

Should We Obey The Ten Commandments Today?

Bible Answers About Salvation

Most of the religious world believes that the Ten Commandments are binding upon people today and that we must obey them. This false idea comes from the fact that people fail to rightly divide the Scriptures as Paul urged Timothy to do. (2 Tim. 2:15)

The Ten Commandments are a part of the covenant God made with Israel and gave to them at Mount Sinai (Deuteronomy 4:13; Galatians 4:24). Notice the statement by Moses when he said, "Then Moses summoned all Israel, and said to them, 'Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully. The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, [with] all those of us alive here today'" (Deuteronomy 5:1-3 NAS). The Ten Commandments are stated in verses 6 through 22 showing clearly that they are a part of the covenant given to Israel. Even though some of the principles contained in the Ten Commandments had been given before and some are also now in the new covenant, the Ten Commandments as a body had not been given before Mount Sinai. The fourth commandment to observe and keep the Sabbath day, for example, was only for Israel, God says explicitly, "But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for {this} is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you'" (Exodus 31:13 NAS).

The Law of Moses is made up of all of the commandments God gave to the people of Israel through Moses (Deuteronomy 5; Nehemiah 10:29; Malachi 4:4; John 1:17). This law was never given to other nations. "Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?" (Deuteronomy 4:8 NAS). This law was added to the promise given unto Abraham and was to last only until the "seed" should come. (Galatians 3:16-19) That "seed" is Jesus Christ. The law was to serve as a "tutor," or schoolmaster, to introduce the Jews to Jesus Christ in order that both the Jews and Gentiles may be justified by faith. Paul then stated, "Therefore the Law has become our tutor [to lead us] to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:24-26 NAS).

When Jesus Christ came, the covenant given to the Israelites was fulfilled in His life, death, and resurrection. (Luke 24:44) Jesus said, "Behold, I have come to do Thy will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second" (Hebrews 10:9 NAS). We are now under a new covenant, the will of Christ (Hebrews 9:15-17). The first covenant, given at Sinai, is now old, declared obsolete so as to be deprived of force and authority (Hebrews 8:8-13).

The first covenant was done away by Christ when He died on the Cross as Paul shows when he wrote, "having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us [and] which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him. Therefore let no one 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. 2:14-17 NAS, Cf. also Ephesians 2:14-17; Hebrews 12:18-24). When Paul wrote to the Corinthians he compared the old and new covenants showing that the first was done away and the second covenant remains today, ("Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as {coming} from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate {as} servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading {as} it was, how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory on account of the glory that surpasses {it.} For if that which fades away {was} with glory, much more that which remains {is} in glory" (2 Cor 3:5-11 NAS).

Salvation is in Christ today because He is the propitiation for the sins of mankind and He is the Savior of all who obey Him. (1 John 2:1-2; Hebrews 5:9) Jesus Christ—not the Ten Commandments—is our Savior. A person therefore cannot be saved by keeping the Ten Commandments. If one can be saved by keeping the Ten Commandments then one is saved without Christ, without faith in Christ, without obedience to Christ and without experiencing the new birth (1 Corinthians 15:1-2; Romans 10:9-10; Hebrews 5:8-9; John 3:3-5).

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