

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Series: *Covenant: God's Way of Relationship*



Teaching Sermon Notes: "Moses: The Covenant of Law, Part Two"

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Law and Gospel always brings us to the Word of God with so many questions. I hope to provide you with better understanding of the relationship between them. To do that, we cannot leave out discussing the New Covenant in Christ's Blood, for what Jesus accomplished, what we call "the cross-work of Christ," brought in a covenant that is better, better, better. (Hebrews)

We need to see the mercy in the Mosaic Covenant of Law. God redeemed a people out of Egypt, out of bondage and slavery, to worship Him and to be His demonstration people. They were to be separate, different from other people groups. God gave them a Law. Like all covenants of the Living God, the Mosaic covenant is unilateral, non-negotiable, and expected to be kept.

First let's look at what Jesus said and then what Paul the Apostle said about the Law and living the Law. Remember, the Law did not nullify the promise; the Law cannot give Life; only the Holy Spirit gives life. The Law of the Spirit of Life has set us free from the Law of Sin and Death; in order to sin that grace may abound? NO. That we might obey through faith which works by love, a supreme loyalty and attachment to Jesus.

1. Law, The

Jesus "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill," (Matthew 5:17).

Paul: "Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law." (Romans 3:31). "What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise." (Galatians 3:17).

2. Law, Living the

Jesus "You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 19:18, 19).

Paul "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the law*.⁹ For this, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of *the law*." (Romans 13:8-10)

In Galatians, Paul shows that if the cross is either obscured or superseded, the gospel is no gospel. If observing the Mosaic Law is necessary to salvation either alone or attached to Christ's work, it's really another gospel. No, the cross is the sole ground of acceptance. It is Jesus alone,

not Jesus plus something. The atonement is the exclusive ground of salvation. Other things must be put in their place (Gal. 5:1-4). We are not to pervert the purity of the gospel (Galatians 1:7, 8). Doom is justified by the nature of Christ's death and by this highest exhibition of God's wisdom, love, and faithfulness. In other words, the atonement is the greatest act of God in the universe, the highest demonstration of God's glory. Believers are not to build their confidence on rites and rituals, ceremonies, and legal observances, but on the atonement of Jesus Christ. (Phil. 3:18)

In reflecting on the OT sacrificial system, the apostles considered it to be both TYPICAL and SYMBOLICAL, i.e., TYPE and SYMBOL.

The Mosaic Law included precepts and prohibitions, threats and penalties which united into a system. That system upheld the divine holiness of God, the evil of sin, and the necessity of dealing with that sin through sacrifices.

Prophecy and sacrifices are found together and throw light upon each other. They run as parallel lines through the entire OT economy. The sacrifices themselves may be regarded as a sort of prophecy inasmuch as they became a guarantee to which the veracity of God was pledged. The shadow must one day become a reality. They pointed to the great fact of the NT in Christ's Blood to come. Together from the time of the first promise in Genesis 3:15 to the coming of Christ, the reality had been appointed to appear; and the OT system pointed in both type and symbol this reality to come.

Today we talk about sacrifice and sacrament. We need to remember that sacrifice denotes what is given to God. Sacrament points out what God gives to us. Nevertheless, the sacramental character of sacrifices may be discerned in the system God provides all along. All along there were signs and seals given to believers and such were of God. God gave the system of offering blood sacrifices as a method of acceptable worship. His instructions were explicit and detailed.

Let's first consider the sacrifice of Abel and some references in the NT. Colossians 2:23; Hebrews 9:4; 2 Chronicles 7:2. Abel's sacrifice was offered in compliance with divine appointment and not a mere will-worship. It was acceptable to God, more acceptable than Cain's, because it was offered in faith. The descent of consuming fire from heaven upon the sacrifice said the offering was accepted, but that would have been terrifying, I think, if some person dreamed this up for worship. It might otherwise seem like an angry God was there, not a means by which a man and God were reconciled. How did they know that this consuming fire was a token of divine acceptance? We must consider that revelation began at the Fall and that God conveyed His mind to Abel or someone. We are never left to our own mind in the matter and mode of worship for otherwise that is "will-worship." Matthew 15:9

Abel's sacrifice story is the first mention of sacrifice, but it doesn't seem like it was some new invention at the time. God's response to Cain seems to indicate that the mode of sacrifice was known; customary. Later, at the time of Noah, there was already a distinction made between clean and unclean animals; yet animal meat was not a common food until after the Flood. Genesis 8:20. God did, however, distinguish between clean and unclean animals for sacrificial purposes.

Under the Mosaic Law, sacrifices were distributed into classes. The burnt-offering of the primeval and patriarchal age was now to be accompanied by other types of sacrifices. All the bloody sacrifices were atoning sacrifices. Sin-offerings were designed for the expiation of certain sins. The Mosaic Law multiplied the sacrifices and divided them into different classes for different purposes. The sin-offerings were meant to provide the forgiving grace of God by

means of atonement, a vicarious atonement. Reconciliation and the satisfaction of divine justice could come in no other way. Worshippers offending a holy God were worthy of death. The sacrifices symbolized the inevitable divine punishment that those sins and the debt note of sin deserved. The death of a substitute demonstrated that the offerer could again be taken into favor. The symbol and type is clear: An atonement by vicarious expiation is the indispensable necessity.

We must see the grace in the OT system. 1. It was a gracious institution which God appointed for means of reconciling a person to Himself, the offended party. 2. It was vicarious. 3. Satisfaction of divine justice was effected by means of the victim's death.

The Mosaic Law did not appoint sacrifices for moral offenses such as murder, adultery, or idolatry or sins of a high hand. The sacrifices were provided only:

1. for trespasses of a ceremonial nature,
2. for involuntary oversights and sins of ignorance,
3. for states of bodily defilement which had been pronounced trespasses according to the laws which separated Israel from other nations.

Get this. The sins for which the sacrifices were available were not properly speaking, moral offences. Touch a dead body, touch a grave—offer a sacrifice. For moral offences the blood of bulls and goats could never take them away. Hebrews 10:4. The sin offerings of the OT were for theocratic trespasses. And on the great Day of Atonement, the annual sacrifice was offered for the priest and then for the collective sins of the entire people during the course of the year so that their relationship as the theocratic people of God could be once again in place. (Leviticus 16:15; Hebrews 9:13)

The positive law and the positive atonement came into existence together. God developed the concept of sin to awaken consciousness of sin. Romans 5:20; Galatians 3:19. These laws were external, positive, and transitory. The NT believer is no longer under the penalty system of the OT law; it has ceased.

Even at that, we must remember that ceremonial offences might still be connected with the effects of sin or with the roots of sin in man's nature. But they were external. The sin-offering removed them and covered them, but had no power to purge the conscience. Whenever an Israelite contracted ceremonial guilt, he was out of covenant relationship with the God of Israel and had no approach or access to God's presence until the sin or trespass was taken away. The sin or trespass produced separation between the two along with a conscious estrangement and fear of the death which must necessarily ensue as the wages of sin. **God does not sacrifice His holiness to His love.** Death is the due punishment for sin.

Likewise, transgression also meant the withdrawal of civil and ecclesiastical privileges. The sacrifices were provided for involuntary trespass or unwitting neglect, not for wanton disobedience, remember. Let's note:

1. The sin-offerings were not for mere offences against the state. They were not offered to man but to God. They did not avert civil pains and penalties; they removed offences against the ceremonial law. When a worshipper brought the proper sacrifice of atonement, he was no longer deemed defiled and had access to God. He could enter again the courts of the sanctuary.
2. The sacrifices were not a mere expression of penitence. Defilement could only be removed by sacrifice and by the sprinkling which was connected with sacrifice. Repentance is not exactly

excluded; but the system was external. Sin was atoned for and cancelled by a deed done. Do this and you will live. Now, in the NT, is repent and believe. It is a heart matter. Believe in Jesus and you will be given eternal life.

3. The sacrifices were not a mere paying of homage to the theocratic King. Yes, there were thank offerings and free-will offerings, but the sin-offering was not a mere offer of homage to God. Guilt was transferred to an animal victim who died in the person's place. The guilt incurred was transferred to the sacrifice which stood as substitute. Hebrews 9:9, 10

Nevertheless, something actually happened on the occasion of every sacrifice in the OT system. In some lower sphere, there was actual deliverance and reconciliation, a transaction. In point of fact remission of guilt was effected. (Leviticus 4:20) Threatened punishments were removed. But true and proper atonement does not come through the elements of the world; the OT system was a shadow, a type, a symbol, a preparation.

When blood was sprinkled on the holy place and its furniture, it was to show that God would continue to reside when He beheld the blood of atonement. The people needed the reconciliation, not the place; thus Jesus' comments in John 4:23, 24:

But the hour is coming, and now is when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

Today the Holy Spirit comes where the Blood of Christ is applied. The sacrifices were typical of the Great Atonement. The OT system foreshadowed the propitiation for sin that was to come; it was a prophetic anticipation of the NT atonement in Christ's sacrifice. Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:5; Hebrews 10:1; Hebrews 9:23, 24.

The death of Christ is expressly represented as an offering and a sacrifice. Ephesians 5:2, Hebrews 10:14; 1 Corinthians 5:7. Jesus entered Jerusalem on the day when the Passover meant separation, according to the Law, for the sacrifice. **The Passover was the foundation of the covenant with Israel and the thing which separated God and His people from the world.** Christ's priestly act of sacrifice was the truth and substance. Hebrews 9:7-14. When the once-for-all-time everlasting sacrifice was offered, the need for the others disappeared. Christ is our Passover Lamb who was sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5:7)—the Lamb of God for the household of God. The vicarious death of Jesus, His atoning work, is the basis for union in Christ, by which we are accepted. Amen.

Delighting in the Grace of our Loving Father,

Mary Craig

Mary Craig, D. Min.

**“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”
Revelation 21:7**

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