



Devotion to God
Devotion to
one another

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Contents

Introduction	4
Pre-Sinai	5
Pre-Flood.....	5
Post-Flood	7
Israel.....	8
Laws	9
Laws regarding God	9
Laws regarding People and property	9
Covenant Laws	11
Compassion for People	11
Purge the Evil from among you	11
Be an example to the World	12
Purpose of the Law	12
Church	12
Proclamation of the Gospel	12
The Holy Spirit.....	13
Jesus	14
Gospel	14
New Testament Laws.....	14
Blessed are	15
Example and Witness.....	16
Prayer.....	16
Caring for People.....	16
Heart Issues.....	16
Fruit of the Spirit	18
Faith and Works	18
Strive and Persevere	18
Marriage and Divorce	18
Harmony within the Church.....	18
Spiritual Gifts.....	19
Reconciliation.....	19
Sabbath and Feasts	19

Christian workers	19
Instructions and Laws	19
Hierarchy	19
Civil Laws	20
Church Structure	20
Evil People	20
Immorality	20
Judging	21
Purge the Evil from among you.....	21
Evil People will not Inherit the Kingdom of God	22
Summary	22

Introduction

Jesus summed up the commands of God in the following way:

And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' "This is the great and foremost commandment. "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matt 22:37-40)

The Apostle John wrote the following

"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." (Joh 14:21)

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. (1Jn 5:2-3)

This theme runs right from Adam and Eve through to Revelation. We find people like Abel, Enoch, Noah, Job, Abraham, Moses, Elijah and others that are truly devoted to God. The thing that we note here is that without knowing God and His commands, we would not know what it means to truly love our neighbour and have a reason for loving our neighbour as He defines these terms. We tend to have different ideas as to what it means to love others; for some it is never confronting anyone on what they have done wrong or a bad direction that they are going. For others, it means warning people of impending danger, even if it means risking the relationship. Love needs to be defined the way God defines it in Scripture. In this study, we will examine the three periods, the pre-Sinai period, the Sinai covenant and the new covenant. Right from the fall with Adam and Eve, works or obeying the law could never bring about a reconciliation with God. It was always the grace of God that provided for the reconciliation between God and man. The great faith chapter in Hebrews 11 speaks of the faith that God's people exhibited throughout history. This faith believed God and always worked itself out in the actions of those who believed God by obeying His commands. The apostle Paul and James focus on this issue. Works will never save anyone, and faith without works is also dead.

Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. (Gen 5:24)

By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. (Heb 11:7)

The other truth is that man's sin was always atoned for by the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross.

They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one (Ps. 14:3) (Ps 53:1, Ecc 7:20, Ro 3:10)

nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. (Gal. 2:16)

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (Joh 3:16)

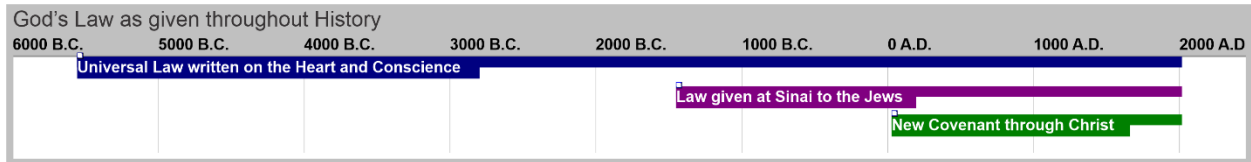
*Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. (Joh 14:6)*

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Act 4:12)

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; (Rom 3:23-25)

For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. (1Ti 2:5-6)

See also Hebrews, especially chapter 10, also 1 Jn 2:2,



Pre-Sinai

Pre-Flood

The pre-flood account has very few commands, but it is quite obvious from the text that the people during this time knew right from wrong, after all, Adam and Eve had eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

When God created Adam and Eve, he gave them a few commands that are recorded. The first command to Adam was that he could eat from any tree in the garden, but he was not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If he was to eat of it, he would surely die. (Gen 2:16) God made the animals and brought them to Adam so that he could name them. God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply and then gave them dominion over His creation to subdue it and rule over it. They were also given the plants and the fruit of the trees for food. The institution of marriage was initiated here; one man and one woman became one flesh.

After Adam and Eve disobeyed, we come to some passages where judgement is pronounced and executed. After eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they knew what was right and what was wrong. Even though people knew God, they suppressed the truth. The apostle Paul expounds on this in his epistle to the Romans (Ro 1:16-Ro 4:12). We see that people before the flood rebelled against God and were very violent. After the flood, people again rebelled against God and worshipped all sorts of false gods as is borne out by the records that we have from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Canaan and other parts of the world.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, (Rom 1:18-22)

For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, (Rom 2:12-15)

Sometimes Romans 2 is construed to mean that people who have never heard the Gospel can be saved by just doing good things, since they know what is right and wrong and can choose to do the right thing. Paul starts this whole section with *"For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law" (Rom. 2:12)* *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them."*(Rom. 1:16-19) The context is that faith in God is required for salvation and that judgement comes on all who do not exhibit faith. If we look at the two commandments that the law and the prophets hinge on, the first one requires loving God with all your heart, soul and mind, so if you only work on the second and do not love God, then there would be no salvation. The good works need to be a result of acknowledging God and obeying His will from the heart. Scripture says that there is no one who is righteous and never sins. (Ps 14:1, Ps 53:1, Ecc 7:20, Ro 3:10) Paul goes on to say *because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; (Rom. 3:20-24)* (Ro 3:8-20) *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. (Rom. 3:28-30)* *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." (Rom. 4:2-3)* *nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. (Gal. 2:16)* *"I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly." (Gal. 2:21)*

For the first 4200 Years or so from Creation to the giving of the law, people were justified by faith as evidenced by their love for God and following His law as written in their hearts. This is where we find Enoch, Noah, Job, Abraham and Moses (Heb 11). People who rebelled against God were also without excuse, since it is obvious from all of creation that there is a true Creator-God. From the giving of the law to Jesus Christ is about 1400 Years and from Jesus to the present about 2000 Years.

Abel is listed in Hebrews 11 and showed his devotion to God through the presentation of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions as his offering by faith. Cain is confronted on the offering that he presented and then on murdering his brother. What is interesting to note here is that in the pre-flood time, there is no record of capital punishment for murder. In fact, Cain is left to experience the consequence of his sin by not being killed and a mark being put on him so that he would not be killed. Additionally, Cain being a farmer, was no longer going to have the ground bear fruit for him. Enoch's walking with God shows his devotion to God and he was taken by God at the age of 365.

By the time that we get close to the flood, a couple of thousand years after creation, we read God's assessment of the situation:

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Gen 6:5)

Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. (Gen 6:11-12)

In light of this situation, God pronounces a judgement against "all flesh" that is on the earth. Only Noah was found to be righteous and was saved, along with his family. (Gen 6:8-9, Gen 7:1, 2 Pe 2:5). Noah was devoted to God and cared about other people as is evidenced by him preaching to them and calling for them to repent. Of note here is that obviously no one was without excuse and all were found guilty. Everyone knew what was right and wrong and they chose to rebel against God's way. Noah had been preaching to them for many years as he was building the ark and most likely even prior to that. There were no "innocent" people that perished in the flood. Jesus said that the most important commandment was to "Love the Lord Your God with all your heart and soul and mind." This then means that even though people may do things that may seem good to us, they are still not obeying the most important command.

Post-Flood

After the flood, God again commands them to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth. At this time, God also gave mankind meat to eat along with the plants. Meat was not to be consumed with its lifeblood in it. At this point, capital punishment is instituted.

"Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man. (Gen 9:5-6)

It is amazing how fast people turn away from righteousness. Here we have Noah, a very righteous man who, along with his family, have just experienced God's judgment on the world with the flood, A few hundred years later, we come to the account of the "tower of Babel". The people had not dispersed the

way that they were commanded and were in fact building a “tower” in order to deliberately keep from being scattered.

They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." (Gen 11:4)

At this point God steps in and confuses their language and disperses them over the face of the earth. We have very little personal history recorded from the time of Noah to the time of Abraham, but we are told that Abraham’s immediate family worshipped other gods.

Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods. (Jos 24:2)

In Genesis 18-19 there is another account of judgement, this time for arrogance, gross immorality and not helping the poor and needy. Abraham interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah, but not even ten righteous people were found there.

And the LORD said, "The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. (Gen 18:20)

and they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them." (Gen 19:5)

"Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy. "Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it. (Eze 16:49-50)

just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. (Jud 1:7)

In Genesis 15:16, we are also told that the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete. Here we see again the patience of God and that He will execute His judgement in due time. It is also in this time frame that a righteous man, named Job, lived. He did what was right in God’s eyes and maintained his integrity through trials. We also meet Melchizedek, a king and priest of God Most High (Gen 14:18).

Israel

During this time, over a thousand years after the flood, God starts the next phase by calling Abraham to go to the land of Canaan and promising the land to him. God promises to make Abraham a great nation, that He would bless him and that Abraham would be a blessing to all the families of the earth. (Gen 12:2-3) Abraham is called “a friend of God” (2Ch 20:7, Jas 4:4).

After the sojourn of Abraham’s descendants in Egypt, Moses is called to bring them out of Egypt. They come to mount Sinai where the law is given and the covenant is made. The covenant required obedience on the part of Israel. At this point in time, God’s requirements are written down. Some of the

commands relate specifically to Israel and their covenant relationship with all the “Levitical” laws. Many of the laws really spell out what it means to love God and love our neighbour.

'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." (Exo 19:5-6)

Laws

While we are not going to list all the laws that are presented, we will list enough to get a really good idea as to what was required. There is a list of 613 Old Testament laws that have been compiled in the middle ages and are available from several sources. One such list is found [here](#)

Laws regarding God

Then God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before Me. "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. (Exo 20:1-11)

Death Penalty Laws regarding God

- ❖ He who sacrifices to any god, other than to the LORD alone, shall be utterly destroyed. (Ex 22:20)
- ❖ Working on the sabbath (Ex 31:14-15, Ex 35:2)
- ❖ Blaspheming the name of the Lord (Lev 24:16)
- ❖ Serving other gods (Deu 17:2-7)
- ❖ Prophets, dreamers or anyone else that would lead people away from God (Deu 13:5-10)
- ❖ Sacrificing offspring to Molech (Lev 20:2)
- ❖ Going up the mountain of God or touching it (Ex 19:12)
- ❖ Layman coming near to the tabernacle when it is being set up or taken down (Num 1:51, Num 3:10, Num 3:38)

As we examine this, we see that any violation of the commands regarding God are subject to the death penalty.

Laws regarding People and property

The primary laws regarding the interaction between people are also listed in the ten commandments

"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you. "You shall not murder. "You shall not commit adultery. "You shall not steal. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor." (Exo 20:12-17)

Here is a partial list of the commands that are given

- ❖ Help your enemy if his animal has wandered away or if his animal is lying helpless under its load (Ex 23:4-5)
- ❖ You are not to pervert justice (Ex 23:6-8)
- ❖ You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind (Lev 19:14)
- ❖ Do not hate your fellow countryman (Lev 19:17)
- ❖ Love your neighbour as yourself and not take revenge or hold a grudge (Lev 19:18)
- ❖ Do no wrong in regard to measurement, weight or capacity (Lev 19: 35-36, Deu 25:13-16)
- ❖ Pay the labourers (Lev 19:13, Deu 24:15)
- ❖ Do not wrong one another (Lev 25:17)
- ❖ A stranger is not to be oppressed or wronged (Ex 22:21)
- ❖ A widow or orphan is not to be afflicted (Ex 22:22)
- ❖ People were not to charge interest to their fellow Israelites. (Ex 22:25, Lev 25:36-37, Deu 23:19)
- ❖ Do not curse God or the ruler of your people (Ex 22:28)
- ❖ Fulfill your vows (Num 30:1-16, Deu 23:21)
- ❖ Do not move a boundary marker (Deu 19:14)
- ❖ Build a parapet for your house (flat roofed houses where people would be) so as not to incur bloodguilt (Deu 22:8)
- ❖ Honour the aged (Lev 19:32)
- ❖ Men not to wear women's clothes or women wearing men's clothes (Deu 22:5)

Death Penalty Laws regarding Social Interactions

- ❖ Murder (Ex 21:12, Lev 24:21, Num 35:16-19, Num 35:30-31)
- ❖ Striking father or mother (Ex 21:15)
- ❖ Kidnapping (Ex 21:16)
- ❖ Cursing father or mother (Ex 21:17)
- ❖ Men struggling with one another and killing the baby in the womb of a woman (Ex 21:22-23)
- ❖ Owner of an Ox in the habit of goring (Ex 21:29)
- ❖ Lying with an animal (Ex 22:19, Lev 20:15-16)
- ❖ Adultery (Lev 20:10, Deu 22:22)
- ❖ Sex with wife of father (Lev 20:11)
- ❖ Sex with daughter-in-law (Lev 20:12)
- ❖ Homosexuality (Lev 20:13)
- ❖ Marriage to a woman and her daughter (Lev 20:14)
- ❖ Sorceress, medium and spiritist (Ex 22:18, Lev 20:27)
- ❖ Daughter of a priest committing harlotry (Lev 21:9)
- ❖ Stubborn and rebellious son (Deu 21:18-21)
- ❖ Sexual immorality, sex before marriage (Deu 22:13-30)

- ❖ Disobedience to the Priest or Judge in office regarding homicide, lawsuit or other disputes of the law (Deu 17:8-12)

Covenant Laws

We will not list many here as they are no longer applicable since the time of Christ and the establishment of the new covenant.

- ❖ Do not till the land in the sabbatical year (Ex 23:11, Lev 25:4)
- ❖ There is a long list of laws regarding the priesthood and regulations regarding the tabernacle
- ❖ There is a list of clean and unclean animals (a note here is that even in Noah's time, there were clean and unclean animals Gen 7:2)
- ❖ The feasts and their regulations are listed

Compassion for People

- ❖ If you find your enemy's animal, return it (Ex 23:4)
- ❖ Help the one that hates you (Ex 23:5)
- ❖ Do not oppress a stranger (Ex 23:9)
- ❖ Do not charge interest (Lev 24:35-43)
- ❖ Leave some of the produce of the field for the poor (Lev 19:9-10, 23:22)
- ❖ Help the poor (Deu 15:7-11)

He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God? (Mic 6:8)

Purge the Evil from among you

A common theme for the giving of the commandments and the judgements for disobedience is to "purge the evil from among you" (Deu 13:5, Deu 17:7, Deu 17:12, Deu 19:19, Deu 22:21, Deu 22:24, Deu 24:7). As you consider that prior to the flood, evil and violence went rampant, and that after the flood, people again rebelled against God, it becomes obvious why God, in His covenant at Sinai, put these laws in place so as to have a people that would be obedient to Him, love Him and love others.

Israel was to be separate from the peoples around them so that they would not become corrupt themselves and forsake God. In Deuteronomy 7:2-5, the inhabitants of the land are to be completely destroyed and no covenant is to be made with them because they will turn the Israelites from serving God. (Also, Ex 23:31-33, Ex 34:12-17, Pro 13:20)

When David committed adultery with Bathsheba, the response to David was "*because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme*" (2 Sa 12:14). An interesting note on this is that even though David had committed adultery and murder (having Uriah the Hittite killed in battle), God did not have him executed as the law required, instead, Nathan the prophet said that God had forgiven his sin. (2 Sa 12:13)

'Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. (2Sa 12:9)

As we read the words of the prophets, we see that it is because of Israel's disobedience to God and not purging the evil from among them, that they were exiled. For example, read Jeremiah chapters 7 and 11. This is a pattern right from the period of the judges to the exile to Babylon. The main reasons usually provided for the punishment of Israel were idolatry, murder and mistreatment of the poor and needy.

Be an example to the World

"See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. "So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' "For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him? "Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today? (Deu 4:5-8)

Purpose of the Law

The purpose of the law was never to provide a way for mankind to redeem himself through his works. The apostle Paul addresses this issue in specifically in his letters to the Romans and Galatians. (Ro 3:20) Essentially, the law revealed God's requirements, exposed sin and desired to stir people to draw close to God by choosing to obey Him for their own good. Obedience to the law was to be a response to the goodness of God and a change in heart.

And because he loved your fathers and chose their offspring after them and brought you out of Egypt with his own presence, by his great power, driving out before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land for an inheritance, as it is this day, know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other. Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for all time." (Deu 4:37-40 ESV)

"Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? "Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. "Yet on your fathers did the LORD set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. "So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. (Deu 10:12-16)

Since this was a covenant which required obedience on the part of the nation of Israel, there were blessing and curses associated with obedience and disobedience. Deuteronomy chapter 28 records these. We note that there are far more curses than blessings.

Church

Proclamation of the Gospel

The "first" edition of the law was written on the heart and the conscience. Obviously, people did not respond very well as they rebelled against God and became exceedingly wicked resulting in the

judgement of the flood. The next edition was the written law given during the exodus time starting at Mount Sinai. Again, even with the written law and Israel being charged with being a great example to all the nations, they failed as well. With the coming of Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God, we now move on to God coming and showing us how to love God and others. With the New Covenant, the laws of God were put on the mind and written on the heart along with the Holy Spirit being given to all believers to empower them.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matt 28:19-20)

For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM," He then says, "AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE." Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin. (Heb 10:14-18)

"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, (Joh 15:26)

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you. (Joh 16:13-15)

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Act 1:8)

The Holy Spirit

One of the most striking changes is the emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is also the only "unforgivable sin". (Mat 12:31, Mar 3:29, Luk 12:10) The Holy Spirit was at work prior to the day of Pentecost in Acts, but there was a definite change at Pentecost. The apostles were already believers prior to the resurrection, but in John 20:22 we read that Jesus breathed on them in order for them to receive the Holy Spirit and at Pentecost the Spirit came upon them and filled them (Act 2:4). Prophecy occurred through the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2Pe 1:20-21)

In Acts 2:38, Peter states that repenting and being baptized for the forgiveness of sins will result in receiving the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit provides power to be witnesses and provides spiritual gifts (Act 1:8, 1Co 12:1-11). There are many passages in Acts, for example, where the disciples were proclaimed to be full of the Holy Spirit or acted in the power of the Spirit. The Spirit also has a very active role in all

that happens in the church and directing the believers. Paul writes “But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him”. (Rom 8:9) Paul also writes

I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (1Co 2:3-5)

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, (Tit 3:5)

When the Holy Spirit works in a person, there is evidence (Gal 5:22-23).

Jesus

Much can be written about Jesus, but some of the basics are:

- All things that have been created in the heavens and on the earth have been created through Him (Col 1:15)
- Jesus is fully God and fully man
- Jesus was born through the power of the Holy Spirit by the virgin Mary
- Jesus’ death on the cross has atoned for the sin of all (only those who accept this payment for their sins will gain eternal life)
- Jesus was raised on the third day and then ascended to heaven

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. (Joh 14:6)

Gospel

A study of what the gospel is and what it means is quite useful and enlightening. It would be good for each one to look up all the occurrences of the word “gospel” to get a clear meaning. The New Testament speaks a lot about “preaching the gospel” and holding on to the gospel and not distorting it. The Gospel definition ranges from the narrow aspect of the payment of our sins by the Lord Jesus and His resurrection to proclaiming all truth of God and calling for repentance.

New Testament Laws

In the New Testament, we find that there is a much greater emphasis on motives and the heart. The following lists are not designed to be comprehensive, otherwise much of the New Testament would need to be listed or referenced, rather this is a representative list, covering the main topics.

"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. (Luk 16:16)

For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. (Joh 1:17)

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. (Gal 5:18)

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been

faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; (Heb 8:6-8)

The Mount Sinai covenant has been replaced with a new covenant.

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (Jer 31:31-33)

And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. (Lk. 22:20)

In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." (1Co 11:25)

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. (Heb 8:13)

The Jerusalem council in Acts 15 settled the matter of keeping the ceremonial law. It is quite obvious though from Jesus' teaching and from the letters, that this did not mean that people could just disregard all of God's law and instructions. In fact, as you read the instructions, they seem to go even further and go to the heart of the matter. For example, in Matthew 5:27-28 Jesus says that if a man looks at a woman with lust for her, he has already committed adultery. The apostle Paul also states that "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;" (2Ti 3:16)

Blessed are

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 5:3)

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (Matt. 5:4)

"Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. (Matt. 5:5)

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (Matt. 5:6)

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. (Matt. 5:7)

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Matt. 5:8)

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (Matt. 5:9)

"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 5:10)

"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. (Matt. 5:11)

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. (Lk. 6:20)

"Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. (Lk. 6:21)

"Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. (Lk. 6:22)

Example and Witness

- *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matt. 28:19-20) (Mk 16:15)*
- Be salt of the earth (Matt 5:13, Mar 9:50, Luk 14:34-35)
- Be the light of the world (Matt 5:14-16, Luk 11:33)
- Proclaim the kingdom of God, preach the Gospel, repentance (Lk 9:2-6, Mk 6:12, Mk 16:20)
- If you confess Jesus before men, Jesus will confess you before God and the angels (Matt 10:32, Lk 12:8-9)
- Live lives in such a way so that Jesus and the ministry will not be discredited (2 Co 6:3, Col 4:5, 1 Th 4:12, 1 Ti 3:7, 1 Pe 2:12)

Prayer

- Jesus is recorded as praying many times (Mat 14:23, Mat 26:36, Mk 6:46, Lk 6:12, Jn 17)
- Christians ought to pray consistently (Lk 18:1, Ro 1:9-10, Eph 6:18-19, Col 1:3, 9, 1 Th 3:10, 1 Th 5:17, 25, 1 Ti 2:1, Jud 1:20)

Caring for People

- Be servants (Matt 20:25-28, Matt 23:11-12, Mk 10:43, Lk 22:24-26)
- The parable of the sheep and goats (Matt 25:31-46)
- Serve one another (Matt 20:26, Mk 10:43, Jn 13:14, Ro 12:10)
- Love your neighbour as yourself (Gal 5:14, Matt 22:39, Jas 2:8)
- Sell your possession and give to the poor (Matt 19:21, Lk 12:33, Lk 18:22, Lk 19:8, Act 2:45, Act 4:32-37)
- Be devoted to one another, contribute to the needs of believers (Matt 19:21, Act 2:44-45, Act 4:34, Ro 12: 10 & 13, 1 Jn 3:17)
- Care for widows (Act 6:1-6)
- Encourage one another (Heb 3:13,
- Respect weaker believers in their beliefs (1 Co 8:1-13, 1 Co 10:23-24)

Heart Issues

- *"You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'" (Matt. 15:7-9) (Mk 7:6-7)*
- *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. (Jn. 14:15) (Jn 14:21, 1 Jn 5:3, 2 Jn 2:3)*

- *"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. (Jn. 15:12) (Jn 13:34, Jn 15:17, Ro 12:10, 1 Jn 3:23)*
- *"But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. (Matt. 15:18-19)(Mk 7:19-21)*
- *"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart. (Lk. 6:45)*
- *Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (2 Tim. 2:22)*
- For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Heb. 4:12)
- *Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, (1 Pet. 1:22)*
- *"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. "The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matt. 12:33-37)*
- Angry person is guilty before the court (Matt 5:21-22, 1 Jo 3:15, Eph 4:26)
- A man looking at a woman with lust has already committed adultery in his heart (Matt 25: 27, Jam 1:15)
- Do not be righteous in front of others in order to be noticed (Matt 6:1-6, Matt 6:16)
- Do not store up treasures on earth (Matt 6:19-24, Lk 12:33-34)
- Trust God and do not worry (Matt 6:25, Lk 12:21-34)
- Compassion not sacrifice (Matt 9:13, Matt 12:7)
- It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath (Matt 12:12)
- The things that come from the mouth are what defiles a person (Matt 15:11, Matt 15:18-20, Matt 12:34)
- Clean the inside (Matt 23:23-28, Lk 11:38-46)
- Good comes from the good treasure of the heart (Matt 12:35, Lk 6:45)
- Be on your guard against greed (Lk 12:15)
- You cannot serve both money and God (Lk 16:13, Mat 6:24, 1 Ti 6:10, Heb 13:5)
- Repent (Lk 13:3-5, Act 2:38)
- Bless those who persecute you (Ro 12:14, Mat 5:44, Lk 6:28, 1 Pet 3:9)
- Keep from strife and jealousy (Ro 13:13)
- Love (1 Co 13, 1 Pe 4:8)
- Love from a pure heart (1 Tim 1:5)
- Be angry, but do not sin or let the sun go down on your anger (Eph 4:26)
- Be content with your circumstances (Php 4:11-12)

Fruit of the Spirit

- *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22-23)*
- Bear fruit in every good work (Col 1:10)

Faith and Works

- Faith and works go hand in hand (Matt 7:17-27, Lk 6:47, Jam 1:22, Lk 11:28, 1 Jo 2:3, Gal 5:6, Heb 11:7)
- Lose your life for Jesus (Matt 16:24-25, Matt 10:38, Lk 9:23, Lk 14:27, Mar 10:21, Matt 19:21, Mk 8:34)
- John the Baptist preached repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Share your possessions, be upright in your dealings, do not take money by force or accuse falsely, be content with your wages. (Mk 1:4, Lk 3:3-14)
- Deny yourself and take up your cross daily (Matt 10:38, Matt 16:24, Mk 8:34, Lk 9:23-24, Lk 14:27)
- Parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37)
- Forget what is behind and press on forward to the goal (Php 3:13-14)

Strive and Persevere

- One of the themes in the New Testament is striving, persevering and focusing on God. Lk 13:24, 1 Ti 4:10, Ph 3:12-14, He 6:1, 1 Co 9:24-26, He 12:1, Phi 2:12, 2 Ti 2:4, Jam 1:12, 2 Pe 1:5-11, Rev 13:10)
- In Revelation chapters two and three, Jesus praises their perseverance and exhorts them to continue on and overcome.

Marriage and Divorce

- Marriage was instituted as one man and one woman at creation
- Divorce is only permitted for if the spouse has committed sexual immorality (Matt 5:32, Matt 19:3-9, Luk 16:18, Mar 10:2-12). The freedom to remarry is assumed here as that was the normal arrangement at the time.
- In 1 Co 7:15, Paul allows for an unbelieving spouse to leave. Scholars differ on whether this allows the believing partner to remarry after the divorce.
- Moses allowed divorce because of the hardness of heart of the people, but that is not the way it should be (Matt 19:7-8)

Harmony within the Church

- People within the church are to agree with one another and that there be no divisions. This does not mean compromising on essential doctrines though. (1 Co 1:10-13, 1 Co 3:3-6, Php 2:2, Php 4:2, Rom 12:16, Eph 4:1-3)
- Do not look down on poor people (Jam 2:1-9, Act 6:1)
- There is to be no strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances; (2 Cor. 12:20)
- Be kind and tender-hearted and forgive (Eph 4:32, Col 3:12-13)
- Encourage one another (1 Th 5:11, Heb 3:13)
- Do not discriminate (Jam 2:1-10)

Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are given for edifying the church. (1 Co 12, 1 Co 14, Ro 12:1-8, Eph 4:11)

Reconciliation

- Be reconciled before presenting your offering (Matt 5:23-24)
- Reach a settlement with your adversary quickly (Matt 5:25, Lk 12:58-59)
- Address sin and excommunication (Matt 18:15-17, 1 Co 5:1-13, 2 Co 2:6-10)
- Forgive (Matt 18:21-22, Mk 11:25-26, Lk 17:3-4, Matt 6:12, Col 3:13)
- Do not go to law against one another (1 Co 6:1-10, Matt 5:39-40)

Sabbath and Feasts

- The Sabbath was made for people (Mk 2:27)
- Do good on the Sabbath (Matt 12:12, Mk 3:1-5)
- Do not judge regarding Sabbath or Feasts (Col 2:16, Ro 14:5)

Christian workers

- Pastors, teachers and others that are involved in the ministry are entitled to be paid (Lk 10:7, 1 Co 9:14, 1 Tim 5:18).
- Elders are to be honoured (1 Tim 5:17, 1 Th 5:12-13)
- Accurately handle the word of God (2 Ti 2:15)
- Teachers are subject to a stricter judgement (Jam 3:1)

Instructions and Laws

- Abstain from things contaminated by idols (Act 15:20 & 29)
- Avoid sexual immorality (Act 15:20 & 29, 1 Th 4:3)
- Avoid eating strangled animals and the blood of animals (Act 15:20 & 29, Gen 9:4)
- Paul preached *to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. (Acts 26:20)*
- *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; (Rom. 12:9-10)*
- *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. (Rom. 12:18)*
- Keep away from those who cause dissensions and hinderances contrary to the truth. (Ro 16:17)
- Do not be partners with unbelievers (2 Co 6:14-15)
- Lead a quiet, productive life (1 Th 4:11, 2 Th 3:7-12)
- Respect those over you (1 Ti 6:1-2, Tit 2:9) While this specifically addresses slaves and masters, it equally applies to all who have authority over us such as employers.
- *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, (Eph. 2:10)*

Hierarchy

We see within the Scriptures several places where hierarchy is discussed and obedience to those who have authority

- Jesus spoke to the crowds and told them to obey their religious leaders, but not to do what they did. (Matt 23:2)

- Slaves were to be obedient to their masters. This would by inference include employers. (Eph 6:5, 1 Ti 6:1-2, Tit 2:9)
- There is another order which could be listed from top to bottom as God-Jesus-Church-Man-Woman-child (Eph 5:22, Col 3:18-20, 1 Pe 3:6-7)

Civil Laws

Paul commands in Ro 13:1-7 to obey governing authorities and to pay taxes and customs. Also 1 Pe 2:13-18, Tit 3:1-2.

Church Structure

- At the beginning, the Apostles were seen as the leaders with Peter being the head of the group
- As issues arose with serving the widows, men were chosen to deal with this issue so that the apostles could focus on prayer and the ministry of the Word. (Act 6:1-6)
- Over time, elders were added to the apostles (Act 11:30, Act 15:2-6)
- Elders were appointed (Act 14:23, Tit 1:5)
- Elders, overseers and deacons are to be men of good character and are to be tested. (1 Tim 3:1-13, Tit 1:5-9)
- Women were also to be of the same character when being considered for deacons (1 Ti 3:11)
- A contentious issue today relates to Paul's instructions regarding women. Women were not to teach or have authority over a man (1 Ti 2:12-14). He takes the reason for this back to Genesis, thus eliminating the argument that it was a cultural issue. It must also be noted though that obviously women were involved in the ministry as they are mentioned throughout Scripture, so this seems to be primarily an authority issue.

Evil People

- Do not resist an evil person and love your enemies (Matt 5:39-48, Luk 6:27-35, 1 Pe 3:9, Ro 12:17-19, 1 Th 5:15)
- Pray for those who persecute you (Matt 5:44)
- *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Rom. 12:21)*

Immorality

There are many references related to avoiding all evil and immorality.

- Jesus started His ministry by calling people to repent (Matt 4:17, Mk 1:15)
- Peter and Paul called for repentance (Act 3:19, Act 17:30, Act 26:20)
- The letters to the churches in the book of Revelation call for repentance (Rev 2:5, Rev 2:16, Rev 2:21-22, Rev 3:3, Rev 3:19)
- In the book of Revelation, we read of people who refuse to repent (Rev 9:20-21, Rev 16:9, Rev 16:11)
- *For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Eph 5:5)*
- *Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:19-21)*

- *But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Eph. 5:3-5) also Col 3:5-9*

Judging

There are a number of passages relating to judging and all need to be looked at to get a comprehensive understanding.

- Do not judge so that you also will not be judged (Matt 7:1-2, Lk 6:37, Ro 2:1, Ro 14:3-13, 4:11-12, Jas 4:11-12)
- Judge those in the church (1 Co 5:12-6:5)
- Judge rightly (Jn 7:24, 1 Co 11:14)
- Do not judge regarding food or drink (Ro 14:3-5, Col 2:16)
- You will know them by their fruits (Matt 7:20, Matt 12:33, Lk 6:44, Jam 3:12)
- Be merciful (Lk 6:36, Jas 2:13)
- God judges those outside the church (1 Co 5:13)

Purge the Evil from among you

This theme is continued in the New Testament (Ro 2:24, 2 Pe 2:2), and we can see from Jesus' teaching and even our world, that the "believers" i.e. Jews and Christians can be quite hypocritical and bring about the deriding of the Name of God. First Corinthians speaks specifically to this issue and lists a number of reasons for excommunication for the purpose of repentance of the sinner.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul admonishes the church not to associate with immoral people in the church, but to expel the immoral person because of the damage it will do to the church as the immorality spreads. (1 Co 5:1-13, also 2 Th 3:6-15) Additionally, we also need to look at some other passages to round out this teaching. In 1 Corinthians 15:33, he states that bad company corrupts good morals. In 2nd Corinthians 2:6-8, Paul now asks the church to take the repentant sinner back into their fellowship. Paul tells Timothy (1 Tim 1:3) to instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines. He also asks him to pay attention to his teaching to ensure salvation for himself and those who hear him. Paul continues in 1 Tim 6:3-5 and 6:20 talking about people that advocate a different doctrine and instructs Timothy to flee from these things. Timothy is instructed to accurately handle the word of truth and gently correct those who are in opposition.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (2Ti 3:16)

preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (2Ti 4:2-4)

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Peter in his second letter also addresses the issue of false teachers and that Scripture was not made by an act of human will, but rather that men who were moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. It is quite important to note that all of Scripture is inspired and authoritative.

Since we have been called to go and make disciples of all the world, we need to be wise in our interactions with unbelievers and not let them affect our dedication to God, but rather to impart God's love to them and share the good news with them.

Evil People will not Inherit the Kingdom of God

- 1 Co 6:9-10 gives a list of people who will not inherit the kingdom. See also Eph 5:5-6, Rev 21:8, Lk 13:3-5

Summary

God created mankind in His image and desires to have fellowship with all people. He gave mankind intelligence, personhood and the freedom to choose. Adam disobeyed and brought about a sin nature to all mankind resulting in both physical and spiritual death. God has made His will evident and known to all people so that all are without excuse. It is each person's choice as to whether they will obey God and be devoted to Him or to rebel against Him. It is by faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning death and resurrection that eternal life is obtained. This faith in God was demonstrated by people from the beginning of creation on to the present as they acknowledged their own sin and trusted in God. This faith is to have its outworking demonstrated through our love and devotion to God and to others. The Scriptures expound on this and record the successes and failures of various people.

And He said to him, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' "This is the great and foremost commandment. "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matt 22:37-40)