

Two Teachings Of The Bible

The Bible's Message

The Bible's message is God's message. We know that because the Bible is "inspired."

"Inspired" can mean many things. Some people think it means that it "is interesting" or "fascinating." Certainly, the Bible does "inspire" us and give us joy.

"Inspiration," however, refers to the fact that God caused or "Breathed-in" ("inspired") the Bible. That means that every single word of the Bible is God's Word, not words invented by humans.

St. Peter wrote, "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about...our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Peter 1:16 NIV)

Many Christians don't believe all the Bible is God's Word. This is because they don't want to listen and obey God in everything. This is exactly where Satan wants them. Whenever we deny God's Word, we disobey God by making our words more important than God's Word.

The purpose of the Bible is to show us how to be saved and how to live a Christian life.

The Law tells us how to live our lives. This is the first major teaching. We find the Law of God throughout the Bible. The best example of God's Law is in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5).

If we could be perfectly holy, we could be saved by keeping the Ten Commandments perfectly. Since we can't keep God's Law perfectly, everytime we hear God's Law, God's Law...

- Shows **Our Sin** (SOS)
- Makes us feel guilty
- Condemns us to eternal life in hell
- Reminds us that God will punish us for our sins, and
- Promises that we will die for our sin.

The Gospel, the Bible's second major teaching, teaches us that Jesus has paid the price for our sins. The Gospel is God's remedy for all the punishment promised by the Law. The Gospel is God's undeserved gift of salvation given to us in Jesus Christ. The Gospel...

- Shows **Our Savior** (SOS)
- Comforts sinners with Jesus' forgiveness,
- Reminds us Jesus paid for all our sins, and
- Promises eternal life.

Confusing Law And Gospel

The most dangerous mistake any one can make is to confuse Law and Gospel. How can you tell if someone is confusing Law and Gospel? Just ask this simple question: "How are you going to heaven?"

1) Some say they will get to heaven because they are good people. Wrong! By completely eliminating Jesus' forgiving work on the cross, they believe they are saved completely by keeping the Ten Commandments. Unfortunately, the Bible says, those who believe this are going to hell.

2) Some people believe Jesus died for them, but He didn't completely save them. Since Jesus' sacrifice wasn't enough, they must do good things to be saved. This belief, too, confuses God's plan of salvation. As the Bible says, unless Jesus is our only Savior, we are going to hell. Those who want, by their own good works to "help" Jesus, are not Christians. They deny the Gospel and are in danger of eternal damnation.

The only way we are saved is by the clear--not confused--message of the Bible. St. Paul wrote,

"It is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:8-10 NIV

Law and Gospel are *not* confused when we affirm the Bible's teaching that

1. *Nothing* we can do can save us. Only Jesus can do that.
2. The good works we do are simply the way we thank God for salvation in Jesus Christ.

St. Paul wrote that our good works are the way we live out God's calling for us that He planned for us before He even created the world.

- Why did God create you?
- What did God plan for you to do before the world began?
- Are you ready to do what God called and prepared you to do?

How God Gave The Ten Commandments

God first gave the Ten Commandments to Adam and Eve. By putting them directly in their hearts, the Ten Commandments enable them to know--and do--what God wanted them to do.

God also gave the Ten Commandments to Moses and the Children of Israel on Mount Sinai as His covenant with them. Having chosen them as His most dearly-loved people on earth, He blessed and honored them by making an agreement--a covenantal promise--that made them His people (Exodus 20).

God gave the Ten Commandments through Jesus. When asked which commandment was the most important, Jesus responded,

"'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:37-39 NIV

Since God has given His Law so many times and throughout the Bible, it must be important to Him. As we live in the joy of God's grace, God's Law is also important for us.

God gave us His Law for three purposes. Martin Luther called these purposes the "Three Uses Of The Law."

First, God gave the commandments as a CURB. This means that the Ten Commandments are designed to protect us from being hurt or hurting others. As a curb prevents a car from going off the road, so the Ten Commandments "curb" our behavior so that we do not curse, swear, steal, disobey parents, kill, covet, commit sexual sins, etc.

Second, God gave us the Law as a MIRROR. When we consider the Ten Commandments, the "thou shalt's" and the "thou shalt not's", we realize that we are sinners. The Ten Commandments, then, are the mirror by which we recognize our sin. This recognition, as God intends, leads us to ask for forgiveness in Jesus Christ. By grace, each time we ask for forgiveness, God forgives us completely! (I John 1:8-10).

Third, God gave us the Law and the Ten Commandments as a GUIDE for how to live. Since we cannot see God, the only way we can truly know what He wants is in His Law. This use of the law applies only to Christians since unbelievers do not seek to follow God's Law. Because we are forgiven children of God, Christians *joyfully* seek God's guidance in our lives every day so that they can "take up their cross" and serve God by obedience to the God's Law.

If we wish for God to guide our lives, it is important for all Christians to know God's Law. That is why confirmants study the Ten Commandments as we will in the next lesson.