

CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE POSTAL COURSE



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LESSON 8 • A Law that could not bring Life

WEEKLY READINGS
READING FOR STUDY PAPER

Genesis 27-29; 1 Timothy 1-3
Hebrews 9-10

We must have laws

Have you ever thought what would happen in one of our busy towns if ever car driver drove his car just as fast as he pleased, and went anywhere in the road without considering other people? There would soon be many serious accidents. Wherever men and women live together in towns and villages, they must have laws. They must have good laws, and there must be someone to see that these laws are kept.

The Law of Moses

You will remember how God brought the Jews out of Egypt; and how He gave them the land of Israel to live in. You will remember, too, from lesson 6, how He was their King, and how He gave them laws. We usually speak of these laws as 'The Law of Moses'; because it was to Moses that God first gave them, and Moses passed them on to the people. Nearly everybody has heard of that most important section of the Law of Moses, called 'The Ten Commandments'. Amongst these was the law of the Sabbath Day.

A law given by God

Because the Law of Moses was given by God, it is quite different from the laws which men make. We can divide the various commandments into two kinds.

First, there were the rules for everyday life. There were rules to say what the people should eat; the kind of clothes they should wear; and the way in which they should behave towards each other. In fact, these rules were to guide them in every way in their everyday life.

But there were other laws besides these. There were many laws telling the people how they must behave towards God, and the way in which they must worship Him.

When the people came to God to ask His forgiveness for their sins, or to offer Him thanksgiving and praise, they had to bring an animal - usually a lamb or kid - and kill it.

The animal sacrifices were to remind the Jews that they were sinners, and deserved to die. They were to remind them, too, that they must worship God in the way in which He commanded, and not in the way they chose themselves.

The Law was hard to keep

The Law of Moses, having been given by God, was a very good law. Paul tells us in Romans, chapter 7, verse 12, that, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

But men are not naturally good. Many of the Jews didn't even try to keep the law; and even those who did try failed. The more they tried to keep the law, the more they realised that they were sinners.

We saw that the Law of Moses was necessary to govern the nation. But it did something else besides this. It made men realise that they were sinners, unable to keep God's law. And because they were sinners, they deserved to die.

Paul says in Romans, chapter 3, verse 19,

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

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A better way

The law taught men that they were sinners, and deserved to die. They needed someone to save them from their sins. The law itself could not save them - it could only show them their sinfulness. So God, in His love, provided something better. God gave His own Son, Jesus Christ, to be a sacrifice for sin. We read in Psalm 40, verses 6-8, "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened: burnt offering, and sin offering has Thou not required. Then said I, 'Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart'."

Jesus always did the things that pleased God. He was the perfect sacrifice, offering Himself for our sakes.

We no longer have to bring an animal to sacrifice, when we come to worship God.

But we have to come to Him through Jesus who said,

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John, chapter 14, verse 6).

Lessons for us from the Law

The law helped sincere Jews to come to Christ, because it showed them how hopeless and helpless they themselves were. This is a hard lesson for men and women to learn; but we, too, have to learn it, before we can come to God, and ask His help.

The Law of Moses can help us in this. We are no better than the Jews - we would have failed just as they did. The law can teach us a great lesson: that God is holy, and we are sinful; and we can only come to Him in the way in which He has chosen - through the Lord Jesus Christ.

God does not expect us to keep all the details of the Law of Moses. But He has preserved it in the Bible for us, and, by reading it and thinking about it, we may learn more about His ways.

Summary

1. The Law of Moses was a law given to the Jews by God.
2. (a) It contained rules covering their daily life.
(b) It also taught them how they must worship God.
3. The law was good; but men, being evil, could not keep it.
4. God provided a new way in Christ.
5. The Law of Moses is in the books of the Bible called Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. There are many things we can still learn from it today.