

The Ages of God's Law

Written by Joel McNabb

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Since the beginning of the creation, the great Creator has laid down the law. From time to time, He has given commandments unto man, who almost always found them hard to keep. We often think of the law as “**thou shalt not**,” which in some cases is true, but sometimes it is “**thou shalt**.”

” Like the law of gravity, “what goes up must come down”; so there are laws of God that show how He operates. In different ages, He laid out these laws to perform a work in His plan for mankind and His purpose on this earth. I would like to take a look at these different ages and bring us to our age and the law to come.

In the book of Genesis, we find the **first age** of God's commandments to man. He told Adam and Eve, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” He gave man the responsibility to rule over the earth and to be the caretaker of all the creatures. There is also the matter of replenishing the earth, (which in itself is somewhat a strange commandment, if the earth had never been inhabited before). God also gave them a **thou shalt not**

: “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” This commandment is the one that got Adam, Eve and all mankind into trouble. It should have been an easy law to keep, only one tree of knowledge, and you could eat all you wanted of the rest of the trees in the garden. However, it was like telling your child not to touch the electrical outlet, and he can't keep their hands off it, not really knowing the consequences of disobedience to what seems to be a small commandment.

When he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam was fully aware that he was willingly breaking God's commandment. “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Tim. 2:14). This fall brought death to mankind, and death reigned until an age when God would show man how he could get life back. During this age there was no law enforcement, and the wickedness of man became so great that it made God sad that He had ever created man.

His plan for man's redemption was set in motion. The great wickedness of man caused God to take severe action. He was going to destroy His creation and start all over, and He looked the whole earth over and searched for someone with whom He could start over. The Bible says that Noah, a just man and perfect in his generation, found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and Noah walked with God. God spared Noah and his family by sending the flood and destroying the wickedness from off the face of the earth. “When once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by

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water" (1 Pet. 3:20). They weren't just saved from the flood of water, they were saved from a world that was not able to change. After the flood, with a new earth and someone to give the dominion to, it was time to start over with new laws and a **new age**.

As Noah and his family disembarked from the ark, another age dawned. God gave commandments once again, and said unto them: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," the same command as He had given Adam and Eve. They were to fill the earth with mankind again. He also gave them dietary laws. Instead of just a vegetarian diet, He said that "every moving creature that liveth shall be meat for you" (Gen. 9:3). There was no suggestion that they should only eat clean animals, but everything that liveth, even as the green herb. All animals (clean and unclean, insects, serpents, and slugs) were given for nutriment for the human body. This led God to give a "**thou shall not:**" "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." Eating blood was not allowed, because it contained the life of the body, and life is a gift of God. He has given every creature a spirit, which allows it to live. "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"

One more law was given to man after the flood, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man" (Gen. 9:6). Man was to kill the murderer, though this commandment was not given to Adam, as we see in the case of Cain. By letting the murderer go free we saw how bad the earth can become. If we are made in the image of God, murder is like killing God Himself. It led to man's great wickedness, which caused God to bring in the flood. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Our destiny is set from the time we are born, we live our lives and then we die, without hope. Adam's decision affected all mankind and left us with death as our future. After the flood, man did not change though God had started all over again. And man, with inbred sin, resumed his course of self destruction.

Is there a way to obtain life again? Yes there is! We are still following the plan of the Creator, and His purpose for man on earth. Out of Noah's three sons, He chose the lineage of Shem. Abram, the tenth generation from Shem was chosen by God to raise up a people to whom He would give His laws of life, for Abram would be faithful to pass on his faith from generation to generation. In Abram's generation, mankind had become idolatrous, and the only way God could make a transition to life for man was to get Abram out of his country and kindred. So Abram, by the command of God, left with the covenant of promise, and became a pilgrim. God knew that he would command his children and his household after him, that they should keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment, so that the LORD would bring His promise upon Abraham. To his seed, God would give the laws of life, which is our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ.

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God told Abraham that it would take over four hundred years before His promises would come to pass (Gen. 15:13-16; Ex. 12:40-41).

He brought them to Himself to Mt. Sinai, to give them His laws of life. By the law that was given to Moses, God taught His chosen people the ways of life. Moses said in Deut. 30:15, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil."

The time for God's words to be revealed was at hand, as Jesus said, "the words I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life." Before Moses, God's word was not written down, although God did speak to man from time to time. Now they had God's words where they could see them and be reminded of them.

The Mosaic laws are just another step in man's search for life. You may have heard of Ponce de Leon, who looked for the fountain of youth, some way to find eternal life. God gave the laws to teach us the way. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, and in keeping of them there is great reward." The children of Israel could have been lead to life, if they had kept the laws of God. From the time the law was given and even to our present day, the law has not been kept by man. Paul even said, "neither we nor our fathers could keep" the law, even though, when it came to the law, he said he was blameless. If Israel could not keep Gods law, why was it important for Him to give it to them? It was to show man what sin is. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Rom. 7:7-14). The law was to bring us to Christ, the one true way to life.

The gospel of John tells us that the law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ. There was another age of law needed to show a more perfect way to life. God sent His only begotten Son as He sent Moses, to give us the new law of grace. In Matt. 5-7, Jesus, as Moses, went up on a mountain and gave to His disciples this law. It is called by many the Sermon on the Mount, but if we read passage correctly, Jesus actually got away from the crowd and only His disciples were with Him when the sermon – or law – was given.

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“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Matt. 5:17-18). Jesus did not throw away any of the commandments of God, He made them even stronger. The words of Jesus were given with the intent that we might come to a closer relationship with the God of creation, who, from age to age, desired to bring man nearer to the place for which he was created. Jesus said, “If you love me keep my commandment,” “for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Being set free from the death sentence of Adam, the way of holiness is accessible to those who choose to keep His law. His grace is sufficient for all who accept that blood of Jesus. He went to Mount Calvary, and His laws were set in something stronger than stone, written with His blood on our hearts.

Now as we come to the end of the grace age, a new age is approaching. The culmination of all the laws, which were given by God from Adam to Jesus, will be put into action: The age of Judgment in which Jesus will have all power and authority to meet out true justice. He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under His feet.

One of these laws is revealed in, Zech. 14:16. “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.” If they will not keep this commandment, the rains will stop and famine will come upon their land until they submit to the commandments of the Lawgiver.

The new age of God's law is upon man, who has had two thousand years of the grace age, yet has not changed. All around us today, the wickedness of man has only worsened. Our time is up, and it is God's time now. Jesus said in Revelation 22:10-14, “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” We are dealing with the **laws of life**

and in Him we live, move and have our being. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). We still have a choice today, but time is running out. What will you choose, life or death? “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).