

A Biblical Theology of God: The God who Legislate

At first sight Bible is contradictory about the law: Psalm 19:7 vs Galatians 3:10

When is the law given? In Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. But even before in Genesis (commandment not to eat from tree of knowledge of good and evil). -> Laws are there right from the start.

Overview of the law in Bible

Exodus			Numbers		
Chapter	# laws	What	Chapter	# laws	What
20	~17	10 Commandments ++	5-6	~20	Purity and Nazirite
21-23	~50	Book of the Covenant	15	~10	Offering and Sabbath
25-31	~40	Tabernacle + Priestly	18-19	~25	Priest and Levite Duty
34	~15	Covenant Renewal	27-30	~30	Inheritance, Offering, vows
			35	~15	City of Refuge, murdering

Leviticus			Deuteronomy		
Chapter	# laws	What	Chapter	# laws	What
1-7	~50	Sacrificial System	4-26	~200	Expension of Previous Laws, Moses' Farewell Address
11-15	~60	Dietary and Purity			
16	~10	Day of Atonement			
17-26	~100	Holiness Code			

Exodus is the first giving of the law

Leviticus is focused on ceremonial and purity laws

Numbers is focused on civic and judicial law

Deuteronomy is Moses' farewell address to the Israelites in which he exhorts them to obey the law once they enter the promised land.

Categorizing laws: laws are often categorized in 3 categories: 1) Moral laws 2) Ceremonial laws 3) Civil laws. It is generally accepted that Christians only need to obey moral laws, but this is only a simplified guideline. Some laws are hard to put in a category.

The name of God In Exodus 33:18-23 Moses asks God to show him his glory. In Exodus 34:5-7 God does just this but not how we might expect. He proclaims His name: He is 1) Love 2) Justice. This is central to His glory. God enforcing his law and cursing Israel when they don't obey isn't pettiness. It is what makes God glorious.

What can we Learn from Purity Laws? In Leviticus 10:1-2 two priests sin by burning incense in an unauthorised way and defile God's holy place. They are swallowed up in fire consequently. Starting then (and arguably as a consequence) the purity laws are introduced. They teach us that there is a divide between humans and God: the common and the holy. Just like a sick person can infect a healthy person or as a dirty object can dirty a clean object humans are incompatible with God and need to take great care when approaching Him. Many of the purity laws are related to a symbol of death: emission of reproductive fluid (reproductive fluid has the potential to give life and when it is emitted it is wasted and doesn't bring life), sickness, leakage of blood, etc. These symbols of death are incompatible with God who is life.

What can we Learn from the Sacrificial System? Leviticus 16: day of Atonement, high priest goes into the Most Holy Place once a year, he needs to offer sacrifices for himself to atone for his sins, only after this can he offer a sacrifice for the Israelites -> necessity to be made clean to minister to the nation, Jesus was sinless and could minister to us

High priest offers a goat as a sin offering for the nation and confesses the sin of the nation over a second goat called scapegoat. The scapegoat is lead into the wilderness. This points to Jesus who was crucified outside the city and was excluded so we could be included in God's family. Death and sin could not hold Jesus back and unlike the scape goat he didn't stay excluded.

There is a big divide between God (most holy place) and the people, numerous rituals and sacrifices

need to be made, only once a year, only the high priest can go in. Under the new covenant we are all priests, God lives in us, we can be in God's presence at every instant without extra sacrifices and rituals.

Hebrews 9:11-15 compares the ritual in Leviticus 16 with what Christ has done at the cross. It describes Jesus as the high priest of a new covenant. It says that animal sacrifices purified the flesh but that Jesus' sacrifice purifies our consciences.

Hebrews 10:1-4 makes clear that the animal sacrifices offered need to be offered again and again and don't make sinners perfect or remove consciousness of sin. The law and the sacrificial system is a shadow of Christ's sacrifice for us that does truly make our conscience void from sin (can link to Romans 7:15-23: Paul saying He is not sinning but the sin lives in him).

Grace in the Law Leviticus 5:5-7, 11 describes how when Israelites sin unintentionally they must offer a lamb as a sacrifice, yet if they can't afford a lamb, they can give two turtledoves and if they can't afford that they can give a handful of flour. This logic is extended in Isaiah 55:1-3 where it speaks of eating bread and buying wine and milk without money from God. This is realised in Jesus who gives us His flesh and His blood to be redeemed of all sins, unintentional and intentional.

What can we learn from the Shabbat Rest? Hebrew 4:1-13 speaks about entering God's rest, it mentions how the generation of Israelites who disobeyed God at Horeb couldn't enter the promised land, the promise land is God's rest. Then the passage speaks of another more fuller rest yet to be found. "for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his" (Hebrew 4:10) Our works are an attempt to find a fulfillment that only God can satisfy, we might think we have to earn it and we keep working at it. The good news of Jesus fulfills the law of the Shabbat when we remember we are not working at our salvation anymore. When we realize this our work is not work anymore but an act of worship and we enter God's eternal rest.

Law in the New Covenant Matthew 5:17-20 shows us that Jesus didn't come to make the law easier, He makes it harder (expanded law on murder, adultery, lying, retaliation, loving your enemy and the list goes on). Instead of suggesting we put our trust in obeying the law Jesus offers a different way altogether: faith in Him and grace.

Jesus fulfils the law in the following ways:

- 1) He lived a perfect life living by the law perfectly
- 2) He brought to fruition what it foreshadowed by the law
- 3) He intensified and extended the law
- 4) He explained the intent of the law

Hebrew 8:13 shows that the new covenant is in discontinuity with the old covenant which helps understand why there are so many laws that are not followed by Christians.

Like all good stories the Bible narrative through the lense of the law has a happy conclusion.

Revelation 7:14 speaks of those who endured tribulations and washed their robes with the blood of Jesus. The demands of the law are met through faith in Christ. **Revelation 21:14** reveals why this was all worth it. It describes a time when we will fully be beyond the curtain of the most holy place in God's presence and the glory of God gives light to city instead of the sun.

When looking at **Psalm 19:7** and **Galatians 3:10** we see an apparent contradiction between the law that is perfect and reviving to the soul and the law that is a curse. **Romans 7:7-12** clears this up for us explaining that the law is life: it shows us how to please God but the law reveals our sin. It isn't the law that makes us sin, the law simply reveals it.