

Final Meditation

Los Diez Mandamientos

Did Jesus come to change the Law?

Last Part

In our voyage through the Ten Commandments, we have researched deeply into the meaning of the Divine Law and its importance in our lives. We have meditated on the function of the Law, its ability to guide and protect, and how it challenges us to live a righteous life in harmony with God and our fellow human beings.

However, a crucial question arises that invites us to think about and inquire deeper: Did Jesus come to change the Law? In this final stage of our study, we will delve into this question, exploring the teachings of Jesus and seeking to understand whether there was a transformation or continuity in the real purpose of the Law.



In addressing this topic, we will discover how the previous meditation on the function of the Law gives us a solid basis for this new exploration. Are you ready to unravel the mysteries of the relationship between Jesus and the sacred Law? Come along this fascinating journey while we look for enlightening answers and discover the truth that lies beyond the Commandments.

Did Jesus abolish the law of Moses? *“Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.”* (St. Matthew 5:17) Abolishing means invalidating, and Jesus did not do away with the old laws and establish new ones; He came to fulfill them. Jesus did not implement a new system, but consummated the old one. The same God who worked through Moses worked through Jesus.

In Jesus' days, some Pharisees and religious leaders gave a strict and rigorous interpretation of the Law. They focused on the outward fulfillment of the Commandments and established numerous traditions and additional regulations to prevent any transgression. This rigorous interpretation often led to a legalistic mindset and an excessive burden of external observance of the Law.

Jesus criticized this attitude and emphasized that true obedience to the Law goes beyond mere outward appearance. He drew attention to the feelings of their hearts and intentions behind their actions, highlighting the importance of love, justice and mercy. Jesus confronted the Pharisees for their hypocrisy and for neglecting the deepest and most essential aspects of the Law, emphasizing the need for a true inner transformation.

Beyond doubt, Jesus meant that He came to establish the Law in its fullness; He came to completely clarify what might be dark or confusing about it. Jesus came to give the true meaning of it and to reveal the truth and the full importance of each of its parts; to show the length, the width, and the exact measure of each Commandment contained in the Law, and at the same time, the height and depth of it in all its sections.

Jesus came to give a new understanding of the Commandments. Jesus, rather than focusing on the ritualism of the Law, He concentrated on acts of mercy, healing, assisting the helpless, on neighbors, and on forgiveness (St. John 8:1-11). The new understanding, through Jesus, was not completely different, but was a significant improvement of the old one. He deepened the meaning and purpose behind the Commandments, showing that their fulfillment was not limited to merely an outward observance, or legalism, but went beyond, embracing a person's inward feeling as well as intention.



For example, Jesus taught that the Sixth Commandment (Exodus 20:13) “*Thou shalt not kill*” referred not only to refrain from murder, but also to avoid anger, hatred, and to speak cynically and falsely about another person. Murder is a sin subject to Divine judgment because it violates God's command to love and care for one's neighbor, “*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*”. In the same way, this holds for our verbal aggression, bad treatment, indifference when we abuse power or whenever we defame someone.

Given a situation in which you were working in an office and you spoke against a co-worker to your boss and as a consequence of your action this person got fired being left unemployed, it is as if you were killing him/her, because you would leave that person out in the street without a salary and with the consequence that this causes. This is an example of a way you may kill someone else by attacking their personal, psychological or spiritual integrity.

When one of the teachers of the Law approached Jesus asking what the First Commandment is, Jesus answered him with the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4) and then referred to the First Commandment: “... *thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and with all thy strength*”. (St. Mark 12:30) and the Second: “*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*”. (St. Matthew 22:39), “*On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the prophets*”. (St. Matthew 22:40)

Jesus synthesized the Ten Commandments into two. The first four teach how to revere God, and the remaining six refer to the behavior and relationship among human beings. In these two Commandments all ten are held.

Jesus exhorted people to obey the Commandments of the Law as taught by the scribes and the Pharisees, but not to follow their lifestyle (St. Matthew 23:2-3). Jesus also criticized the rigid positions and hypocrisy of those who focused too much on outward observance and the rigidity of the Law, paying no attention to love and compassion toward others. On several occasions, he confronted the religious leaders of his time, exposing their misunderstanding of the Law and calling them to a better justice and mercy. (St. Luke 14:1-6)

The Gospel of Jesus produced a faith that firmly exalted the validity of the Decalogue. St. Paul said: “*Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law.*” (Romans 3:31)

Having lived a life of loving obedience Himself, Jesus emphasized the fact that his followers are to be keepers of the Commandments. When asked about the requirements for an eternal life, he replied: “... *if thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments*”. (St. Matthew 19:17)

Jesus fulfilled the Law, not by destroying it, but through a life of love, mercy, and obedience. “*For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled.*” (St. Matthew 5:18)

Jesus did not preach against the Law itself, but against the abuses, crude legalism, and excesses to which it was subject. Jesus emphasized the importance of a true love from the bottom of your heart, living in obedience to God, and in love and compassion toward others.

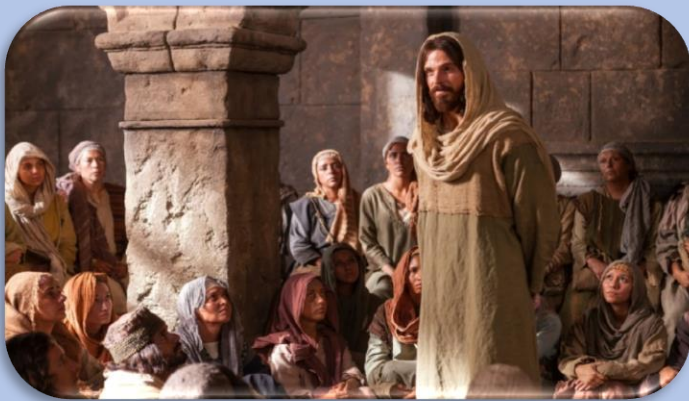
So, are we saved by following the Law?

And this is the million-dollar question: are we saved by the Law? And the answer is a resounding NO. The Law does not save; The Law judges you, condemns you, brings you to trial, is strict and immovable, the Law punishes.

Throughout our study of the Ten Commandments, we have seen the importance of Law as a moral and ethical standard. However, it is crucial to remember that Law-keeping alone does not qualify us for salvation. Our redemption and freedom from the yoke of the Law does not come from striving to fulfill it, but through faith in Jesus Christ.

According to the Scofield Study Bible, the Law was clearly not a means of salvation. He wrote, “The Law neither justifies the sinner, nor sanctifies the believer... It is of utmost importance to observe... that the Law is not offered as a means to obtain life ...” Following the Law (the Ten Commandments) is not in itself enough to obtain salvation.

As much as we believe that we are doing everything right and fulfilling the precepts, since the Fall, we are all sinners. St. Paul explained it in the following way in Romans 7:14-18: *“For we know that the Law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the Law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do*



it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

Not one single person is able to keep God's Commandments perfectly in this life, but breaks them daily in thought, word, and deed, *“... For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.”* (Ecclesiastes 7:20). Hence, the Law is not the way to salvation, any more than it is through good works.

While the Commandments have a moral and ethical value, given our sinful nature, it is impossible to fulfill them perfectly and completely. The Commandments serve us as a moral standard that show us the need for the grace and redemption of Jesus Christ.

Faith in Jesus Christ is most important to be saved, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”* (The Acts 16:31) Our faith in Jesus, accepting His atoning sacrifice on the cross and trusting in His grace, grants us forgiveness of our sins and eternal life. This faith is considered a gift from God and not something that can be earned through works or the observance of the Commandments.

Jesus came into the world to give His life as sacrifice, perfectly fulfilling the Law that we fail to fulfill. And a new covenant was established, where we are no longer forced to strictly

follow each of the Commandments. This does not mean that the Law is worthless, as it provides us with an ethical and moral framework.

We are saved by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, being Just, Holy, and without stain, shed His blood on wood for all mankind, justifying us before God. His sacrifice came to redeem us, save us, and reconcile us to our Heavenly Father. We are saved by our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

However, this should not lead us to undervalue or ignore the Law. Even though we are not under the crushing weight of a legalistic observance, the love of God and to our neighbor forces us to live in obedience and to follow the moral and ethical principles present in the Commandments.

In short, our salvation is not based on Law-keeping, but on faith in Jesus Christ. He fulfilled the Law for us, establishing a new covenant of grace. Let us continue to live in love and obedience, knowing that we are saved only by His sacrifice and the faith we place in Him.

The good news is that by placing our faith in Jesus Christ, we are justified and reconciled to God. His sacrifice gives us the grace and forgiveness that we need. Faith in Jesus Christ is the way to salvation and eternal life.

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