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ARE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS BINDING TODAY?

The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus 20: 3-17; Deuteronomy 5:7-21. They were not the totality of the Law of Moses. There were many regulations concerning property rights, treatment of servants, restitution, human relations, how to conduct worship, etc. All of these were an enlargement or an application of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were an outline of what was to follow.

We Have Been Delivered From the Law

The Ten Commandments were contained within the Law of Moses and not separate from it. Paul says we have become dead to the law and delivered from it (Rom. 7:1-6). As if someone would question what law he was talking about, he identified it in the next verse as the one which commanded "Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:7). He also identified it as the one given at the time Moses' face shone after descending from the mount (2 Cor. 3:6-14). This shows that it was the law which, included the Ten Commandments (Ex. 34).

Is It Okay to Violate the Ten Commandments?

This question would naturally follow, if we are no longer under the Law of Moses. The principles of the Ten Commandments are in the New Testament, but are often expressed on a higher level. Nine of the ten are taught in the gospel but not in the same language, necessarily.

First, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." New Testament teaches that there is "One God, and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all" (Eph. 4:6). "There is no God but one" (I Cor. 8:4-6).

Second, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image..." To the idolaters of Athens, Paul said, "The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life,

and breath, and all things;... Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of men" (Acts 17:24, 25, 29). No idolater can inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9, 10).



Third, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain...." In reference to this Jesus said, "Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black" (Mt. 5:34-36). All bad language, which would include taking God's name in vain, is condemned (Eph. 4:29, 31; I Pet. 2:1; 3:10).

Fourth, "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy..." This commandment is not repeated in the New Testament. We are not to be judged for failing to keep the Sabbath (seventh day of the week, our Saturday). It was nailed to the cross with the rest of Moses' law, which was a "shadow of things to come" (Col. 2:14-17). While Sunday is not called the Sabbath, Christians worshipped on that day (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1, 2).

Fifth, "Honor thy father and thy mother..." This is repeated in Eph. 6:1-3. Children and grandchildren are to respect their parents and grandparents and to "requite (return the care, Goodspeed) them" (I Tim. 5:4).

Sixth, "Thou shalt not kill." Murder is prohibited in Rom. 13:9. The attitude that would cause one to murder is condemned in I John 3:15.

Seventh, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21). Jesus went behind the act and dealt with the attitude of lust (Mt. 5:27, 28). Paul condemned lasciviousness (Gal. 5:19-21).

Eighth, "Thou shalt not steal." Repeated in Rom. 13-97.

Ninth, "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Paul commanded, "Put away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor..." (Eph. 4:25). All liars will have "their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21:8).

Tenth, "Thou shalt not covet." Repeated in Rom. 13:19.

Conclusion

Jesus said the whole law hangs on two commandments: Love God and love your neighbor (Mt. 22: 37-40). *The first four dealt with man's relation to God and the last six covered man's relation to man.*

One is guilty of breaking God's law if he violates any of these nine commandments - not because they were part of the Law of Moses, but because they are contained in the gospel. "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1,2). Hear ye him!" (Mt. 17:5).

-Dick Blackford