

# VI

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## *THE LAWFUL USE OF LAW*

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it unlawfully . . .  
(I Tim. 1:6).

The church at Ephesus was experiencing a problem with teachers of the law. They wanted to teach the law but they did not understand what they were saying or whereof they were affirming (I Tim. 1:7).

Jesus once said that you could recognize teachers by their fruit in the same way you could recognize a tree by its fruit. One does not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles.

What had these teachers of the law produced at Ephesus? It is obvious that they had produced trouble and dissension. The situation had become so serious that Paul left Timothy there to charge these men to quit their divisive teaching and argumentation.

As I besought thee (Timothy) to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine. Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying . . . (I Tim. 1:3-4).

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History proves that you cannot argue yourselves into unity, or debate yourselves into agreement.

God did not give us the Scriptures in order that we might argue about them. He gave us the Scriptures to teach us to love. This is specifically stated in I Timothy 1:5: The end or goal of what God commanded is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.

The presence of argumentation and strife in the church was proof that something was wrong. Christians are to be known by their love for one another. The problem, again, was that someone was using the law in the wrong way.

The law was not given in order to coerce and control Christians. It was given as a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

So Paul continued:

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine: (I Tim. 1:9-10)

Christianity is to manifest the “righteousness of God without law” (Rom. 3:21). The definite article “the” is absent in the Greek text. Christians are without law, but then so is God. God is good, not because anyone makes Him be good, but because His basic nature is good. Christians are good for the same reason. We have had a change in our basic nature. We have been born again.

When sheep know the voice of the Shepherd, and follow Him, you do not need to control them with barbed wire fences.

Though the Christian is not under law, there is still a legitimate use of the law for the Christian.

### *Shadow of Good Things*

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come . . .” (Heb. 10:1).

The law did not save, it was not the “very image” of spiritual things, but it did provide a “shadow of good things to come.”

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Whole books have been written upon this subject without exhausting it. God who gave us the law built into it many facets of His infinite nature and of spiritual realities in the heavens. Here is a brief overview of but a few.

### *Moses was a shadow of Jesus.*

The life of Moses, the lawgiver, prefigured the life of Jesus in many ways.

Both had their lives threatened by kings during their infancy.

Both were providentially preserved.

Both fled to a foreign land to escape.

Both were deliverers to those enslaved.

Both were lawgivers—Moses gave us the Ten Commandments and Jesus gave us the “law of love.”

Both were intercessors who interceded for God’s people.

Both were prophets to whom obedience was required.

Moses was responsible for building a physical sanctuary for God and Jesus is building a spiritual sanctuary for God.

There are at least some thoughts which indicate that Moses was a shadow of something good to come.

### *The experience of Israel was a shadow of the Christian experience.*

I Corinthians 10 and other passages make the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and their journey in the wilderness analogous to the Christians experience.

Israel was enslaved and Christians were enslaved.

Israel was delivered by a baptismal experience in the Red Sea and Christians have been separated from their old life of slavery by baptism into Christ.

Israel was miraculously sustained by bread and water and the Christian is dependent upon Jesus for sustenance.

They were strangers and pilgrims searching for Canaan and we too are strangers and pilgrims searching for a better country.

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Many Israelites fell into temptation in the wilderness and did not make it to Canaan and many Christians also fall from their own steadfastness.

Before they entered Canaan they had to cross the troubled waters of the Jordan and before we can enter heaven we must face the experience of death.

There was a rest promised to Israel and there is a rest promised to the Christian. In one respect we do not have to die in order to enter into rest, but in Christ we enter into a new dimension of power and victory which is also analogous to Canaan.

These and other considerations indicate that Israel during the period of law was a shadow of something good to come.

*The tabernacle was a shadow of heavenly things.*

When Moses supervised the construction of the tabernacle, he did so with a divine blueprint before him. On the mountain he was given the "pattern" by which the tabernacle was to be constructed (Heb. 8:3). The pattern did not resemble anything on earth but was a pattern of heavenly things (Heb. 9:23).

Consider these few observations:

The tabernacle was a sanctuary, or dwelling place for God just as today the church is the Body of Christ where His Spirit dwells.

The workmen on the tabernacle were selected by God and filled with his Spirit to do their work just like the Apostles and prophets of New Testament times were selected by God and filled with His Spirit (Ex. 31:1-11; 35:30—36:2).

The material from which the tabernacle was constructed came from a freewill offering by the people (Ex. 25:1-9) and the church is composed of those who volunteer themselves to Christ.

Inside the outer court was the altar of burnt offerings. The original fire upon this altar was kindled by Jehovah (Lev. 6:13; 9:24). We also as Christians have an altar where perpetual atonement is obtained and our altar is Christ (Heb. 13:10-12).

Before entering the Holy Place each priest would have to pause at the laver and wash (Ex. 30:17-21). The Scriptures teach

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that the believer is "baptized into Christ" (Gal. 3:27) and that by one Spirit were all baptized into one body (I Cor. 12:13).

In the Holy Place was the table of shewbread which was changed every week (Lev. 24:5-9) and in the church is the Lord's Supper which was eaten at weekly gatherings (Acts 2:42; 20:7).

In the Holy Place was also the seven branched lampstand (Ex. 25:31-39) which burned continually. It was the only light in the Holy Place. Today the Word of God is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. It provides continual guidance.

Also in the Holy Place was the altar of incense (Ex. 30:1-10). Every morning and every evening highly perfumed incense was burned upon it with fire from the brazen altar. The sweet fragrance filled the room and penetrated into the Holy of Holies. In Revelation 5:8, vials full of odours, or incense, are said to be the prayers of the saints.

The veil separating the Holy of Holies was rent in two from the top to the bottom when Jesus died (Matt. 27:51). This reminds us of the new and living way that we have to enter into the presence of God (Heb. 10:19-20).

The ark of the covenant contained the law of God and today the law of God is written upon the heart of all believers (Heb. 8:10; II Cor. 3:3).

On the ark was the slab of gold called the "mercy seat" which prevented the cherubim from seeing the law. Christ is our "covering" or propitiation which prevents the spirit world from seeing our sins.

These are just a few of the considerations which cause us to believe that law was a shadow of good things to come.

*The Sacred Seasons were a shadow of good things to come.*

The Sabbath teaches us about our rest in Christ.

The Year of Jubilee teaches us about the joys of grace and forgiveness.

The Passover Feast teaches us about the possibilities of deliverance from death.

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The law was given on the day of Pentecost and this is precisely the day when the church was established.

The Feast of Trumpets began the seventh or sabbatical month. Ten days later would be the Day of Atonement. The Gospel is the trumpet of God by which we summon men to His Atonement.

The Day of Atonement was the day in which the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies to obtain forgiveness for the people. The year of Jubilee began upon this day. Today we have a perpetual Jubilee because Christ ever ministers in the presence of God in our behalf.

Volumes could be written on these Feasts and the many facets of spiritual truth which they prefigure. Suffice it to say that they were an integral part of worship during the period of law and they were a shadow of good things to come.

We could continue to talk about the Feast of Dedication, the Feast of Purim, the cities of refuge, the various types of offerings and sacrifices which the law required. Each of these would contain a "shadow" of something good and properly expounded would bring us into Jesus that we might be justified by faith.

### *None of These Diseases*

Dr. S. I. McMillen in his excellent book, *None of These Diseases*, offers a beautiful commentary on Exodus 15:26. God promised His people that if they would obey His commandments, He would put "none of these diseases upon thee, which I brought upon the Egyptians. . . ."

He then proceeds to demonstrate that the Bible offers rules for health which make modern scientific discoveries 4,000 years late. A number of these prohibitions, restrictions, and instructions are found in the books of law.

Such teaching about morality and health certainly provides us with another "lawful use of law." These instructions, however, will only realize their complete fulfillment when the law brings us to Jesus that we might be justified by faith.

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It is important to remember that the law was only a shadow and not reality. My shadow is not me and your shadow is not you.

The law was not God . . . not reality . . . only a shadow!

### *Is The Law Good News or Bad?*

The Scriptures contain a number of statements about the law which seem to be in conflict with one another.

In Matthew 5:17, Jesus said that He did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. In Colossians 2:14, the Scriptures teach that Jesus took away the law nailing it to the cross.

In Romans 7:12, we find that the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good. In Galatians 3:13, the law is called a curse and we are told that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.

In Romans 7:14, we find that the law is spiritual, but in Hebrews 7:16, the commandments of the law are called carnal (see also Heb. 9:10).

Paul said, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22), and in Ephesians 2:15 he referred to the law of commandments as "enmity."

These and other similar Scriptures can be resolved quite easily by recognizing the purpose for which the law was given.

The law was never given to save. It was given to point out sin, and man's inability to save himself and to be a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

### *Schoolmaster*

Our English word "schoolmaster" comes from the Greek word "paidagogos" which occurs but three times in the New Testament Scriptures.

It is found in I Corinthians 4:15 where the King James Version renders it "instructors."

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

The two other times it is found occur in Galatians 3:24-25:

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

The paidagogos was not the instructor of the child, but was a slave

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who exercised general supervision over him. Thayer indicates that until the age of manhood a boy with such an overseer was not allowed to step out of the house without supervision.

The severity of these slaves is reflected by the terminology associated with the situation. In Galatians 3:23 it is called being "kept" or as later versions say "kept in ward," a situation which was tantamount to being in jail or "shut up."

There were some good things about the law, especially if a man used it lawfully, but the general picture of law was that of a severe slavery preceding the kind of maturity which blossomed into freedom and trust.

Christ is our teacher, and the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to him. The emphasis of law is on "doing." The emphasis of faith is much different. The emphasis of faith is that which takes us beyond the finite and physical to the dwelling place of God.

In conclusion, we must categorically affirm that there is a "lawful use of law." The law was given to us by God and we may be confident that He has a good reason for doing so. Jesus came to fulfill the law (Matt. 5:17) and men like Paul expressly stated that they believed all things that were written in the law (Acts 24:14). When Paul preached Christ, he was able to do so out of the law of Moses and the prophets (Acts 28:23).

We suggest for your thinking, however, that the "lawful use of the law" involved placing it in its proper perspective to the over all plan of God so that it became a "schoolmaster" to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. In what way is love the end of the commandments (I Tim. 1:5)?
2. How had men in Ephesus perverted the law? (See I Tim. 1.)
3. List some important lessons taught to us by law?
4. If the law is good why did Paul call it a curse (Gal. 3:13)?
5. If the law is a curse why did Paul call it good (Rom. 7:12)?
6. In what way is the law of the Lord perfect, converting the soul (Ps. 19:7)?
7. Were the Hebrew people better off with the law or without it (Rom. 3:1-2)?
8. Define "schoolmaster."
9. What kind of people need to be "kept in ward"?
10. What happens to a criminal when he is "born again"?