***The Age of the Jews, No. 4  
  
DS4B***

We have found that a dispensation is a period of human history expressed in terms of divine viewpoint and divine interpretation. It is a distinguishable economy of the outworking of God's plan for the ages. We have looked at the first dispensation of the gentiles which was in three phases: innocence; conscience; and, human government. The whole dispensation went from Adam to the Tower of Babel. We are now in the second dispensation--the dispensation of the Jews--which also has three phases. Phase one is the phase of promise; phase two is the phase of law; and, phase three is the tribulation period. It goes from Abraham to the Second Advent of Christ minus the church age.

In each dispensation, God's world household is arranged in a different way. Some things remain as they were in the previous dispensation; some things are changed; and, some new things are added. As the dispensation progresses from phase to phase, there will be changes as that particular dispensation unravels. It is important to recognize these. Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden. They had the specific requirement, "Don't eat of this particular fruit of this particular tree." Obviously, later in that dispensation, all that changed, and a different situation was in force. We're not under the same order.

Now one of the prime places that this is violated is in the Charismatic Movement today. In the early stage of the dispensation of the church, which is the next one that we will be study, there were certain temporary spiritual gifts. The Bible is very clear in spelling this out and declaring the temporariness of the gift of tongues. If you're interested in pursuing that you may get the recordings on tongues that go into this in greater detail. But this is definitely a gift which no longer exists. Nobody can legitimately claim to speak in tongues or claim to be able to heal people today. I don't care if they try to cover it up by saying that they are praying for people.

If you have not caught that, I want you to be informed that the big time charismatic leaders now have dropped off the old time Holy Roller healing claim. What they are talking about is still healing, but they are talking about praying for people. However, they still mean that in the process of their praying, the healing is accomplished. If you've ever been in a healing meeting, you know that that is the core of the healer's performance. He gets up there and he dramatically prays over the individual, and in the name of Christ commands the demon or the illness to leave. This type of confusion of charismatic claims here at this point in the dispensation of the church is over against the reality that once existed in the earlier stages. It comes from the direct ignorance of the progression of the dispensations and the changes within a dispensation.

So we are studying no small topic when we pursue this study. In this session, I want to look in depth with you at one segment of the Abrahamic Covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant was the basis of the first phase of the dispensation of the Jews--the phase of promise. You will recall that in that covenant, God promised Abraham three main things. One was a land--that he and his descendants would own a certain area of real estate in the world forever. Secondly was a seed; that is, he would have a great nation descend from him. Thirdly was blessing which was in the form of salvation.

Right now, I want to look at this promise relative to the land. It is very important in the world in which we live today relative to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and it is very important to the interpretation of Scripture. We still have some Christians who are so disoriented to the Word of God that when they look at these promises to Abraham concerning a land, they either associate it with the country they happen to live in, like the United States, or they associate it with heaven and call it "Beulah Land" to which they are going.

So let's look at Genesis 15:18. You will notice here in this passage that the boundaries of this land that God is going to give to the Jewish people forever are defined in very specific language: "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham saying, 'To your seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river (the river Euphrates).'" So the extent of the land from north to south was from the Euphrates in the north to the Nile River in the south. It was also to extend from the Mediterranean Sea on one side to the Jordan River on the other. Now if you look at a map, you would realize that this is a much larger area than the some 183 miles long by 25 to 52 miles wide area that Israel possesses today. Even at the height of the Jewish power as a nation under Solomon, notice that they did not possess this extent of the Promised Land. The Jew has never possessed what God promised He would give him.

Immediately we are confronted with three options. One would be that the writers of Scripture have lied to us in reporting what God said; two, we are misinterpreting what God said relative to the earthly piece of real estate; or, three, God still intends to keep his Word, God was true, God was telling the truth, and God intends to give the Jew this land. Furthermore. He intends to give him this extent of area forever. I need not labor the point of how long forever is. In other words, there will be no end to the Jewish possession of the land of Palestine in the extent to which it was promised in the Abrahamic covenant.

**The Palestinian Covenant**

Now, however, we are looking at a secondary covenant called the Palestinian Covenant which amplified this promise which you have in the Abrahamic Covenant--the promise concerning the giving of the land that you find in the first part of Genesis 12. So, here is the land in the Palestinian Covenant reconfirmed to the descendants of Abraham.

Now look at Genesis 17:8. Here is an additional factor that again we must stress. God said, "And I will give unto you and to your seed after you, the land wherein you are a sojourner, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. And I will be their God." So the Jew has an everlasting title deed to the land of Palestine in its ultimate extent to which it has been promised to them. Even if Israel had once possessed this property (under Solomon) to the extent that God had outlined that they would (that is, to the extended area), they still do not possess it today. Therefore, we have not fulfilled the everlasting forever part. Therefore, we still know that they must come back to possession of this land, and possessing it without ever leaving it again. That is not the case today. So we know that they're going to return. It is still the Jews' land although they have not yet inhabited that land. The Arabs inhabit most of it, but the Arabs which are within this extent of land promised to Israel are there by squatter's invasion, and someday they will be removed.

Now while this land was promised to Israel forever, the blessing of enjoying this land was contingent upon obedience on the part of the people. The Jews will always own Palestine, but they will not actually always possess it. That is the situation which we have today. So let's look at Deuteronomy 30 where we have this Palestinian covenant, again, amplified in its pertinent features. In chapters 28 and 29, we have some very valuable background given for this Palestinian Covenant that you may want to read on your own. One of the things that we should perhaps notice in view of what we have said about the eternal ownership is in chapter 28. You will notice that several times in this chapter, the word "if" comes up, and "if" means conditional.

Deuteronomy 30:1-8: "And it shall come to pass *if* you shall hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord your God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command you this day, that the Lord your God will set you on high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come on you and overtake you *if* you shall hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God." You will notice in verses 3 through 12, as your eye runs down those verses, that there is a series of blessings that are promised with the condition "if." Then in verse 13: "And the Lord shall make you the head and not the tail, and you shall be above only, and you shall not be beneath *if* you hearken unto the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you this day to observe and to do them."

Verse 15: "But it shall come to pass *if* you will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you this day, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. Verse 58: "*If* you will not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord your God." The result if they do not observe is seen in verse 62: "You shall be left few in numbers, whereas you were as the stars of heaven for multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God." Through the centuries, the Jews have been slaughtered because they have not obeyed the Lord their God.

You will notice that in all of these "ifs," the "if" is not relative to their owning the land. The "if" is always relative to their possessing and enjoying it. What God is saying is, "If you do not obey me, then I will put you out of the land, and I will scatter you so that you will not be under My blessing." Leviticus 26 gives you the Jewish cycle of discipline, which we will not go into tonight, but it goes in various stages. The fourth stage is where the Jew is in his land, but he is under a foreign military domination. This was the condition when Christ was born. Israel was in her land, but they were under the domination of the foreign government of the Roman Empire. The fifth stage of the cycle of discipline is that the Jew is scattered out of his land into other nations, and a foreign power completely takes over the territory of the Promised Land. That was the condition following 70 A.D. when the Roman government, under the armies of Titus, destroyed and killed well over a million people in the siege on the city of Jerusalem.

What has happened is what God promised would happen. If they do not obey Him and if they do not keep the Word of God, then He will scatter them, and that's what the ifs apply to. So this is not a conditional covenant. The Palestinian covenant is not conditional. It does not depend on what Israel does as to whether she will continue to own the land, and whether she will forever inhabit it. The "if" has only the bearing upon their enjoying it at any point in time. The time is coming when God is going to correct the rebellion which is in the Jewish heart today, and bring her around so that all of Israel will once more be placed in the land, and thus in the place of blessing.

This, of course, is going to require salvation. The Jew is returning to Palestine today, but in unbelief. The Jew is not returning as a born again believer. So before Israel is returned to her land, and before she can obey the Lord, in other words, she must be saved. Romans 11:26 tells us that. You and I as believers today accept the unconditional salvation package. It's salvation by grace. We are saved. Our salvation is not contingent on whether we behave ourselves as Christians or not. However, our blessing is very much contingent upon whether we obey the Word of God and whether we have positive volition response to doctrine or not. But it does not affect our salvation.

In Deuteronomy 28:63-67, we had this declared to us--that if the Jews are disobedient, they will be dispersed. They are scattered in a state of insecurity throughout the nations of the world today. I want to remind you that this prophecy was written thousands of years ago--that the Jew would, at this point in time, be in a condition of dispersion throughout all the nations of the world.

In Deuteronomy 29:12-13, this Palestinian Covenant is tied back to that Abrahamic Covenant. We said that this is an amplification of the Abrahamic Covenant. So in Deuteronomy 29:12, we read, "That you should enter into the covenant with the Lord thy God, and unto His oath, which the Lord your God makes with you this day." This is the Palestinian Covenant that He is making. "That He may establish you today for a people unto Himself, and that He may be unto you a God as He has said unto you, and as He has sworn unto your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and, Jacob." So this Palestinian Covenant is tied back to the Abrahamic Covenant as an amplification of the Abrahamic promises.

Now getting to Deuteronomy 30:1: "And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon you, the blessing and the curse (that is, the blessing is obeying, and the curse is disobeying), which I have set before you, and you shall call them to mind among all the nations to which the Lord your God has driven you (which is where Israel is today), and shall return unto the Lord your God and shall obey His voice according to all that I command you this day, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that then the Lord your God will turn back captivity and have compassion upon you and will return and gather you from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you." This has never yet been fulfilled. This is a promise concerning what God is yet going to do for the Jewish people--His gathering of them together from whence they have been scattered around the face of the earth,

Verse 4: "If any of yours be driven out unto the outermost parts of heaven, from there will the Lord your God gather you, and from there will He fetch you. And the Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. And He will do you good and multiply you above your fathers." They are scattered now, but they will be regathered. "And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart." This is salvation, which is promised in the New Covenant. That's the New Covenant phase that fulfills the promise of blessing in the Abrahamic Covenant. "The Lord your God will circumcised your heart and the heart of your seed to love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul that you may live. And the Lord your God will put all these curses upon your enemies and on them who hate you, who persecuted you." The table will be turned against the people who are today the enemies of the Jews. "And you shall return and obey the voice of the Lord and do all His commandments which I command you this day."

So Israel shall return, and she shall obey the law. Then it goes on to tell about the blessings that will flow from this obedience upon the people once more. The future is not very bright for the Arab nations in view of what God is promising here that He will do to the enemies of the Jews. This is what He is going to do for His people when once He again gathers them into His land. When God said to Abraham, "I'll give you this land. I'll give it to you forever, to your descendants," that's exactly what He meant. The Palestinian covenant emphasizes that fact.

Ezekiel 37 describes for us the regathering of Israel. There it's a regathering which is predicted, but which is a regathering in unbelief, and that's what we're seeing today. This full regathering is not fulfilled until the Second Coming of Christ--not at the Rapture. The rapture takes care of us as believers, but at the Second Coming of Christ, that's when this regathering is complete. There are two phases to Christ's coming. There are two phases to the Second Coming of Christ. In Ezekiel 37:1-10, we have the first part described.

This is the famous passage which describes Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. Before his eyes, he sees these bones coming together, and muscle and flesh placed upon the bones. These bones are brought together in a person or a living personality, and a living human being is once more standing there before him. Now the interpretation that the prophet gives is that this represents Israel. Israel is scattered among the nations which looks like she's dead and gone. However, Ezekiel says that this is not so. What looks like a graveyard of bones, relative to the nation of Israel, is going to be brought together bone-to-bone in its right relationship. God will put it all back together, and the nation will again rise and come to life.

Going forward from Ezekiel 37 is where he explains this vision. Notice that verse 14 says, "'And shall put my spirit in you and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land. Then shall you know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it' says the Lord." Now God has not yet put the Jew in his own land. What the previous verses of this chapter are saying is that God is going to bring the nation together. Then verse 14 says that when they are brought together, they will also be born again. Every Jew there will be saved. Every Jew will recognize Christ--the one whom he has pierced and the one his forefathers killed on that cross as being indeed the Messiah. The result will be that conversion will come to the Jewish nation. Then they will be in their land in belief, as today they are there in unbelief.

Isaiah 11 and Ezekiel 11:16-21 described for us the completion of this gathering at the Second Coming of Christ. While all this is going on, if you want to know what's happening in the rest of the world, then you read Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 which give the course of the events within the gentile nations.

So that is the Palestinian Covenant in brief, and you may follow this in more detail at your leisure through the Scriptures. I just wanted to emphasize to you that the Bible is very clear that God is not through with the Jewish people. It gets a little tiresome to listen to amillennialists and people who are not really good students of the Word of God so they have brought the whole picture together with all the related details. It gets a little tiresome listening to people declaring that God has no further purpose for the Jewish nation. They say that there is no further prophetic history for the Jew, but that is not true. The Bible is very clear that God intends to bring them together again; to bring them out of their dispersion; and, to bring them together once and for all as believers within their own nation. They will once more be restored to the full blessings that God promised to Abraham.

The Palestinian Covenant is what crystallizes the promise of the land forever. There is no way for you to get around this by playing footloose with language and saying, "Well, it refers to my country; it refers to the nation in which the Jew happens to live; or, it refers to the land of heaven, and that's the place that all this applies to." That is not so. This is actually and literally the land along the Mediterranean Sea from the Euphrates to the Nile. That's what God promised. That's what He's going to give them. He's never done it yet. He will yet do it, and they will possess it forever. When will He do it? As Ezekiel indicated, when they have been brought together, bone-to-bone--the whole nation restored, and then the Spirit of God comes upon them in regeneration. That takes place at the Second Coming of Christ, and not before.

**The Law**

With that tying up of phase one of the dispensation of the Jews, we want to move on to phase two. Phase two is where most people get in trouble. Phase two of the dispensation of the Jews deals with the Mosaic Law. And boy, here's where the legalists have a heyday. Here's where the amillennialists go crazy. They go into spasms of ecstasy over all of the things that they can involve Christians with. The tither or the preacher who loves tithing is just beside himself when he gets to phase two of the dispensation of the Jews. Here's where he can get his clutches on the people of God, and pin them to the wall with the misconception that God says that they are under this Old Testament religious income tax of 10%, which was true of the Jews for the support of the temple, but which is not true of us. They like to talk about bringing your tithes into the storehouse. They take the temple and suddenly it becomes the magnificent church auditorium in which people gather on Sundays. That becomes the temple and the storehouse. These are human viewpoint devices in order to gain something out of the people of God and to justify something, very sincerely, on the basis of the portion of the dispensation of the Jews that deals with the law.

We're going to look into the Mosaic Law system. As you know, God fulfilled his promise to Abraham. Abraham's family, in 430 years, became in Egypt a great nation of some 2 million people. The Israelites were freed from slavery, and they returned, under the leadership of Moses, to the Promised Land. God had raised up Moses to be the deliverer in phase two of the dispensation of the Jews. Moses himself shied off from this responsibility. You can be sympathetic with him, I'm sure, as you could put yourself in his place and think about being called upon to form a free nation out of people who have been slaves all their lives. That was some job.

However, God had already solved this problem for Moses. God had made provision for this kind of a fantastic transformation--that people who were slaves should, practically overnight, become people who understand personal freedom and personal liberty as a nation and as individuals. God had solved the problem by making a provision in the form of the Mosaic Law. This is the law which God gave Moses, and which we call Bible doctrine, because that's what the law is. It is an expression of the points of view of God concerning various matters. These are doctrinal statements. As always, the solution for the problems of our lives is doctrine. Whatever your trouble is today and whatever your situation is today, doctrine is the solution.

However, you have to be careful with doctrine. You have to be careful to use it in the right way. This is like the most magnificent medicine that you may get to restore you to physical wellbeing. If you don't use it in the right way, it can work against you, and it can have a self-destructive effect. There are Christians who can take doctrine and use it in a way that excuses certain things within themselves and justifies certain failures within themselves, and they think that they are using what God has provided for them. What has happened is that Satan has taken doctrine, and he is using it for their own destruction. So I want to warn you when we say, and it is true, that doctrine solves every problem of life. If you know the answers from the Word of God, you've got the real answer.

At the same time, Satan can lead you to use it in an improper way. That's what the whole problem of the misunderstanding of dispensations is all about--people who don't understand that God has ages and times that He is progressing through them. Remember that in each one, God is showing to us one great thing--that man in himself is a total failure. I don't care what the conditions of life are, from the perfect environment in the beginning of the dispensation of the gentiles, to this one that we're going to look at now where God says, "Okay, I'm going to spell it out for you. I'm going to tell you in 613 specific rules how I want you to act. All you have to do is learn these 613 rules and keep them." We're going to find that they couldn't even keep them before Moses got down off the mountain with the regulations. They were already violating them. Every phase of every dispensation demonstrates man's incapacity to obey God, and shows us how helpless we are. God comes in and does the job for us.

So Moses was raised up. God gave him the solution in the form of the law. The Israelites needed a system of rules for their form of government. Their form of government was now changed from the patriarchal system, under which they had operated up to this time, and they went into a theocracy. A theocracy means a government which is ruled by God through certain human agents. Rules are essential in the governing of a group of people. In all areas of life, rules are essential. Consequently, authority is to be respected, but man by nature is a law breaker. For that reason, we need law enforcement for human survival.

The Mosaic Law as a system originated with God. It was revealed to Moses, but Ezra 7:12 makes it clear to us that this is the law of God. This is not something that Moses invented. This is not something where Moses got out in the wilderness and said, "Now listen. You know, I was reared up here at the Egyptian palace. I had the finest education of any of you here. The rest of you are a bunch of ignorant slaves. As you know, I was once a prince in Israel. Now I'm going to write a form of government. I have some background with the legal processes and the rules and the laws that we had in Egypt. I'm going to set up a system for us. I know something about medicine. I know something about social relationships and fairness." This is not so. Everything that's in this law came from God. It was not something that Moses put together.

When we say the "Mosaic Law," we mean that it was given to him to give to the people. As you know, they received it at Mount Sinai. There the divine laws of establishment were spelled out for a free nation in the Mosaic Law. For centuries to come, the happiness and the blessing of the Jews would rest upon obedience to these 613 specific regulations (Exodus 19:5-6). The law system was given to Jews who were born again. The law was never intended for a person who is not born again. The law was never intended for a gentile, and the law was never intended (God forbid) for a Christian. Now get that straight in your mind. If you do not catch hold of this concerning this dispensation, you'll miss the key that causes so much trouble today. The law was never given to anybody else but born again Jews. Period (Exodus 19:3, Deuteronomy 4:44). The law was therefore not a means of salvation. The Bible stresses this many times (Acts 15:10-11, Galatians 2:16, 21, Galatians 3:11-12).

Obedience to these 613 laws was dependent upon human willpower. That was another factor concerning the law. Today, your obedience to God is dependent upon you being willing to let the Holy Spirit function through you on the basis of doctrine that you have received, and He does the living. However, the poor Jew, when he had these 613 regulations, was confronted with obeying these laws entirely on his own capacity and within his own free (old sin nature) human will. Therefore, unbelievers can keep these rules today. Many unbelievers do keep many of them in a very moralistic way. However, it is not possible to be saved by keeping these rules (Titus 3:5). Keeping the law is a form of human works. It is dependent entirely on your human capacities. That's why keeping the law is a works system. It's a human works performance, and the Word of God tells us that people cannot be saved by human works.

**The Ten Commandments**

We have in this system of the law the Ten Commandments, as you know. This is a moral code which is provided for the protection of the life, liberty, privacy, and property of a nation. So even when unbelievers practice the Ten Commandments, they are blessed by it. Any nation which violates the moral code of the Ten Commandments on a widespread basis will disintegrate and be destroyed. History is replete with nations that have done exactly that. You and I as Christians come under a much higher code in the grace way of life which is revealed in the New Testament epistles.

So for the Jews, the law covered all of the moral, social, and religious issues that they had to concern themselves with. Therefore, three systems made up the Mosaic Law. The first was the moral law. This is described in Exodus 20:1-17. We call it the Ten Commandments. In the moral law, right and wrong was set forth. Remember that God is the only one who can make absolute statements on what is right and what is wrong. That's what He has done in the moral code. These, Romans 7:12 tells us, are holy, just, and good. Under this theocracy system, God was going to rule them through a group of leaders. Their morals were to be governed by these rules--this moral code that He laid out for them.

You and I in the United States live under a government which originally was founded upon this moral code, and with respect for it. It was woven into our structure of government and into our system of laws. We also have agents and representatives through whom we function in this government. We have, in a very similar way, a theocracy type of government. However, we do not have that direct line of communication that the Jews had with God in directing the national policies and the procedures of the nation.

By the way, a theocracy is the most fantastic system of government. A theocracy is the finest that there is. If you could have a theocracy, you'd have the best. That's what we're going to have in the millennium. Democracy, as Winston Churchill pointed out, is the best that we've been able to come up with, because every other system of government is even worse. So the theocracy is the finest, but the Jews didn't have the sense to recognize this. As you know, they came to a point where they argued that they wanted to be like the other nations, and they insisted on a monarchy which was nothing but a series of grief to them from then on.

The second part of the law system was the religious law. This is spelled out in Exodus 25-31. These are called the ordinances. These included the worship regulations relative to the worship of the Jews in the tabernacle, and later in the temple. It contained all the information on how God wanted the Jews to live in their worship of him after salvation. The third segment was the civil law which we have an Exodus 21-23. These are called the judgments. They set out the social regulations between the Jews. They covered such things as health laws; quarantine procedures; agricultural regulations; principles of warfare; and, many other things.

This was one law with three divisions. Please don't fall into the trap of thinking that they had the moral part of the law, the religious part of the law, and the civil part of the law. That is false. It was all one entity. That's what the problem is for people today who want to be under the law. They say, "Oh, I'm not a dispensationalist." You say, "Oh, you don't live under the law?" They say, "Oh yes, I do. I keep the law." You say, "What do you keep?" They say, "I keep the Ten Commandments." You say, "Oh, you do keep the Ten Commandments? Which ones do you keep?" Maybe they'll mention a couple of easy ones that they manage to keep. They don't want to mention a few that they're kind of rusty on. But they don't say, "Oh I bring my lamb every week to the temple to be sacrificed. Also, when I'm going to my temple on Saturday, if I catch a character out here playing golf, well, I stone him right on the spot--with golf balls. I fulfill the law. I don't fool around. Man, I'm faithful to the law."

This is the idiocy of trying to separate the segments of the law. That's what they'll do to you. They'll say, "Oh, we love the Ten Commandments." And the Ten Commandments is a moral code which indeed does apply to all humanity--believers and unbelievers. But it's not the law in itself. It is just part of it. It had three divisions. When Paul says in the New Testament that the law is gone, it was gone in total--in all three divisions. What God wanted us to know as believers in the age of grace, relative to the moral code of the Ten Commandments, He repeated under the teachings of grace in the New Testament. There is only one of the Ten Commandments that is not repeated in the New Testament epistles that Christians are to obey. That one happens to be the Sabbath day. Only the Sabbath day rule is not repeated in the New Testament. All the other regulations are repeated in the epistles. We don't obey the Sabbath day regulation because we are a new creation. We have a new day of worship which is Sunday.

**The Purpose of the Law**

Well, what was the purpose of the law? Well, I want you to understand that the law did not cancel out the promises that God gave to Abraham. They simply carried these promises to their fulfillment. The law constituted additional directives for this phase of the dispensation of the Jews, while the promises were being realized. The gentile nations continue under phase three of the dispensation of the gentiles--the phase of human government. The law was designed to prove to the people of Israel that they needed a savior (Romans 3:19-20). It was never designed as a means of salvation. It was never designed as a means of spirituality. You cannot be spiritual by keeping the law. That's what people think they can do today. You cannot be saved by keeping the law. Both of those ideas are human works operations.

How do you become spiritual today? You become spiritual by confessing all known sins biblically. In that moment, God the Holy Spirit is able to take control of your life, and you are a spiritual believer. You may be as dumb as a dodo bird when it comes to the knowledge of the Word of God, but you are spiritual. You may be a baby stage Christian, but you are spiritual. Keeping the law will not make you spiritual. It was designed to show people just how bad they were.

Before the law came into being, people sinned because they had an old sin nature. However, it was not put to their account as personal guilt (Romans 5:13). When the law was provided, now there were specific regulations that people were violating. The old sin nature was now bucking specific statements of the Word of God, and it was revealing what an incorrigible rebel the old sin nature was. Now sin was in a different category (Romans 7:7-8). So the law served to prove man's complete helplessness to the old sin nature (Romans 7:11-13). In this way the law pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:24, Galatians 4:4-5).

The law was to Israel as a schoolmaster was to a child in the ancient Greek world. A schoolmaster was really a slave who walked with a child to school; he saw to it that he paid attention in class; and, he then walked him home and saw to it that he didn't fool around on the way, and brought him home. When he became an adult, this supervisor was detached, and he was free and on his own. That's what the law did. It led the Jews to Christ in the days of their immaturity.

The demands of the law are very severe. The whole law has to be obeyed in all three divisions--all 613 rules. The whole law has to be obeyed if you are going to please God (James 2:10, Galatians 3:10). If the Jews failed in keeping even one law, the whole thing was broken for good. It's like the most beautiful china dish that you have at home. All you have to do is drop it once, and it only breaks in one place. However, it is broken, and it's repairable. It's done for. That's how the law was. It was a China dish, and once it was cracked or splintered or chipped, it was broken, no matter how small the failure was. The moment you failed in one point in keeping the law, the whole curse of the law that had been promised descended upon you. It was a horrible way of life for a believer--an absolutely fantastic horrid way of life. There was no way to keep the law. There was no way for you to walk before God in a way that was pleasing to Him because you couldn't keep the rules. Then if you broke one of them, the whole thing was against you, as if you had broken every one of them.

**The Limitations of the Law**

Here are the limitations of the law. The law could not justify a person. It couldn't save him (Galatians 3:10-11). The law would not give you life (Galatians 3:21). The law could not save (Galatians 2:16, Philippians 3:9, Hebrews 7:19). The law could not give you the Holy Spirit or spirituality (Galatians 3:2). The law could not do miracles (Galatians 3:5). Also, the law could not solve the problem of your indwelling sin nature (Romans 7:18). The law was good, holy, and right, yet, it brought a curse down upon the person who disobeyed it in one aspect (Romans 8:3). So Acts 15:10 tells us that Israel found it an unbearable yoke. In 2 King 17:7-17, we have the whole picture of Israel's failure under the law system.

The climax of this failure, of course, was that the Jews crucified the Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22-23, Matthew 27:22-26). So if you're going to try to live under the law, and you're going to say, "I'm going to please God by keeping the law," just remember that if you broke one point, you've had it. If you break one little rule of the 613, you have had it. That's the end of blessing under the law for you. As the Jews at Mount Sinai looked over this list of regulations and rules, it would have been better for them not to say what they said in Exodus 19:8: "All this we will do." It would have been better for them to say, "Lord God, you know us for what we are. We have demonstrated to you for a year out here in this wilderness what we are. You know that we cannot keep this. We cast ourselves rather upon your grace. Do not put this burden and this bondage upon us." That would have been smart, and God would have honored the request.

Today, we as Christians fail in the same way they failed--through negative volition in spite of our divinely provided capacity to obey. We're even worse. We have the capacity that they did not (Romans 7:18), and yet we fail in a most fantastic way. So this is a brief review as we are whipping our way through these dispensations, and we're in phase two of the dispensation of the Jews. This is a brief review of the law--what God intended by the law system; the role that it was to play; and, how you may relate to it today. The way you relate to the law system is to thank God that you're not under it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971

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