

Don't Mistake Christ for Destroying the Law

Christ warned us to not mistake Him as destroying the law or the prophets, "Think not that I am come to destroy **the law**, or the prophets" (Mat 5:17). And that we must live to God's moral righteous standard to enter the kingdom, "That **except your righteousness** shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case **enter into the kingdom** of heaven" (v. 20). He then proceeded to teach the moral righteousness of the law, "Thou shalt not kill" (v. 21), "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (v. 27), "Thou shalt love thy neighbour" (v. 43). Finally, He concluded by stating He will deny knowing those breaking God's laws, "I never knew you: depart from me, **ye that work iniquity**" (7:23), "you lawbreakers!" (NET) "you who practice lawlessness" (NKJV), "you who break God's laws" (NLT).

Although Christ upheld the moral standard of righteousness in the law, He did, however, set us free from the non-moral actions decreed by the law upon the circumcised Jews. And the foremost action was abstinence from unclean meats: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man" (Mat 15:11), "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him" (Mar 7:15), "What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common" (Act 10:15), "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal 5:1).

This became the primary issue in the early church, "That it was needful to **circumcise** them, and to command *them* to **keep the law of Moses**" (Act 15:5), "*Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law:* to whom we gave no *such* commandment" (v. 24). By "keep the law" in this context, it's not the law's moral righteousness but its non-moral actions. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and dealt with this issue extensively: "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself ... All things indeed *are* pure" (Rom 14:14,20); "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats" (1Co 6:13); "he did eat with the Gentiles" (Gal 2:12); "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*" (Col 2:16); "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1Ti 4:4); "Unto the pure all things *are* pure" (Tit 1:15).

These statements of Paul's about the law, "Therefore by **the deeds [actions] of the law** there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom 3:20), "Knowing that a man is

not justified by **the works [actions] of the law** ... for by **the works [actions] of the law** shall no flesh be justified" (Gal 2:16), were about the actions of circumcision under the law, not the moral righteousness required by God. But today these statements about circumcision and its non-moral actions are being used to destroy the moral righteousness of the law—the very thing Christ warned us not to do!

We're being taught today that God's people under the law could never keep its moral righteousness and neither can we. That we were born with a depraved sinful nature that prevents us from living righteously. That the law is legalism and we don't want to be legalistic! This faulty view of the law is then the basis for the false view of salvation by faith. Paul taught the Gentiles in Rome and Galatia "The just shall live by **faith [faithfulness]**" (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11). Salvation is not by keeping the non-moral actions of the law, "Therefore by **the deeds [actions] of the law** there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom 3:20), "a man is not justified by **the works [actions] of the law** ... for by **the works [actions] of the law** shall no flesh be justified" (Gal 2:16), but by Jesus Christ's faithfulness to His Father to accomplish what He was sent to do, "the righteousness of God through **the faithfulness of Jesus Christ** ... because of **Jesus' faithfulness**" (Rom 3:22,26 NET), "I live because of **the faithfulness of the Son of God**" (Gal 2:20 NET). This is also what he taught the Gentiles in Ephesus, "For by grace are ye saved **through faith [faithfulness]**; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: **Not of works [actions]**, lest any man should boast" (Eph 2:8-9), "because of **Christ's faithfulness**" (3:12 NET).

The issue in the beginning was that man broke God's commandment, "And the LORD God **commanded the man**, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, **thou shalt not eat of it**" (Gen 2:16-17). Therefore, he was banned from the tree of life, "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of **the tree of life**, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God **sent him forth from the garden of Eden**" (Gen 3:22-23). And in the end, it will be those keeping God's commandments that regain access to the tree of life, "Blessed *are* they that **do his commandments**, that they may have right to **the tree of life**, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev 22:14).

We've been sold a false narrative that salvation isn't by living right but by believing right. The masses of people today read their Bibles through that tainted lens. But Christ warned us to not mistake Him for destroying the law.