

San Juan Church of Christ

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What does God's Word Say About...

Obligation to the Ten Commandments Today

Many people are confused as to whether we are obligated by scripture to keep the Ten Commandments today. We will look to God's word, the Bible, which states that in Christ the Old Law and its ordinances have been "canceled". Paul wrote, "He [Christ] made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of death consisting of decrees against us [ordinances], which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Colossians 2:13-14). Paul also wrote that Christ abolished "in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances...(Eph. 2:15).

Many false teachers want to separate "ordinances" from the Ten Commandments. But God's word does not separate ordinances from commandments. "Ordinance" means: "a direction or command of an authoritative nature; a decree" (Webster). Whether from the Greek or in English, the word "ordinance" means a decree or command. In other words, the "Ten Commandments" are the "ten ordinances." Those who would bring parts of the abolished Law of Moses into the gospel age have long tried to separate that Law into "ordinances" and "commandments." But these are one and the same.

The Old Law was designed by God, to last only "till the seed should come" and "the seed is Christ" (Galatians 3:16, 19). The Old Testament was removed in order that the New Testament would be in effect (Hebrews 7:12; 8:8-13, 9:12-17, 10:9-10).

Some contend that "the Ten Commandments" were not taken away at the cross. But notice what scripture says: "Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day: things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ"

(Col. 2:16-17). All of these, which were ordinances of the Law, were nailed to the cross [done away with], and that includes the law of the Sabbath day.

Paul said that we are to be "servants of a new covenant, not of the letter [old covenant] but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). Paul said to the Christians who wanted to return to the Old Law that they would be "severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

The Bible makes no distinction between the ordinances and commandments of the Old Law. We are now living under the "New Testament" which was established by the death and blood of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:12-17).

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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