from main stream Jewish society}* even though they were not (necessarily) of the priesthood. They were considered to be the most devout Jews, and the greatest students of the Law. They were the “ivory tower”, religious-elite types; viewed by the people to consider themselves better than everyone else, not because they were intrinsically better, but because of the degree of their piety, and their strict obedience to God's Law. They considered themselves “righteous under the Law” (Matt 5:20). They assumed that they were fulfilling God's covenant of works (Phil 3:3-6). They thought they had it right. They thought they had it all together. Yet even with all of their studying and piety, they seemed to miss the point of the Law, considering it to be the means to an end; a strict taskmaster for their lives, and not as a joy or blessing for their relationship with God.

“The Law” was and is still very important to the Jewish religion and it is important to our lives of faith, in Christ as well; but the Law cannot save us. We cannot ever satisfy its requirement of obedience our holiness, to merit entrance into God's presence. “The Law” is like a lock, whose tumbler we cannot turn because of our sin; sin, which makes us to not fit the lock perfectly because our key is bent and deformed out of shape.

So, if “the Law” was not given for us to be saved by, why do we have “the Law” then? The Apostle Paul says that we, as Christians, “...are not under law but under grace.” (Rom 6:14-18). This does not mean “the Law” has been discarded, replaced, invalidated, or does not apply to us. Paul is describing our current relationship to “the Law”. The Law remains to explain how we are to be holy and obedient disciples, and how we are to worship the LORD.

“The Law” which the Pharisees and Jesus were debating in our text, is the Hebrew *Torah*; but the word *torah* is complicated in its meaning, it is layered and used for different aspects of law within Scripture. So, the particular context is critical to understanding just which *torah* is being discussed.

When we read about “*the Law and the Prophets*” in Scripture, the *torah* first in mind is the first section of the Hebrew Scriptures, called the Pentateuch (the Five Books of Moses). When we read the plain expression of “*the Law*” or a simple mention of the “*Law of Moses*” in Scripture, this has the same *Torah* in mind. The entire Hebrew Scriptures are also commonly (but incorrectly) called “the *Torah*”; they are more rightly called “the TaNaK”, of which the *Torah* is only the first part. TaNaK is an acronym for the three sections of their Scriptures : *Torah, Navim, Ketuvim*: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Then we understand “the Law” as referenced throughout Psalm 119, to refer to the eternal covenant, this moral law given to govern our lives, as was given to Moses at Mount Sinai.

Additionally, there is also an “Oral *Torah*”, the “Oral Law”, which is called the “tradition of the elders” in Scripture. This *torah* is said to have been passed down: from God to Moses, then to the Rabbi's; through the many centuries, as a commentary and explanation of the written *Torah*. Today, much of this Oral Law and tradition has been compiled and written down as the *Talmud*. The *Talmud* expands upon *Torah*, and is the explanatory source for all “the commandments”, the *mitzvot*: those six hundred and thirteen distinct commandments which all “righteous Jews” are required to obey. However, in the Gospels, Jesus condemns this expansion upon God's Word as being lawbreaking itself (Matt 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13; see also Paul's similar

condemnation of these in Col 2:8; Gal 1:13-17), as following of the “traditions of men” rather than obeying God; like Eve adding and attributing a prohibition on touching the forbidden fruit to God.

When the New Testament writers speak of “the Law”, they are referring to the eternal, unchanging, Law of God, which the Holy, Sovereign LORD has always required complete obedience from His elect people: the covenant of works, and the moral law.

Now you may be thinking to yourself, what about all those strange *{to us}* rules and regulations in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy?

- The rules about clean and unclean animals
- The treatment for or of those with various skin disorders (like leprosy)
- The prohibition against pork: I just ate bacon and eggs for breakfast; am I going to hell for that?
- Are those rules still the Law of God?
- Must we we follow all of those? Isn't loving others as Jesus did enough?
  - Must we still be following all of those rules? No. Yes. Not exactly.
  - May I still eat bacon or pork chops? Yes, see Acts 10:15 and Mark 7:19. *{write those down}*
  - Isn't loving others, like Jesus did, enough? No, it is not.

There is an ancient and recurring church heresy, called Anti-Nomianism (from the Greek word *nomos*, meaning law), which suggests that because of the finished work of Christ, we no longer have to obey the Law. It was to folks believing like that, whom Paul was addressing in 1 Corinthians chapters 6 and 10; who think that because of our freedom in Christ, we have license to do anything and everything we want without it being considered sinful; who believe that sin doesn't matter anymore, because Jesus wrote us a blank check forgiving everything, in His Mercy and Love. But that idea is false! That is Heresy of the first degree. *{Capital H.E.R.E.S.Y., Heresy!}*. Unfortunately, that is what so many people in this country *{and likely our local community}* believe and put into practice today, because that is what is being taught in many church buildings by the so-called “Liberal” or “Progressive” “christians”. *{Yes, the capitalization and lack is intentional.}*

Please turn with me to Matthew chapter 5, verses 17-19. Jesus said, *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."* (Matt. 5:17-19 ESV) You see, Jesus did not abolish the Law; He fulfilled it; satisfied it; and completed its requirements for all of it's intents and purposes. The Law remains and is still good for us, because not only is it the means by which Christ saved us, it is also our guide for how we should live. We are saved by Grace, because Jesus satisfied the requirements of the Law: the terms of the covenant of works. He died justly according to our violations of the Law, so that we can live, by grace, according to His obedience to the Law.

Offering “license to sin” is not love. Endorsing or promoting sinful practices under the claim of Christian freedom; not calling for repentance from sin *{or even remorse for our sin}*; not speaking the hard truths about

sin, keeps sinners in bondage to sin, enslaved and wrapped up in golden chains<sup>1</sup>. The Law is necessary for us to repent to, for without the Law we can not recognize our sin (Rom 3:20). Being “Saved by Grace” does not free us from obligation to the Law: although it frees the Redeemed in Christ from the penalty for our failure to keep it; it frees us to obey the Law in love, instead of fear and terror. The Law still guides our lives.

Jesus Christ is the only Righteous One. When we say that we are clothed in His righteousness (Ps 132:9; Is 61:10); when we say that we have been washed in the Blood of the Lamb (Rev 7:14), we refer to justification by our faith in Him: referring to the understanding, attributed to Martin Luther, that “justification by faith, is the article on which the Church stands or falls”. When we speak of our justification, we contemplate the “divine transaction” of double imputation: where all of our sin and guilt, were imputed to the Righteous One, Jesus, on the cross; and all His righteousness, all His obedience, all His holiness, all His Good Works, are imputed to us, by God's grace, through the faith, trust, and dependence we have on Christ alone *{the faith given us by the Holy Spirit, as the sovereign gift of God (Eph 2:8-9)}*. By Sovereign Grace, our evil deeds, our wickedness were accounted to the Person of Jesus, when He paid our just penalty on the cross, while His complete obedience to the LORD is accounted to us by His grace *{then, now, in time to come}*. So, despite our regular and frequent disobedience, by our union with Christ, we are made God's obedient children. The LORD is Just according to the Law, and the LORD is Merciful according to His Grace.

God is Good! All the Time! Praise the LORD!

Now back to the Law. Historically, the church has understood the *Torah*, as given to Moses, to consist as three distinct forms: moral law, ceremonial law, and judicial or civic law (WCF 19).

The moral law is contained in the portion of Exodus which we read this morning *{and Deuteronomy 5}*, called the “Ten Commandments” *{which are not expressly mitzvot}*. The purpose of the moral law is to govern all of our relationships: those with one another, and our personal relationship with the LORD. This law is fundamental and intrinsic to our base humanity, as bearers of the *Imago Dei*. This is the rule written on the hearts of all mankind, and is what culture calls “conscience” (Rom 1:11-16) while denying its divine origin and relevance.

The ceremonial law was given to be the rule of faith and practice for the ancient Israelites; given specifically to govern their personal holiness, ritual cleanliness, and the required sacrificial rites of atonement and fellowship with the LORD for use in the Tabernacle, and later in the Temple. The purpose of the ceremonial law was to foreshadow the coming Messiah, until He arrived; so that God's people would recognize Him when He appeared, and to understand God's gracious work of salvation for us.

The judicial law was given for Israel, as a political entity; a theocratic state with the LORD as it's absolute Sovereign, even while they had a monarch ruling on God's behalf; but, ever since at least 70 AD, Israel has ceased to exist as such a nation. The modern country of Israel is not Biblical Israel. It is neither a Jewish state, nor is it a theocratic monarchy (it is not governed by the Levitical priesthood, nor is there a (recognized) descendant of King David serving as their head of state) *{Israel's existence as a modern nation since 1948, is unlikely to be the fulfillment of “End Times Prophecy”, unlikely to be a sure sign of the LORD's imminent return.}* . It is a secular state, governed by a representative-democracy; albeit, one populated with a majority people of Jewish ancestry: consisting of many practicing adherents to the Jewish religion *{in some form: Orthodox, Hasidic; Liberal; etc}*; as well as professing Christians “of every flavor”, and the satanic occupiers

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1 The Puritan preacher Richard Sibbes, when speaking of our Christian liberty, “Looseness of life is cruelty to ourselves and to the souls of others. Though we cannot keep those who will perish from perishing, yet if we do that which is apt of itself to destroy the souls of others their ruin is imputable to us.” - The Spirit of Mercy Should Move Us - from The Bruised Reed

of the Temple Mount. The judicial law was given to punish and restrict sin among the people, using consequence as a deterrent. But, just ask almost anyone incarcerated, even knowing beforehand what the consequence and punishment for their crimes would be, they still did it anyways; whether they believed they would never be caught, or if they just did not care about the consequences; they did it anyway. This is why, in part, legislating “morality” or codifying the Christian faith and practice into civil law does not improve society for long. Instead it increases the amount of sin and moral and civic lawbreaking (Rom 7:7-25).

Fortunately, the obligation of the judicial law has since expired, according to the LORD's Providence *{even as aspects and elements are still wise and relevant to modern law}*, following the destruction of the worldly, Jewish, nation-state of Israel and the heavenly enthronement of the eternal Davidic King, Jesus Christ, where He now rules over creation (Ps 102; 110; Heb 10:12-14), with all authority (Matt 28:18), until He returns in glory! Jesus Christ is the Law-giver, our Advocate, the Judge and Jury, and He is our Justifier who renders us the verdict of “Not Guilty”, before the LORD.

Fortunately, the Jewish system of sacrifice has been stopped *{you're welcome PETA}*, ever since the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD, by the Roman Legions, for Christ's sacrificial death on the cross satisfied all justice, and covered all of our debt of sin (Heb 10:12)<sup>2</sup> as the final, complete sacrifice. Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial law therefore, no further sacrifices are necessary *{so, we also do not need to wait upon or assist with the construction of a Third physical Temple in Jerusalem for Jesus to Return. A Temple's whose sole purpose is to re-establish the sacrificial system, when we, the Church, are the true Third Temple, being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and living our lives as “living sacrifices” (Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 6:19; 1 Peter 2:4)}*; the shadows of anticipation are removed where the light of the truth shines. *{Although we may see and understand the work of Christ, as though through a “glass darkly” (1 Cor 13:12), we still see it more clearly and brightly, than our forebears did.}*

Now, only the moral law remains in effect for us. We constantly break the Law, especially when understanding it in light of Jesus's teaching about the Law, during His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). *“And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.”* (Matt. 7:28-29 ESV) We are no longer bound to its punitive nature, even the redeemed break it during every moment of our lives, for we are being sanctified, we are not yet made perfect and spotless in Christ; we need to repent and ask His forgiveness often. We are sinners, redeemed by grace.

The moral Law remains to remind us of our need for Jesus; reminding us of our own insufficiency, and failures in obedience apart from Him; reminding us of our own wickedness, and constant need for God's Mercy. The Law remains to shepherd us back to the Way of the Holy LORD, who commands our absolute devotion; reminding us to rest on, and trust Christ in faith, who is our obedience!

Which brings us back around to the question of, what is the Law we must obey?

When Jesus was asked by the Pharisees, “What is the greatest *mitzvot* (commandment)?”, He said, *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

He did not answer them with one of the Ten Commandments; He responded with the first four of them, then He followed up with the final SIX; completely summarizing and affirming the whole Law of God. These two

<sup>2</sup> But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (Heb. 10:12-14 ESV)

*mitzvot*, these two “commandments” summarize the totality of the moral Law as contained within the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments command how we are to honor and worship the LORD, as our first priority, and then command how we are to worship and honor Him through our interactions with others. Everything we are to do, everything in our entire being, is to be God-honoring and done for His Glory alone (1 Cor 10:31).

So, this question from the Pharisees to Jesus, was intended as a trap; to trick Him into both elevating and denigrating different portions of God's Holy Word, God's Divine Law, by saying or suggesting that one rule is more important than another. To ranking God's *Torah* or *mitzvot* would have been as much of a theological impossibility to the Pharisee as it is to us, because they also would have affirmed that “*all Scripture is God-breathed*” (2 Tim 3:16) *{while they would not agree upon the extent of what writings are Scripture}*. When they considered their origin of the Law, having been written by the “finger of God” (Ex 31:18<sup>3</sup>), no rule should be declared greater or lesser, for they are equal and absolute because the Law-giver is absolute and with compare. Thus, Jesus answered them with two *mitzvot* *{of the 613<sup>4</sup> from the Talmud}* that covered the whole.

The first *mitzvot*, the “greatest commandment”, is part of the *Shema* (Deut 6:4-9) which is recited by every devout Jew thrice daily: first thing in the morning, immediately upon their waking (but more correctly, said before the sun rises); at evening time, when the first three stars come out (but permitted to be said sometime after dark, so long as it is before midnight); and lastly, immediately before going to bed and falling sleep. Every single day<sup>5</sup> of their lives, following their “age of accountability”, *{although women are not held to such a strict requirement}* they speak the *Shema* to fulfill their *mitzvot*. The goal, intent, and purpose of the *mitzvot* to recite the *Shema* is for the Jew to be focused on the LORD: mind, body, and spirit; their whole self is to be entirely devoted to the LORD and His transcendent Glory, all the time *{for God is good}*!

Then, continuing His answer, Jesus said that a second *mitzvot* was like the first, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” (Lev 19:18). We all are created in the Image of God. We were created to be God's stewards of the world. We are His representatives on earth, made to rule over His whole creation. So, when we look at those folks around us: our neighbors; those strange or similar; the good, the bad, and the ugly; the bold and beautiful, the wise and wonderful; we are to remember that the LORD God made all of us in His Image, not just the Jews or Christians in His Image, but also all the unrepentant pagans in the world. *{Hence the purpose of the parable of the “Good Samaritan”, to answer the question of “Who is my neighbor.}* Doing what is good, right, and honorable to and for others with the *Imago Dei*, is service to the LORD. It is Godly-worship, serving Him through our service to them; even serving those without faith, those who do not believe on Jesus, for by this service they might come to believe.

When Jesus said, “*Truly, I say to you, as you did [or did not] do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.*” (Matt. 25:40, 45 ESV), **this** is what He meant. That Golden Rule of “Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you” (Matt 7:12<sup>6</sup>), fulfills the moral Law of God. Serving others is serving the LORD; this

3 And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. (Exod. 31:18 ESV)

4 [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/756399/jewish/The-613-Commandments-Mitzvot.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/756399/jewish/The-613-Commandments-Mitzvot.htm)

5 [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/955162/jewish/Laws-of-Reciting-the-Shema-Part-I.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/955162/jewish/Laws-of-Reciting-the-Shema-Part-I.htm)

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/955327/jewish/Laws-of-Reciting-the-Shema-Part-II.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/955327/jewish/Laws-of-Reciting-the-Shema-Part-II.htm)

6 "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matt. 7:12 ESV)

was neither a new nor a revolutionary idea presented by Jesus. *{Remember, Jesus, the Apostles, and Saul/Paul were all Jews.}*

Hillel, the great Rabbi *{the head of one of the two primary schools of Jewish thought during the First Century; from whom modern Rabbinical tradition is descended; and whose grandson was Gamaliel the Elder (Acts 5:34, 22:3), teacher of the Apostle Paul}*, is quoted in the Talmud telling a Gentile who asked to be taught *Torah*, "Whatever is hateful and distasteful to you, do not do to your fellow man. This is the entire *Torah*, the rest is commentary. Go learn." So, even while the Jews miss the mark of faith in the revealed Messiah, they still got some things right.

Jesus showed us what kind of service is expected from us, through the demonstration of His entire life and ministry, *"even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve"* (Matt. 20:28 ESV). It is in this way we keep God first in our lives. Serving others, for His sake and glory. Living out our faith by acts of service, proving our religion true, because the "Why" matters. Glorify God, not yourself, by service. The lowest and most humble acts of service, often bring God the greatest Glory *{because we will not stand in His way to claim credit}*.

Think about Mike Rowe and his TV Show "Dirty Jobs". Jesus truly did the "dirtiest jobs" of all. Jesus put on a towel and washed the feet of His disciples, including the ten whom He knew would abandon Him in a few short hours, the one who would deny Him that night, and the one who had already betrayed Him; twelve men who were the most ungrateful and undeserving of our Lord's kindness, but whom Christ gladly served, to God's Glory. Jesus served us, you and me, when He died for sinners on the cross (Rom 5:8).

Jesus told the Pharisees that, *"On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."*, because they are the foundation of the Law, *Torah*, and Scripture as a whole. The historical books tell us of Israel's regular cycle of disobedience to the Law, their punishments, and their subsequent repentance and restoration. The Prophets condemn Israel's covenant violations, calling the people to repent and do what the LORD commands. The Gospel's tell the story of how God atoned for His people, justifying us through the work of Christ. The Epistles again tell us of how we are meant to live lives of holiness, in accord with God's law. Just like Hillel said, "The rest is commentary." After the Holy Spirit regenerates us, after we are "Born Again", then with repentant hearts we await the final restoration.

Jesus said, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."* (Jn. 14:15 ESV) The Law still matters for us, as redeemed sinners saved by grace, because our obedience to Christ is how we demonstrate our love for the LORD.

Everything we do, is to be done for God's glory, alone. Everything we do, is done as an act of worship to our Holy LORD. We are commanded to obey Him and to love His Law, not so that we might receive salvation, but because we have been saved already.

So, respond to God's Law by:

...serving God to love God.

...serving others, loving others, to serve God.

...obeying the LORD's commands.

So, love Jesus and keep His commandments.

**AMEN**