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Law of Moses and the Christian



Authority of Scriptures - Steve Gregg

According to Steve Gregg, Christians acknowledge the authority of Scripture and consider the Ten Commandments as authoritative today. Although Jesus inaugurated something new, he did not come to abolish the law of Moses and the prophets but to fulfill them. The law of Moses contains ceremonial, moral, and civil laws, and Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial and moral laws through his life, death, and resurrection. Paul emphasizes the importance of being dead to the law and living for Christ, which means that Christians have the liberty to choose whether or not to keep certain laws or customs depending on their context and audience.

Transcript

At the beginning of our last session, I raised some questions that I personally think are very pertinent to the issue of the application of the concept of the authority of Scripture in our lives. The authority of Scripture is not merely an interesting concept or a concept that Christians dutifully acknowledge because that's just part of being a Christian, you acknowledge such things. But the authority of Scripture is really what we live by.

I mean, it's supposed to be. The Christian is desirous to live in a way that pleases God and that is obedient to God. And therefore, if the Scriptures are the word of God, obviously we want to give them their full and rightful authority in making the decisions for us about what we're going to believe and what we're going to do and what we're going to approve and what we're going to disapprove.

But, of course, once we have made that commitment, okay, I'm going to honor the authority of Scriptures, we don't read very far before we come to a bit of a snag. There are certain commands in Scriptures that most Christians don't keep. In fact, it would be either hard or impossible to keep.

To, for example, come to the temple in Jerusalem and offer animal sacrifices would not only be difficult to do, but it's impossible. There's no temple in Jerusalem today. How could we observe such a thing? Well, the fact that we can't might give us a clue that we maybe needn't.

You know, if God has not made it a possible thing to do, then maybe he doesn't require it. But there's other things that are commanded that we also don't do. And, of course, the question arises, should we? There are Christians on the planet who believe we should observe the laws of kosher diet, who believe that Christians ought to avoid foods that the Old Testament calls unclean foods.

There are some groups of Christians that feel that keeping the Jewish feasts and festivals would be a good thing. I don't know of any of them that actually teach you must do so to be saved, but I know of some who feel that since the Bible talks about these festivals, we should keep them. I know some people, many Christians, who believe we should keep Saturday, the Sabbath, because the Sabbath is frequently emphasized in the Bible.

And because it is, they say, well, how can we just ignore it? It's right there in the Ten Commandments, and it's repeatedly spoken of throughout the Old Testament and even mentioned in the New Testament. And, therefore, the question we would want to answer, if we really want to obey Scripture, is what parts am I supposed to obey? Are there some parts that have more authority over my life than others? And the answer is, I believe that the entire Old Testament is inspired, but not all of it is imposed on the believer. Not all of it is a description of a believer's task or a believer's duty.

Two of the questions I raised at the beginning of our last lecture were, are the laws of diet and of Jewish festival observance as binding upon the believer today as are the Ten Commandments? And the second question was, are the Ten Commandments as authoritative today as the Sermon on the Mount? Now both of these questions have to do with the relative authority of certain things in the Old Testament. I singled out the laws of diet and of Jewish festival observance because these are representative of a whole class of commands in the Old Testament that we might refer to as ritual law or ceremonial law. The Ten Commandments, I put in juxtaposition with those because, at least in the mind of most people, the Ten Commandments are in a different category than ceremonial law.

Most people believe that because the Ten Commandments were carved in stone, which is somewhat of a more permanent medium than parchment, for example, that this symbolized the fact that they were unchanging and eternal in duration. And therefore, while the other commandments of the Old Testament were given by God through Moses and were authoritative and so forth in their time, it is thought they were not authoritative forever. But the Ten Commandments are, they say.

And therefore, when one would ask, well, am I obligated to keep the dietary laws and the ceremonial laws and the ritual laws of the Old Testament religion? Most Christians would say no. But if you would ask them, am I required to keep the Ten Commandments? As far as I know, most Christians would say yes. And therefore, their answer to the first question would be, no, the laws of diet and of festival observance are not as binding on

the Christian today as are the Ten Commandments.

That is the answer that almost all Christians I've ever encountered would give to that question. I give a different answer. I believe the biblical answer is otherwise than that.

The other question then is, are the Ten Commandments as authoritative today as the Sermon on the Mount? Well, you know from what we talked about in our last session that I think the Sermon on the Mount is authoritative because I spent my whole time trying to press upon you an acknowledgment of the authority of the words of Christ. He is the Lord and what he commands is our duty, is what we're supposed to be doing. And the Sermon on the Mount belongs to that class of scripture that contains the words of Jesus, what he said, what he commanded.

So you know very well that I believe at least that the Sermon on the Mount is authoritative. But are the Ten Commandments authoritative too? And are they equal to that? Well, you know, if the view of many, perhaps most Christians is correct, then the answer would be yes, they're about the same. The Ten Commandments are God's eternal law carved in stone as binding today as they ever were and so is the Sermon on the Mount.

And they could point out that the Sermon on the Mount never did nullify any of the Ten Commandments. Some people have mistakenly thought that the Sermon on the Mount did nullify some of the Ten Commandments. It did not.

When Jesus said, you have heard that it was said you shall not murder, and whoever murders shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, if you're angry at your brother without a cause, you are in danger of the judgment. And when he said further down in the Sermon in Matthew 5, when he said, you have heard that it was said, whoever commits adultery simply, you've heard that it was said, thou shalt not commit adultery.

But I say to you, whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery already with her in his heart. Some people think, well, see, Jesus was taking some of the Ten Commandments and changing them. He wasn't changing anything.

He never said, you have heard it was said thou shalt not commit murder. But I say to you, thou shalt commit murder. He didn't say, you've heard that it was said thou shalt not commit adultery.

But I say, you shall. He didn't change anything. He simply amplified.

He simply showed that there was more to it than meets the eye. He was not saying that those laws are not valid and that he wanted his disciples not to forget about those laws. He was saying there is something in those laws that you have largely missed.

And because those laws still are important, it's necessary for you to understand what God really meant when he gave them so that you can observe them, not just in this limited way that you understand them now, but you can you can obey them fully in the way God wanted you to. This is no changing of the Ten Commandments. Now, from what I just said, you might think that my position is the Ten Commandments were reinforced by Christ and therefore that we must keep them.

But that is not my position. My position is this, that whatever Christ has reinforced, whatever Christ has stated to be true about the Old Testament is binding on the Christian. And now I want to look, if I could, at some of the things Jesus did say and about the Old Testament law, and then we will we're not going to reach simplistic answers, but we're going to, I think, I hope, reach a precise answer to the question.

First of all, we need to acknowledge that Jesus had no doubt about the authenticity of the Old Testament. Jesus never attacked it. He never thought it was superstitious or mythical.

In fact, the Jews believed the Old Testament was inspired by God, and Jesus seemed to approve of this and agree with it himself. Every time he spoke of the Old Testament, he spoke as if it were God's Word. I've given in your notes just a few examples where he said this.

We could multiply those examples if we wanted to take the time, but it would be unnecessary. But in Matthew 19, for example, when Jesus was asked about divorce, whether the Pharisees asked whether it's lawful to divorce your wife for any cause you want, he answered and said to them, Have you not read that he who made them at the beginning made male and female and said, For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. Now, notice in verse five, he's quoting Genesis 2, 24, and he begins the quote by saying, And said, Well, who's the subject of that sentence? Who said that? You have the verb, but you don't have the subject, whereas the subject is in the previous verse.

He who made them. Who's that? God is the one who made them. He that made them made them male and female and said that is he who made them made them this way.

And he said, Who's he? God, the one who made man. So Jesus indicates that by quoting Genesis 2, 24, he's quoting God himself. God is one who said this.

Now, by the way, reading Genesis chapter two, you might not get that impression the way the way that verse stands in the context. You could make the mistake of thinking Adam said these words because it says when Adam awoke and found that God had made Eve for him, he said, This is now bone in my bones and flesh in my flesh. As Adam said that.

And then the next verse says, For this cause, a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. The very verse Jesus quotes here. It follows immediately after what Adam said.

It does not make a distinction whether Adam said these words or God did it. Jesus tells us who said he said the one who made man and woman said this. And so Jesus considered that the words in Genesis were the words of God.

And he took that for granted. Of course, the Jews already believe that. But Jesus challenged many of the things the Jews believe on many subjects.

He never challenged their belief that the word of God was to be found in their Old Testament writings. In Matthew, twenty to thirty one. Jesus was approached by the Sadducees in this context, and they tried to disprove the resurrection of the dead doctrine, which Jesus believed, and they didn't.

But it says in verse thirty one, Jesus said concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? Now he's quoting from Exodus there, and obviously saying this was spoken by God. Jesus acknowledged God was the speaker here. God was the one that that inspired these words.

Over in Mark chapter seven, just a few other examples, we could, as I say, multiply them almost indefinitely throughout the New Testament. But in Mark chapter seven. Versus ten through thirteen, well, verse nine, we'd start in verse nine, he said to them all too well, you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your tradition for Moses said, honor your father and your mother and he who curses father and mother, let him be put to death.

But you say if a man says to his father or mother, whatever prophet you might have received from me is Corbin, that is to say, a gift to God. And you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition. Now, notice he says in verse ten, Moses said on your father and mother, which is you by your traditions do something different than Moses, than what Moses said, and therefore you make the commandment of God of no effect.

Jesus takes it for granted what Moses said was the commandment of God. You neglect Moses, you neglect God's word. And so Jesus is right on track with the Jews generally in this one thing that he believed and taught that the scriptures of the Old Testament, the laws in these cases that we're giving, was inspired by God.

It was God's word. Now, he also made a statement in his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount that that gave some definition to what exact impact he had come to have on the law. Now, until Jesus time, and even until he began his ministry, the law was the

authority of God in the lives of Jesus and his disciples because they were Jews and the Jews, the law was given to the Jews, the law was given to Israel.

It was the covenant provisions that God had made when he entered into a special covenantal relationship of marriage to Israel. And therefore, those who were part of Israel, which included the original disciples and Jesus himself, lived under the law, and rightly so. But Jesus, when he began to teach, began to inaugurate something new, and it wasn't quite clear what it was to many people.

Many people thought maybe he was an enemy of the law because he didn't do a lot of the things that the Jews thought you're supposed to do if you keep the law. You might remember that Jesus appeared to violate the Sabbath, as far as the Pharisees were concerned. He was continually accused of violating the Sabbath.

He didn't observe the hand-washing laws. He got criticized for that, too. He didn't stay appropriately distant from sinners sufficiently to satisfy those who were the guardians of the law of Moses.

There was a time when they brought a woman to him, taken in adultery, and said, Moses said this woman should be stoned. What do you say? Obviously implying he might say something different than Moses. He was perceived as someone who was maybe an opponent to Moses.

Why? Because there were things he did and didn't do which offended them, because they thought the law required certain things, and he ignored those things. So, probably he was beginning to get a reputation. He certainly was, in some circles, getting a reputation of being contrary to Moses, contrary to the law.

And so Jesus wants to clarify this and make sure no one gets the wrong impression about how he feels about the law or what he came to do with the law. In Matthew 5, which is very early in the Sermon on the Mount, he addresses this question so that no mistake might be made by his listeners on this. In Matthew 5, 17 and 18, Jesus said, Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets.

I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law until all is fulfilled. Now, a jot and a tittle, or a yod and a tittle, a yod was the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, comparable to our letter I, but it was just a little tiny mark in the Hebrew characters, smallest of the Hebrew characters, and so it represents the smallest detail in the law.

Not the smallest letter will be changed or will pass away. And a tittle was even smaller than a letter. In the Hebrew alphabet, as in the English alphabet, there were certain letters that were very like each other.

They resembled each other. A capital C in English looks very much like a capital G, or a capital O looks very much like a capital Q. The difference being in each case a single pen stroke. Just adding one little pen stroke to a capital C makes it a capital G. Similarly, a tiny pen stroke added to a capital O makes it a capital Q. Well, that's true in some of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet too.

They're very much like each other, but in some cases one letter differs from another in a mere single stroke of a pen, and that pen stroke was called a tittle. So when he says not one yod or one tittle will pass away, he means not the tiniest detail of the law. The smallest letter in the alphabet, or even the smallest pen stroke that's not even as big as a letter is going to change.

That's what we call a hyperbole. He's making an exaggerated statement. There were some things that did change in the law, but what he's trying to emphasize is there is no detail law that will pass away until it's been fulfilled.

That's what he says. I didn't come to destroy it. I did come to fulfill it, however.

And when it is fulfilled, well then there could be a change, but not until then. Not one yod or one tittle will be destroyed or will pass away until it is all fulfilled. Now we'll have much to say about this statement.

It is one of the most confusing statements Jesus made on this subject, and it is this statement, perhaps more than any other, that has led many people to feel that Jesus enforced the whole of the Old Testament law and that we should all keep it because Jesus said he didn't come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. But the question then, of course, has to be asked if we're going to say what did he mean? One of the things we have to ask what he meant by was what do you mean by fulfill? What does it mean to fulfill the law? Now notice he didn't say just to fulfill the law. He said he came to fulfill the law and the prophets.

Now the law and the prophets was sort of a shorthand way that the Jews used to speak of the whole Old Testament. There was the law of Moses. There were the prophets.

There were some other books too, but they were all just considered to be part of the law and the prophets, the whole of the Old Testament. And Jesus said he came to fulfill the law and the prophets, not to destroy them. Well, it may not be at first clear what it means to fulfill the law, but is it very difficult to know what it means to fulfill the prophets? We all know what it means that he fulfilled prophecy, right? I mean, the prophets prophesied something and he fulfilled it.

What does that mean? It means that he did the thing that was predicted, right? Or he was the person that was predicted. If somebody fulfills prophecy, we would, that's not hard to understand what that means. It means the prophecies anticipated something,

predicted something, and whoever fulfilled it, was that something or did that something that was predicted? So we're not really too much in a quandary to know what he meant when he said, I came to fulfill the prophets, because we've already looked in an earlier lecture.

In fact, it was, it was our last one before, before the previous one to this couple of lectures back, we talked about how Jesus fulfilled a great number of Old Testament prophecies. So we don't have to bother ourselves too much about what he meant by that to fulfill the prophets, but to fulfill the law is much less obvious. What does that mean? Well, there are at least three things it means biblically, and there are at least three ways he did fulfill the law according to scripture.

One of them is he fulfilled the law just the same way he fulfilled the prophets. That is to say that the prophets predicted something and he was that something. The law also predicted something.

The law did it in a different way, however. The prophets predicted Christ by actually uttering oracles, you know, the Messiah will be this way or that way or the other way. And he came and he did that.

The law predicted it non-verbally, more by types and shadows and portrayal by actions. You see, every time the Jews sacrificed a lamb, that looked forward to something. The lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.

Every time they celebrated the Passover, which was a ritual in their religion, that looked forward to something. Christ, our Passover, who is sacrificed for us, according to first Corinthians 5, 7. There's there were many things in the law that were very much like prophecies, but they weren't prophecies in the sense that they were verbalized. They were more like acted out prophecies that every time a Jew kept this ritual, he may or may not have known it, but this ritual was anticipatory.

It was it was foreshadowing something else and that something else was Christ. We read this to be the case, for example, in Colossians 2, verses 16 and 17. It says, so let no one judge you in food or in drink or regarding a festival or a new moon.

That was a special holy day each month for the Jews, the new moon or Sabbath's. Which all those things above mentioned are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Now, what he's saying is that these things foreshadowed something and the real thing that they foreshadowed was Christ.

Now, all the things he mentions there, I believe, are ceremonial type laws. But that's that was the nature of a ceremonial law, it and it pointed forward to something. Ceremonies and rituals are not arbitrary.

The only value in a religious ceremony is if it symbolizes something. Baptism is that way.

There's no particular virtue in getting wet, but but but baptism symbolizes something spiritual.

Doesn't it? I mean, different denominations have different explanations of what it symbolizes. Sometimes they think it symbolizes the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Other denominations believe it symbolizes cleansing from sin.

Other denominations believe that it symbolizes burial and resurrection with Christ. All of these could be true in some sense or some biblical support for each of those ideas. But the point that everyone agrees with is that baptism is symbolic for something.

It's not anything in itself. The water does you no good. There's no real change that takes place in a physical body when the physical water is applied in baptism.

But it is the value of it is its symbolism. Likewise, when you take the Lord's Supper, there is nothing magic in the elements that are eaten. At least as I understand the scriptures, there isn't.

Some groups think there is. But the fact of the matter is, many Protestants, and I'd have to class myself among those, read the scripture to say that these elements are symbolic of the body and the blood of Christ. And by eating these, we're not really doing anything that makes any change physically in us or in the elements.

But we're doing an action which itself points to something spiritual. That was the same thing in the Jewish rituals. When we talk about baptism and the Lord's Supper, we're talking about Christian rituals.

Actually, those are the only Christian rituals that I'm aware of that the Bible commands to be kept. But in the Old Testament, there are lots of rituals. They had to do with the way offerings were made, the way the priests dressed, the days of the year and the days of the month and the days of the week that special ceremonies were to be conducted, what was to be eaten day by day and never to be eaten and all those kinds of things.

Those things were in themselves all symbolic of something. And they were part of what we would usually call the ritual law. Now, what they were symbolic of, according to scripture, was Christ.

They were the shadow. He was the substance. He was the reality that that shadow was cast by.

They were a dim representation in ritual portrayal of something that has come clear and real in the person of Jesus. In that sense, he fulfilled the law the same way he fulfilled the prophets, because the prophecies predicted things about him. And sure enough, those things happened in him.

Likewise, the law, at they anticipated something future to themselves. And he was that thing. So he fulfilled those laws in the same way he fulfilled the prophets, because the laws were another kind of prophecy in a sense.

We call them types where something in the Old Testament provides a pattern that anticipates something bigger than itself, something more important, something more spiritual than itself. The rituals are not spiritual in themselves, but they represent spiritual realities. And the spiritual reality that the type represents is called the antitype.

These are biblical words. There's not just some theologians dreamed up. The Bible uses the word type in the Greek, and it uses the word antitype.

For example, it says in Romans chapter five, that Adam was a type of Christ, a type of him who was to come, in that both of them founded a whole new race of people. Adam founded the human race and Christ founded a race of Christians, a new humanity. And in that sense, Adam was a type of Christ.

He was he was a sort of a pattern of something that would be like Christ in that one respect. The word antitype is used in First Peter chapter three. I think it's verse 20 when it talks about or 21, where it says that there was in the flood, eight people were saved in the flood.

And it says there is an antitype baptism. OK, so it it specifically says in First Peter chapter three and in the Greek, the word antitype is used. It says that baptism is the antitype of the flood.

So that we have. This Old Testament reality is a type which foreshadows something. The New Testament reality is the antitype, the fulfillment of the type.

It will help you to know those words, since they are biblical words, and it'll also help you to understand certain concepts and the way that Old Testament things relate to New Testament realities. But that is certainly one way in which Jesus fulfilled the law, the same way he fulfilled the prophets, the types in the law and everything ritual in the law. Every ceremony was anticipatory of something bigger and more important than itself, something spiritual.

And Jesus was that thing that fulfilled it, the antitype. Now, secondly, he, in another sense, fulfilled the law in the sense that the word fulfill means to fill full. Jesus fulfilled the law by bringing the fullness or the inward part of the moral law to light through his teaching.

Now, I just mentioned the moral law. In the previous point we were talking about, we're talking about ceremonial law. It is generally recognized, and correctly so, that the laws in the Old Testament fall into various categories.

There are essentially three categories. One would be, as we said, the ceremonial law. Next comes what we now read in this point that we're discussing the moral law.

And there's a third category that we needn't necessarily discuss in too much detail, that's the civil law. I'll just say so that we can dispense with it, the consideration of the civil law of the Old Testament is that law that governed the magistrates, the judges, in giving them instructions about what penalties to impose on criminals. In other words, where the law said you shall not permit a witch to live, or an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, burn for burn, stroke for stroke, life for life.

These are laws that were civil. They had to do with if a judge is at the bench and somebody comes and brings a complaint to him and says, this man knocked out my eye. The judge then has to decide what penalty will be given to that man who knocked out his eye.

And the penalty is, well, you knocked out his eye, your eye gets knocked out. That's a civil law. That's not for me to go out and knock out people's eyes or to retaliate if people do things wrong to me.

And Jesus made that clear in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, you've heard it was said an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth. But I say, don't resist the man.

If he strikes you in one cheek, turn the other cheek. Now, Jesus was not saying that in terms of civil justice, the eye for an eye, tooth for tooth is a bad law. It's actually a perfectly just law.

And when it comes to magistrates measuring out penalties for criminals, the Old Testament law, the civil laws are quite really just and righteous. But Jesus was saying that doesn't mean that you follow this as your moral code, that if someone hits you, you hit them back. It's one thing to say the civil magistrate should do such and such to a criminal.

It's another thing to say that you and your personal relations with someone else need to retaliate in this way. You could, after all, absorb the injury rather than inflict it. That's what Jesus seems to be saying there.

But we need to understand that some of the laws in the Old Testament are civil laws. And do they apply today? Well, I don't think they do. Although I would say this much, that if a person was a governor today or a lawmaker, a legislator, he could hardly do better than to make laws that agreed with the laws, the civil laws God gave Moses.

The Bible itself says they were perfect laws. Can't do better than perfect. And therefore, when you read, you know that if a person is a homosexual, you should stone them to death.

If a person is an adulterer, you should stone them to death. The law says that. That is a civil law.

That is defining the penalties for certain criminal actions in the law. And that was for the magistrates to deal with. It's not for me to go out and find homosexuals and stone them or adulterers and stone them.

That's not my business. And those laws are a separate category than most of the law of Moses. So that's the third category.

We've got ceremonial laws, we've got moral laws, and we've got civil laws. And I just want to say to dispense with the category of civil laws is that which the magistrates or the judges or the rulers were supposed to be guided by in terms of how they would punish criminals. That's not our business.

We're not them. But the ceremonial laws and the moral laws definitely need to be taken some serious consideration of because the ceremonial laws governed the religious life of the Jews. The moral laws governed their ethical life or their moral life.

And there is a difference between religion and morality or righteousness. Religion can be defined in terms of rituals that have nothing to do with basic good and evil. The issue of whether a person should slay a lamb that's two years old or a lamb that's one year old, and the law does make a difference between those two things.

The difference is not a moral difference. There's nothing intrinsically evil about slaying a lamb that's one year old or one that's two years old. But one of those would be right and the other wrong depending on whether it was commanded.

But the command does not rest on some basic moral thing that governs the whole universe. It is in the nature of ceremonial laws that the only thing that determined their content is whatever it is they're supposed to symbolize. They have to do a certain way for the symbolic value of it.

For instance, Moses, part of the ceremonial law was the tabernacle and all the ritual at the tabernacle. And when God told Moses, build the tabernacle, what did he do? He showed him a pattern up on the mountain. He said, make sure that when you make the tabernacle, you make it exactly according to the pattern that I showed you on the mountain.

Why is that so important? Well, the writer of Hebrews tells us that in Hebrews eight, he says, well, the reason that God said, make it according to the pattern is because it was a picture of heavenly things. It was a spiritual illustration. And if you make the pattern wrong, you have the picture wrong.

You're going to misrepresent the spiritual things and obviously spiritual things. If God

wants to communicate them, better be communicated accurately because wrong spiritual information can be very damaging. So the tabernacle would be a very good example of ceremonial law.

Make it this way. Don't make it that way. It has to be this many cubits long, not that many cubits long.

The curtains have to be made out of ram skins dyed red, not camel skins dyed red. Camel skins dyed red probably would provide as much protection from the wind and rain as the ram skins. But the difference is the symbolism.

The ritual has to be done just so because of what it is intended to symbolize. You can't go messing with it, can't change it. If you change it, you muddle the message.

But the point is. The ceremonial law, its validity and its inflexibility is based on the inflexibility of the thing it's supposed to portray, whereas morals are of a different sort. Morality is simply the issues of what is right and what is wrong.

And things are right or they are wrong intrinsically insofar as they agree with or disagree with the character of God, because God is right. Everything he is is right. There's no evil in him.

God is light and in him there's no darkness at all. It says there is no unrighteousness in him. Everything about God is holy and just and true and right.

Therefore, whatever is true of God is morally righteous and good. Whatever is contrary to his character is morally perverted and wrong. Okay, now you can see then that moral laws have a basis that's different than ceremonial laws.

I want to talk about moral laws for a minute here because there are laws that you can easily tell which laws are moral and which are not, it seems to me, by asking the question, could this law have been made different than it was by God without any violation of his character? And the answer to that will tell you whether you're looking at a moral law or a non-moral law. For example, could God have said, I want you to come and present yourself before me on the second day of the month, every month, rather than as he did say, he didn't say, I want you to come on the first day of the month. Okay.

He said to come on the first day of the month, but what if he had said the second day of the month? Would that somehow throw the universe into chaos morally? No, there's really nothing intrinsically immoral about coming to God on the second day of the month. That's just not what he said to do. He could have done that if he wanted to, and it would have done no violence to who he is, right? I mean, he could have said, keep the third day holy instead of the seventh day holy.

And while that would, of course, fail to represent correctly the truths he wanted the

Sabbath law to represent, it would not have violated his own moral nature in any way. I mean, he had the right to say, keep the third day holy or the fourth day holy. And he chose the seventh day for the purpose of conveying something, but there's nothing in his innate goodness that would have been violated if he had said, let's make it the third day instead of the seventh day.

You see, that makes it ceremonial because it is, in a sense, something that there's a degree of flexibility, that God could have done it differently without any great harm to his own character. But let me ask you this. Could he have said, thou shalt steal or thou shalt commit adultery? No, I don't think so.

Do you know why? Because that adultery is an act of unfaithfulness to a pledge, a vow. There's a marriage vow. Adultery violates that vow.

That's an act of unfaithfulness. Unfaithfulness is contrary to the character of God. God is faithful.

That's why he requires us to be faithful. He says, be holy as I am holy. What if he is faithful, then we're required to be faithful.

If he is just, then we're required to be just. That's why he has said, thou shalt not murder. Why? By definition, murder is when you kill someone who didn't do anything worthy of death.

That's injustice. An innocent victim. He doesn't deserve to have you murder him.

And you did it anyway. That's unjust. God is a God of justice.

Anything that's unjust is contrary to God and therefore is immoral. Like I say, you can easily answer the question, is this law of the Old Testament moral in nature or is it ceremonial by asking this related question? Could this law have been given differently by God without any violation of his basic character? And if the answer is yes, yeah, that could have been different and it wouldn't violate his character. Then you're looking at a ceremonial law.

It doesn't embody anything that's intrinsically righteous. It has to do with, you know, it's a bit, it has an arbitrariness about it that God chose that symbol. Instead of choosing a lamb, he could have chosen, you know, a guinea pig if he wanted to.

It would have been no problem. I mean, it might have been less a picture of Christ than a lamb would be, but there'd be nothing immoral about God saying, I want you to sacrifice guinea pigs instead of saying, I want you to sacrifice lambs. In God's nature, there'd be no violation of his justice or his faithfulness or his righteousness or his holiness or his love had he said, you know, sacrificed a guinea pig.

Now he didn't, and of course people should do what he said, not what he didn't say to do, but it's clear that laws like that are ceremonial because they could have been different without violating who God is. But laws that are moral laws, morality is rooted in who God is, his character. And any commandment that God could never have given otherwise, because it would have been a violation of his character to do so, is a moral law.

It embodies a universal moral truth. So that God is love. Any act that is contrary to love is an immoral act.

God is faithful. Any act of unfaithfulness is an immoral act. God is merciful.

Any unmercifulness is immoral. Any injustice is immoral. Any pride is immoral because it goes against the basic reality of humility, which is part of God, by the way, the Bible talks about it.

I mean, Jesus, is he humble or what? I mean, the character of God is humble. That might seem strange to say that, but the Bible says he humbles himself to behold the affairs of men. He comes down to our level.

He humbled himself and became a man. Yeah, there's great humility in God. God's character defines moral absolutes.

Now we should realize that that being so, moral absolutes can't change regardless which testament you're in. Whatever is true to the character of God is always true to the character of God because God doesn't change. He's the same God all the time.

And for that reason, any moral commandments of the Old Testament, which express the character of God and God's moral requirements upon man, those laws are unchangeable. And Jesus never once altered any moral command of the Old Testament, but Jesus often challenged and was in the face of those who wanted to defend the ceremonial aspects. Although in many cases, he complied with ceremony, but in terms of teaching his disciples what they should do in their life of discipleship, he never ever gave a command to observe any of the ceremonial law of the Old Testament.

As a matter of fact, in some cases, he declared us free from it. On one case, he said, it's not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles him, but it was what comes out of his mouth defiles him. And it says in Mark chapter seven, that when he said this specifically, when he said, it's not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles him, he was thereby declaring all foods clean.

Now, before he made that statement, not all foods were clean. The law required abstinence from certain foods, but Jesus, by saying, whatever goes in your mouth, doesn't defile you. He's saying all foods, nothing's good.

You can eat anything and it won't defile you. If it's just something that goes into your mouth. And that is why Paul, who always was, I believe, representing correctly what Jesus taught on every subject that he addressed over in first Timothy chapter four said that there would arise in the last times people departing from the faith and some giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

Among other things, they would teach verse three, they'd forbid to marry and they'd command to abstain from foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. Verse four says first Timothy four, four for every creature of God is good and nothing is to be refused. If it is received with thanksgiving.

Now, there were certain creatures of God that Jews were not permitted to eat, but Jesus declared all foods clean. And so Paul could say, every creature of God is clean. Every creature of God is good for food.

That means you can eat rattlesnake if you want to. The Jews couldn't, but you can, you can eat pork. Why? Because Jesus did not enforce the ceremonial laws of diet.

In fact, he abrogated them. Now there are, I'll get around to this. I got to come back to this later, but in the point number two there in your notes that I started from here, it says he, he brought the fullness or the inward part of the moral law to light through his teaching.

The example I give, there is an example I made reference to earlier in the sermon that says, you have heard that it was said, thou shalt not murder. You've heard that it was said, thou shalt not commit adultery. Well, those are both what, what kind of laws are those? They're not ceremonial.

They're, they're moral. Murder is immoral because it is an injustice and God is just. And whatever is an injustice is immoral because it's not like God.

Adultery is unfaithfulness. God is faithful. Unfaithfulness is not like God and therefore it's immoral.

So these are moral laws. Now to say that Jesus fulfilled these laws, how? Not only by keeping them himself, but he filled them full. He brought the inward part.

He said, okay, listen, this business about murder, it's all true. If you murder your brother, you'll be in danger of the judgment. But let me tell you something else.

If you're angry at your brother without a cause, you'll also be in danger of the judgment. There's more to it than just this outward business of killing people has to do with what's going on inside, in the heart. Likewise, this adultery thing, it's true.

You shall not commit adultery. You commit adultery with your wife, you've sinned

against God and that's altogether true, but there's more to it than meets the eye. That adultery can take place in the heart and be equally offensive in the sight of God.

It can be equally a violation of that command. So what he did, you see, the Pharisees of his time taught the law too, but they taught it just in terms of outward behavior inside. They could be like whitewashed tombs, all cleaned up on the outside, inwardly full of dead men's bones and full of all wickedness, like a cup that was washed on the outside, Jesus compared them to, but full of sewage and swill and horrible, defiling stuff on the inside.

That was Pharisee religion. They taught the law as an outward thing. They didn't touch on the issue of the heart.

Jesus taught the law as an outward thing, but he also said, but there's an inward part. Let me give you, let me fill this cup full. This is your concept of the law of the Pharisees is like an outward shelf, empty, empty of any moral content.

It's just all outward behavior, but I'm going to fill this shelf full. I'm going to tell you what the spiritual inward morality is that God's concerned about. And so in this sense, he certainly fulfilled the law.

He fulfilled the moral law by informing us of its fullness of its inward spiritual part, as well as the outward part that it already was known to possess. Now there's another way in which he fulfilled the law. And that was that he inaugurated the eternal spiritual realities that were anticipated by the ceremonial laws.

I remember I said that the ceremonial laws foreshadowed something. They foreshadowed in every sense, they foreshadowed something related to Christ, but different ceremonies foreshadowed different things about Christ, different spiritual truths and realities about Christ and his program. In Philippians 3, 3, Paul says, we are the circumcision.

That is, we are the true circumcision. And by the way, he's saying that deliberately in contrast to the Jews who were physically circumcised, but we're not what Paul was calling the true circumcision. The Jews were called the circumcision, but Paul denied that most Jews really belong to that category, deserve that name.

He says, we are the circumcision. Who? Well, we who worship God in the spirit. That's a spiritual thing, not physical.

Who rejoice in Christ Jesus. Okay, that's Christians who know Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh. The Jew had confidence in the fact that his flesh had been circumcised and that somehow set him apart because he had kept that ritual of circumcision.

Believe me, that's a ritual. Circumcision is not a moral law. It is a ritual.

It represents something spiritual. And Paul says, you know, we're the ones who have been circumcised in the, in the, in the spiritual sense that that was a ritual to, it was, they can circumcise their flesh and have confidence in that all they want, but we're the ones who really are circumcised in the way that that typified. We are the ones who have the spiritual circumcision that it looked forward to.

It anticipated. Now what's interesting is that in the old Testament, you'll find that circumcision is one of those many things that the law says, you shall keep this forever through all your generations. God said that to Abraham in Genesis 17, he says, I want you and everyone, every male in your household to be circumcised on the eighth day.

This is a sign of the covenant between me and you for all your generations forever. Now is today part of forever? Well, yeah, today, you know, 1998, that's part of forever. But, but the law said circumcision was to be enforced forever.

And yet you read Paul in Galatians saying, if you circumcise yourselves, Christ avails you nothing. And he actually advises his readers not to be circumcised. Well, how can this be? Well, there's other things in the Old Testament that are said to be forever.

You know what, when God, when Solomon dedicated his temple, do you know what God said? He says, I'm going to dwell in this temple forever. Do you want to know something? You go over to the temple site where Solomon built his temple. You know what you'll find there? No temple is there.

Got destroyed. 586 BC got rebuilt after that, but it got destroyed again in 70 AD. It hasn't been built since.

There's no temple there. And yet God told Solomon, I will dwell in this temple forever. God said to the Levites, the sons of Aaron, I will choose you to be my priests forever.

Again, the word forever is used, but are there sons of Aaron who are priests of God today? No. In fact, the New Testament teaches that that that priesthood is over with. There's a new priesthood with Jesus as the high priest of the order of Melchizedek and the Aaronic priesthood is passe.

It's over. Now, how can it be that the Old Testament said these things are forever and yet they're not now? Isn't this part of forever? How about when he said he's giving the children of Israel the land in which they were soldiers to be their possession forever? The land of Israel. And yet for centuries they were not in their land.

And even most of them still are not. And even now they don't have unchallenged possession of it. I mean, they're there and they have a government there, official, but there's still a lot of uncertainty.

It's the borders are still being disputed. And there's, you know, the question is why? Why did God drive them out of their land almost 2000 years ago if he said he was giving it to them forever? You see, there's many things. The Sabbath, the Sabbath was said to be an ordinance to be kept forever.

Now, but most Christians don't keep Saturday as a Sabbath. What do we do with all this forever stuff? You know, I mean, well, there's, this is it. Those are all ceremonial things.

Circumcision, like sacrifices. Passover, by the way, he said, you keep the Passover forever, year by year, forever. Passover, sacrifices, circumcision, temple worship, Jewish priests offering sacrifices, the land of Canaan being perpetually theirs, the keeping of Sabbath, all those things are said to be forever, but none of them, it appears to me, are carried over into the New Testament as valid.

Why? Because Jesus fulfilled them. But by fulfilling them, he didn't abrogate them. He didn't destroy them.

He inaugurated the spiritual reality, the eternal reality that they were imaging. And in a sense, circumcision is still practiced, but not in its original mode. It has had a transformation to a spiritual mode.

We still are to be circumcised, but in the heart now. The Jews were told to circumcise their flesh. We are to circumcise the heart.

There is still a Sabbath for us to keep. It says in Hebrews chapter four in verse nine, there remains a keeping of Sabbath for the people of God. But it goes on to say, our Sabbath is that we have ceased from our own works and we trust in his finished work.

It's a spiritual reality that is our Sabbath. And every time the Jews kept a day of the week as a Sabbath, they were keeping a ceremony that pointed toward this spiritual reality. That spirituality has been introduced in Christ.

He fulfilled it. He brought it into its fulfilled condition. From the natural ceremonial state that it was observed in the Old Testament, he's moved it into its eternal spiritual mode.

What about the temple and the priesthood? Well, there's still a temple and priesthood. The temple of Solomon was a type of the temple of the Holy Spirit, which today is made up of believers. We're living stones built into a spiritual priesthood.

It says that in first Peter chapter two and verse five, Peter says, you also as living stones are being built up a spiritual house, a spiritual temple. A holy priesthood, there's the priesthood and the temple. It's no longer Solomon's physical temple or the physical Aaronites or Levites who are the priests.

It's now a spiritual priesthood, a spiritual house to offer up spiritual sacrifices. We don't

offer up physical sacrifices anymore, either. There's a spiritual temple, a spiritual priesthood, spiritual sacrifices, all of this acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

So he's the one who brought about this arrangement. He's the one who fulfilled those things. But by fulfilling them, we mean he oversaw the transfer from the ceremonial mode of these things to the spiritual eternal mode.

He brought about the eternal spiritual realities that the law anticipated. These things that were forever are forever, but in a different mode now. They were not forever to be kept in the ceremonial way.

Jesus fulfilled that by bringing in the spiritual. Likewise, the land of Canaan. There is a spiritual land that Jesus has brought that is now the inheritance.

See, the Jews looked at the land of Canaan as their inheritance. We now have an inheritance in God in heavenly places. It even says in Hebrews 11 that Abraham was looking not for an earthly country, although it could have fooled me reading Genesis, looked like he was looking at an earthly country, but the writer of Hebrews under inspiration said, no, he was looking for a heavenly country.

The land of Canaan was a type of a heavenly inheritance. So what we see is that Jesus did not abolish the law or destroy it. He simply oversaw the transfer from the ceremonial aspects that were symbolic to the spiritual realities that are permanent, that they symbolize.

In that sense, he fulfilled it, all of it. Now, what are we to do with the Ten Commandments? I mean, I have raised several times this matter of the Sabbath without really answering what we're to say about this. Remember the questions I started with, are the laws of diet and the Jewish festival observance as binding upon the believer today as the Ten Commandments? Well, the question would be best answered by asking, are the Ten Commandments moral law or ceremonial law? Now, you might say, well, that's easy.

They're moral. I mean, murder, adultery, theft, bearing false witness, those are moral issues. Well, those indeed are moral issues.

What about Sabbath? Is that moral or ceremonial? Well, it shouldn't be too hard to answer. Just apply the test. Could God, had he wished, have said, thou shalt murder? No, that would violate his own nature, his own character.

Could he have said, keep the third day holy or keep the first, third, fifth and seventh days holy if he'd want to? Yes, that would violate nothing in him. What's that tell us? The Sabbath law is not of a moral nature. It is symbolic.

And I already mentioned Hebrews 4, 9 tells us what it symbolizes. There's a spiritual

Sabbath that we keep now, the rest that we enter when we rest in the finished work of Christ and cease from our own works. The Jews symbolize that by ritual, by stopping doing any kind of manual labor for a day out of every week.

God told them to, because that was to anticipate this. Now, what I'm saying to you is that Jesus' words are what we follow. And what you will find is that Jesus in his teaching never commanded his disciples to keep any of the ceremonial laws.

But he did command to keep the moral laws. Why? Because morality can't change. Morality is rooted in who God is.

He doesn't change. So, whatever was immoral in the Old Testament is still immoral today and always will be. Whatever is unlike God is always wrong.

Now, it's interesting if you study the teachings of Jesus vis-a-vis the Ten Commandments, that nine of the Ten Commandments apparently are moral in nature because he repeated them. Jesus agreed that you shall not murder. He agreed you should not commit adultery.

He spoke against bearing false witness and taking the name of the Lord your God in vain and disobedience to parents. He spoke about all these things. Covetousness, theft.

He condemned all these things. Nine of the Ten Commandments were reinstated by Jesus or simply carried forward into his program because why? They were moral in nature. And morality does not change.

Righteousness is still righteousness. Always was, always will be. But, interestingly enough, he never ever told his disciples to keep the Sabbath.

A strange omission, really, especially in view of the fact that the Sabbath was not something that never came up in his ministry. The Sabbath observance came up frequently in his ministry. In fact, it seems like he made it an issue with the Pharisees on a regular basis.

The Jewish rabbis had taught that among the things you can't do on the Sabbath day would be you cannot heal. A physician cannot work a cure on the Sabbath day unless it is a life-threatening condition that could not wait. You know, a person's going to die.

He's been injured terribly. If you don't treat him right now on the Sabbath day, he's going to die before tomorrow. Then they said it's okay.

It's like pulling a lamb out of the ditch on the Sabbath day. You'd probably starve or die of the elements or something if you don't get it out. It's an emergency.

Emergency procedures were permitted by the rabbis to be done on the Sabbath. But any condition, any physical condition that was not an emergency and which could as easily

be done on another day than the Sabbath was forbidden to be done on the Sabbath. It was considered to be working on the Sabbath.

Well, Jesus did all kinds of cures on the Sabbath that he could have waited the next day to do. A man with a withered hand, he had a withered hand for ages. Why do that on the Sabbath? Why not wait till the next day? He deliberately did on the Sabbath.

The man who was by the pool for 40 years couldn't move. Jesus walks up to him on the Sabbath day and says, get up, take up your bed and walk. He heals him.

He could have waited for the next day. He was there in Jerusalem for a whole week. Why didn't he do it one of those other days? Jesus deliberately again and again and again, challenged the Pharisees on this matter of the Sabbath and was continually being accused of violating the Sabbath for that reason.

Now, since the Sabbath came up in discussion a great deal in Jesus' ministry, what's fascinating is he never, at any point, told his disciples to keep it. Even though he did tell his disciples to keep other things that are found in the Ten Commandments, he never said that they should keep Sabbath. And that's the more remarkable when you realize how often the Sabbath came up for discussion.

He discussed it many times. Let me show you what he did teach about the Sabbath. And it's quite clear that Jesus believed the Sabbath commandment was a ceremonial law, not a moral law.

And that changes the way we understand its continuing relevance. In Matthew chapter 12, beginning with the first verse, it says, at that time, Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. And it's the Sabbath day, so something's going to happen, some kind of a confrontation.

Hardly ever mentions it's a Sabbath unless there's going to be a confrontation about it. And his disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. Now, this was technically harvesting, something you don't do on the Sabbath.

And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath. But he said to them, have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those that were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath, the priests of the temple profane the Sabbath? That means they work on the Sabbath, they profane it by working on it. And they're blameless.

Yet I say to you that in this place, there is one greater than the temple. But if you had known what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Now, what's this all about? The disciples are accused of breaking the Sabbath. Jesus defends them. Those today who tell us that we should keep the seventh-day Sabbath because it's in the Ten Commandments usually say, well, Jesus kept the Sabbath.

In fact, they always say that. I've been in discussion with them many, many times. I get calls from them on the air.

I've confronted them on the streets. I mean, there's a whole bunch of people out there who want to put you under the Sabbath law and make you keep the seventh-day Sabbath. And invariably, if I say, well, why do you keep Sabbath? They say, well, we keep Sabbath because Jesus did.

So that's interesting. I never read of Jesus keeping Sabbath. All I read of it is him continually being accused of breaking it.

I never read anywhere that he kept it. Now, of course, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath, but the law, Moses never said, go to the synagogue on the Sabbath. He wasn't, by doing that, wasn't keeping the Sabbath law.

He was going there because there's a crowd to preach to. Paul did the same thing. He preached in the synagogues too.

But that's not the same thing as saying, you know, he's keeping the Sabbath. Keeping the Sabbath meant you don't work on the Sabbath. And it's interesting that on one occasion when Jesus actually healed the man at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath, and he was criticized for doing it, the Pharisee said, why do you heal on the Sabbath? You're not supposed to work on the Sabbath.

Jesus said, well, my father works every day and I work. Whatever I do, I do whatever my father does. My father does about as much work on the Sabbath as any other day.

And I'm just going to copy him. I'll do whatever he does. In other words, I'll work every day, too.

Don't make a distinction. God does the same amount of work on the Sabbath and the same kind of work on the Sabbath as he does any other time. And I'm his follower.

I'm his son. I learned how to do what he does the way he does it. And therefore, what he does, I do.

What Jesus was essentially saying is, I'm not going to make a difference because God doesn't. My father works the same kind of work and as much work on Saturdays as he does any other day of the week. And I'm his follower.

I will do the same kind of work and the same amount of work on Saturdays as any other day of the week. This is in John chapter 5, verse 17 and following, if you want to read

what Jesus said on that. He indicated that he does not need to keep Sabbath.

His father doesn't, so he doesn't. He doesn't observe Sabbath as a different kind of day than other days. He doesn't do any less work or any different kind of work on the Sabbath than he does on other days, any more than his father does.

He gives us an example of a son being apprenticed by his father. He says his son doesn't know how to do his father's work. So his father shows him and whatever the father does, his son does the same thing in the same way.

Father loves the son and shows him everything he does. What he's saying is I'm like an apprentice. As a child, Jesus was an apprentice in a carpenter shop.

His father, so to speak, Joseph taught him the ropes, how to make things out of wood. Jesus knew what it was like to be apprenticed by a father, but now he's following his father, God, and he's learning the ropes. He's learning the techniques.

How does my father do it? Oh, he works Saturdays, then I work Saturdays. Whatever he does, I do. I'm just copying him.

It says in Ephesians 5.1, be followers of God as dear children. We're supposed to imitate him. Jesus said, I'm doing it.

He works on Sabbath, I work on Sabbath. In other words, God doesn't observe a Sabbath different than any other day of the week. And therefore, Jesus said, I don't either.

Now notice here, when Jesus' disciples were criticized for breaking the Sabbath. Sabbath keeping people today, when they talk about this story, they say, well, the Pharisees were wrong. Obviously, Jesus rebuked them and criticized them.

He said that they've condemned the guiltless, meaning his disciples were in fact guiltless. But they say the reason the Pharisees were wrong was not that they felt that people should keep the Sabbath. Of course, we know people should keep the Sabbath.

That's their presupposition. But where the Pharisees erred was that they were imposing on the disciples traditions about how the Sabbath should be kept. In other words, it was in fact wrong to do labor on the Sabbath.

But who's to say that picking a head of grain and eating it is labor? I mean, that was a rabbinic, a rabbi's interpretation. And what they say is that Jesus, of course, wanted his disciples to keep the Sabbath, but he didn't care whether they kept the rabbi's interpretations of the Sabbath. So what they would say about this passage is Jesus defended his disciples because they didn't break the Sabbath.

They only broke the Pharisees' opinion of how the Sabbath should be kept. And that's all. But that's not how he defended them.

When he defended them, he says, have you not heard what David did? In other words, this is a parallel situation. David was hungry. My disciples are hungry.

Parallel situation. It says specifically, Matthew 12 and verse one, his disciples were hungry and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. Jesus answers and says in verse three, have you not read what David did when he was hungry? Okay, here's a parallel.

My disciples are doing something parallel to what David did. Both were hungry. Now, what did David do when he was hungry? He went into the tabernacle.

He ate the showbread. Showbread. The law commands, not the rabbis or their interpretation of it, the law itself, ceremonial law that is, commands that only the priests are supposed to eat that showbread.

It's 12 loaves of bread made every week, put out on the table of showbread at the end of the week, the priests ate them. No one else was allowed to. David wasn't a priest.

He wasn't a Levite. He was of the tribe of Judah, not of Levi. He had no rights to eat that food under the law.

He violated the law by eating it. He did not violate the rabbi's opinions about the law. He violated the actual law.

And Jesus said, this is parallel to what my disciples are doing. Now, what he's saying is no one really blames David for this and nor should they. Why? Because the law he violated was a ceremonial law, not a moral law.

And his hunger, that is his need, his human need at that time, preempted the need to observe ceremonies and rituals. Now, on the other hand, if David had, when he was hungry, broken into someone's house, murdered them and taken their food, I don't think Jesus would have made a parallel here, because no one would say that was the right thing to do for David, just like it wasn't right for David to take a man's wife and kill the man. We don't say that everything David did is okay.

Some things he did were definitely wrong. And had David broken into someone's house when he was hungry and stolen their food and killed them while they tried to resist him, this would not be a good illustration of David doing a right thing or an okay thing. He would have to be condemned for that act.

Why? Because murder and theft are moral issues. But what David did was violate a ceremonial issue. No morals were violated here.

Just a ceremony was disregarded by his eating that. Now, if that is in Jesus' mind parallel to what the disciples are doing, then Jesus isn't saying to the Pharisees, you guys are all

wrong about the Sabbath business. You think that eating grain on the Sabbath like this is breaking.

That's not breaking the Sabbath. Yeah, there is such a thing as breaking the Sabbath. I don't want my disciples to do that.

But what they did isn't really a violation. That's just a violation of traditions. He could have said that if that's what he thought.

But he didn't say that. He didn't even say anything like that. He said something very different.

He said David broke the ceremonial law when he was hungry and that's okay. My disciples are doing something equivalent. They're also breaking a ceremonial law, which law happened to be the Sabbath.

Okay. And he says they're guiltless. You're condemning the guiltless.

David was guiltless. My disciples are guiltless. Parallel situation.

Now, he says there in verse five, or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath, the priests of the temple profane the Sabbath and are blameless. Now the Pharisees, Jesus knew what they'd say to that. So he anticipated it.

They would say, of course, well, that's different because they're in the temple. I mean, what they're doing is the work of the temple. That's very important.

It's more important than stopping it because it's a Sabbath. I mean, they offer sacrifices six days a week and Sabbath comes, they offer even twice as many sacrifices. As a matter of fact, under the law, the priest worked twice as hard on Sabbath.

Now Jesus said, what? They're working on the Sabbath. They're profaning the Sabbath, but you call them blameless and they are blameless. Why? Well, the Pharisees thought the answer is well, because the temple, the work of the temple is just so elevated, so important that the Sabbath law could not be made to interfere with the necessities of the temple functioning.

And therefore, because it's temple work, the priests can break the Sabbath to do it. But before the Pharisees could give that argument, Jesus anticipates it and says, but I say to you that in this place, there's one greater than the temple, meaning himself. Now, what's that got to do with this whole discussion here? Simply this.

If you will excuse the priests for breaking the Sabbath because they're doing temple work. Well, I'm more important than the temple and my disciples do my work. If the temple is important enough that those who are going about the temple's business can break the Sabbath, then I'm more important than the temple.

And those who are going about my business can break the Sabbath for the same reason. And he states in this conclusion in verse eight, for the son of man is Lord, even of the Sabbath. Now, what does that mean? He's the Lord.

Is Jesus the Lord of Monday? Yes. What does that mean about Monday? What does that say about me on Monday? What am I supposed to do on Monday? Well, if he's my Lord, I guess I'm supposed to obey him, right? Supposed to do whatever he wants me to do. He's the Lord on Monday.

How about Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday or Friday? All those days he's Lord. What about the Sabbath? What about Saturday? Is he the Lord of that day too? Yes, even of the Sabbath. Which means what? That what I'm supposed to do any day, namely follow my Lord, is what I'm even the Sabbath.

For me to go about my father's business, for me to obey my Lord, Jesus, is not something I do six days a week and then suddenly on the Sabbath I can't obey him anymore because he's not the Lord that day. The Sabbath is the Lord. No, the son of man is the Lord, even of that day.

Obeying him on that day is all that matters, just like obeying him any other day is all that matters. The whole duty of the Christian is to obey Jesus. And if the disciples were doing something that Jesus found okay, he gave them permission, he didn't criticize what they're doing, then they're okay.

Even if what they did did violate technically the law of Sabbath, that's a ceremonial law and Jesus has Lordship superiority over that. Now notice they weren't really doing something they had to do to survive. No one's going to starve in 24 hours.

But they were hungry and Jesus had compassion on their hunger and it was more important to him that they not go hungry. Then that they keep the Sabbath. And as long as they were doing under his supervision, doing what he wanted them to do, they're doing fine no matter what day of the week it is.

He's the Lord of every day, including the Sabbath. And that's what he said. Now, further on down the same chapter, another Sabbath, actually, when he had departed, verse nine from there, Matthew 12, nine, he went into their synagogue and behold, there was a man who had a withered hand and they asked him saying, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath that they might accuse him because they believed it was not.

They knew he believed it was. Then he said to them, what man is there among you who has one sheep? And if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not lay hold of it and lift it out? Or how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Notice this last line, verse 12. Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

What did Jesus declare about Sabbath observance? What can you do and what can you

not do on the Sabbath? Obviously the whole law of the Sabbath is about what you can't do on the Sabbath. Well, what can you do on the Sabbath according to Jesus? You can do good on the Sabbath. Well, what do I do the rest of the week? Bad? No, I do good the other days of the week too.

In other words, I'm supposed to do the same thing on the Sabbath as any other day. You're never allowed to do bad. And you know, in the Bible, it doesn't ever endorse bad behavior, but it endorses good.

Therefore, if I'm being good, that is obeying my Lord, Jesus Christ, on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, then on the Sabbath, it's lawful for me to do the same thing on the Sabbath. It's lawful to do good on the Sabbath. And that's what I do all the time.

Hopefully, if I'm a Christian following Jesus. So what Jesus is saying is that the Sabbath is irrelevant to his Lordship. That when you become a Christian, you're no longer under the Ten Commandments per se, you're under Jesus.

Now, if Jesus said, don't commit murder, don't commit adultery and so forth, then you don't do those things. It's coincidental. It may be that that agrees with the Ten Commandments or some of the commandments, but he never said that you must keep the Sabbath.

He specifically indicated you don't need to so long as you're doing whatever he wants you to do. And that is why Paul in Colossians, in a verse we looked at a moment ago, compared Sabbath keeping with other festival days and dietary laws, which we all acknowledge are no longer binding on us. He put the Sabbath in the same category with the others and said these were shadow.

Colossians 2, 16 and 17. Let me look at that just one more time. We looked at it earlier.

He said, so let no one judge you in food or in drink or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which all of those things are a shadow of things to come, but the substances of Christ. All those things were ceremonial laws, food, drink, regulations, that's ceremonial. Festivals, new moons, that's ceremonial.

Sabbaths in the same list. Now, Sabbath keeping people are very aware of this verse and very troubled by it, and therefore they reinterpret it. They say, well, Sabbaths here doesn't mean the Lord's Sabbath, which is every seventh day.

Sabbaths here, they say, refers to special Sabbaths that were part of the festival week. As you read through the law, you'll discover that there were three different weeks during the year that were festival weeks for the Jews. There was Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.

And these were different weeks at different points on the calendar. And they were week-long festivals. And the first day and the last day of these special weeks were days in which they were supposed to act like it was a Sabbath day.

In other words, you were to do no work and you're supposed to gather for a holy convocation on the first and the last days of these weeks. So that these, the first and last days of these weeks, regardless whether they fell on Saturday or any other day of the week, they were treated as if they were Sabbaths. Now, the Sabbath keepers today say, well, when Paul says, don't let people judge you about Sabbaths, he means those special days related to the festival week.

However, I don't think that's a very correct way of looking at it for several reasons. One, although it is true those first and last days of the festival weeks were to be treated as days for no work, just like Sabbaths, there's no instance in the Old Testament where those days are called Sabbaths. The word Sabbaths is never used concerning those days, only concerning the Saturday Sabbath.

And therefore, it'd be very strange for Paul to use the word Sabbath here in a way that was never used in the Bible previously. It may be that those special days in the festival week were to be treated essentially the same way as Sabbaths, but they were never called Sabbaths. So why should Paul call them that here? A second consideration is that Jesus himself, as we saw a moment ago, considered the Sabbath to be in the class of ceremonial laws, the seventh day Sabbath, the one that his disciples had broken.

It was as far as he was concerned, a ceremonial law, like eating showbread in the temple when you're not a priest. And that's what Paul would be saying here. I mean, these are all ceremonies.

He's including Sabbaths with it, quite consistent with Jesus' teaching on the subject. A third consideration is this. There's a pattern to the list.

He's got food and drink, but then he's got festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths. Well, a festival was a yearly occurrence. A new moon was a monthly occurrence, and a Sabbath was a weekly occurrence.

He's talking about all the special days that the Jews observed as holy days, whether they occurred yearly, monthly, or weekly. It is most natural, and anything contrary to this would be very unnatural. It is most natural to say that Paul is talking about the Sabbaths of the seventh day, and it makes sense that he would.

Now, there's another thing. Look at Romans chapter 14. Romans chapter 14, Paul is talking about differences in personal convictions that different Christians have in the Church of Rome.

Some have convictions about some things, and others don't share those convictions. An

example he gives is in verse 5. One man esteems one day above another. Another esteems every day alike.

Now, here you have a case where some people in the church don't honor one day above another. To them, all days are just alike. Jesus is the Lord of every day, including Sabbath.

But there's others in the church that aren't quite that liberated, and they do still observe one day special. No doubt the Sabbath is in view here. It's the most natural thing to assume.

Now, who's right? Those who keep the Sabbath or those who don't? Well, Paul simply says in verse 5, let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind. In other words, do whatever you're fully persuaded you must do. Follow your own conscience in this matter.

If your conscience will not allow you to stop keeping Sabbath, go ahead and keep it. There's no problem there. You can do it.

On the other hand, if your conscience allows you to just keep every day alike, that's fine too. Just whatever your conscience, just follow your conscience in this matter. Now, consider this.

That makes it very clear that keeping one day special is optional, because Paul gave permission to keep it or not, as you prefer, as you think you should, as your convictions allow. You can, in other words, if you wish and if you feel convicted to, you can not keep a special day. He allowed that here.

What if the controversy were of another sort? Suppose he said, some in the church feel that it's all right to worship idols. Others believe that's a wrong thing to do. Well, let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Obviously, he could never say a thing like that, because idolatry is a moral issue. It's unfaithfulness to God. It's adultery, spiritual adultery.

And therefore, it is immoral. And he could never have given this latitude. He could have never given this permission if it were a moral issue.

Suppose it was, some people feel it's wrong to commit adultery. Others feel it's not all that bad. Well, let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Could Paul give instructions like that? Of course not. He could never relax the moral standards of the Christian life. And since he does relax the issue of Sabbath keeping, he apparently did not consider it to be one of the moral issues.

Why should he? Jesus didn't. And therefore, what Paul is saying is, there are some things in the law that we keep and some things we don't. How do we decide which is which?

Well, we might just say we decide on the base of ceremony versus morals.

And that would be a pretty good gauge. But there's a more fundamental way. And that is, what did Jesus teach? What did Jesus command? You'll find that all the moral issues, pretty much, at least of the Ten Commandments, the nine commandments that were moral in nature, he reinforced them.

They came up in his teaching. But none of the ceremonial issues were pushed by him. Now, this is very important to note, that we don't keep nine of the Ten Commandments because they are moral.

We keep nine of the Ten Commandments because Jesus commanded us to. Remember how we make disciples? By teaching them to observe all things that Jesus commanded, not that Moses or someone else did. There's never any orders in the scripture to command believers to obey the laws of Moses.

Never found. But we are to teach them to observe the commands of Christ. Let me show you something of great help to me and to most people when they see it, in Romans chapter seven.

Again, harping on this Sabbath thing. I don't mean to lay into the Sabbath, but it's an issue that some Christians really want to lay into. And so when a Sabbath keeper comes to me and says, why do you keep nine of the Ten Commandments and you don't keep the fourth one? They think I'm being inconsistent by keeping nine and not keeping all ten.

But I usually will turn to this passage. Paul said in Romans chapter seven, or do you not know, brethren, for I speak to those who know the law, that the law has dominion over man as long as he lives. For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives.

But if the husband dies, she's released from the law of her husband. So then if while her husband lives and she marries another man, she'll be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law so that she is no adulteress, though she is married to another man.

Therefore, my brethren, you also become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, to him who is raised from the dead, clearly a reference to Jesus, that you might bear fruit to God. Now, a lot of people bring this passage up as a teaching about divorce. I mean, it sounds pretty severe about divorce, doesn't it? I mean, a woman can't remarry while her husband's alive without committing adultery.

You need to understand he said he's writing to those who know the law and the law that he's referring to is in Deuteronomy 24. And as a matter of fact, the law does not say that

there are no grounds for divorce and remarriage. The law says the opposite.

Paul is not here trying to give explicit and detailed teaching about all the things that could make for an opportunity to remarry without being an adulteress during the lifetime of one's husband who's separated or divorced. But what he is doing is trying to give an illustration about our relationship to the law. What is the law? It's all that stuff that Moses gave the law.

And he said, it's like a woman who's married to her husband. She's under his law. But if he dies, she's not under his law.

Right. That's what he said. Now, the law of Moses, he says, it's like we were married to that law.

Until we died, one of us died, the marriage is ended by death. When one party dies, the marriage is over. Therefore, we're not obligated to keep the law, but we died to that so we could be married to another, to Jesus.

Now, let me illustrate as quickly as I can, although this is going to be very hard. If a woman is married to a man and he gives her a set of standards that he wants to be the standards of his household, is she obligated to keep those standards? Yes. I mean, unless there's something really unbiblical or immoral about them.

Yes. I mean, he's the head of the household and he can set standards if there is so long as they're biblical and moral. She is under the law of her husband.

But what if he dies? Does she have to keep any of those standards her husband gave her? No, he's gone. He's no longer an authority. He's out of the picture.

He's history. She is free. But what if she marries a second time and her husband gives her certain standards? What's she supposed to do then? Well, she lives by the standards of her present husband.

Now, what if some of the standards her second husband has overlap with the standards her first husband has? Well, then she'll end up, of course, by keeping her second husband's standards, she'll end up just also seeming to keep some of the standards of her first husband because they're overlapping. But she doesn't have to do anything her first husband said because he said it. She has to simply do whatever her new husband said.

When someone asked me, you see, we are married to the law, but we died. We don't have to keep the law, any of it. But we're married to another, the one who rose from the dead.

What does that mean? We have to keep his laws. If someone says, why do you keep nine

of the Ten Commandments? I say, I don't keep any of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments, I do not make reference to the Ten Commandments as the rule of my conduct at all.

None of them. I said, what? You know, you steal and murder and commit adultery. No, I don't do those things.

Well, why not? Well, because I'm married to another. His name is Jesus, and he has also objected to those behaviors. And the things that he objects to, I don't do.

The things he commands, I do. It so happens some of those overlap with some of the things in the Old Testament, including some of the Ten Commandments. But I don't abstain from murder because I'm under the Ten Commandments, nine or any others.

I'm under Jesus. And I can ignore, as far as that goes, the demands of the Ten Commandments so long as I'm obeying Jesus. I will not step out of line with God.

He's the final authority. Paul made this statement about his own convictions. I'm so out of time here.

I might want to continue this in the next lecture. I might finish this up in the next lecture. He says in chapter nine of First Corinthians, verses 19 through 21, for though I'm free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all that I might win the more.

To the Jews, I became as a Jew that I might win the Jews. To those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law. To those who are without law, meaning the Gentiles, I live as without law.

But then he says in parentheses, not being without law toward God, but under the law toward Christ, that I might win those who are without the law. Now, notice Paul says, when I'm with Jews, I keep Jewish laws. Why? Not because I have to, but because it might not offend them and I want to win them for Christ.

When I'm with Gentiles, they're not under the law. I don't live under the law. In other words, I've got liberty.

I don't have to keep the law at all. If I'm with the Jews, I do it to help win them. If I'm not with Jews, I don't bother with it because I don't have to.

I'm not under obligation to keep it. But he says, I'm not without law to God. I'm under the law to Christ.

Now, what he's saying is I can ignore the law of Moses. If I'm with Gentiles who aren't under the law of Moses, we can just, I can eat pork with them. I can do all kinds of things, but I can't go out and sleep with prostitutes with them.

Why? Not because I'm under the law, but because I'm under the law of Christ. I'm under his law. And that, you know, I can't do just everything the Gentiles do because some things would violate the law of Christ, but I can eat foods that they eat.

I don't have to observe the law of Moses. It's not my law. I died to that.

I'm married to another. My whole duty is described in terms of what my present husband requires, who is Jesus. And that is the answer to what parts of scripture we must observe in the Old Testament.

I have one other thing to say about this at the beginning of the next session, and we want to go another direction as well, but we'll stop here for now.