

First Century Fellowship Ministry

A Biblical Church of God

The Ten Commandments -Overview-

This study of the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21, will begin by answering a few questions. Were the Commandments nailed to the cross? Were they done away with, abolished, through the sacrifice of Jesus? Do we have to obey them now or are they just guidelines for us?

To true believers these may seem like foolish questions, however, many churches calling themselves Christian or Bible based churches disregard the Commandments of God or, at best, choose which they feel are applicable to them.

Many of these churches will cite Colossians 2:14, ¹⁴ "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross;" (KJV) and Ephesians 2:15-16 to justify their claim, ¹⁵ "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of the commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; ¹⁶ And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby;" (KJV). These, they will say, show the commandments were nailed to the cross. They make the assumption that these are God's Commandments, the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament that were nailed to the cross. There are a couple of problems with this assumption. First, we need to make sure we have the issue in context. Second we need to ensure the translation is correct

and accurate. Checking other translations helps most of the time. The Bible will interpret and explain itself if we allow it to. This involves reviewing all other scripture that may help to explain or clarify a point.

So using these two points let's see where it leads. The translation most widely used on this issue is the KJV. When I read the New Testament and reach a verse or thought I do not fully understand I have found the Amplified Bible to be very helpful. It gives all words that could be translated to English from the original Greek transcript.

We will take Colossians first. In the Greek, *chriographon tois dogmasin*, is literally translated as, "handwriting in decrees or dogmas. This has been used in the New Testament in other verses and always refers to decrees written by men (Luke 2:1; Acts 16:4, 17:7; Ephesians 2:15). It is not used to refer to any part of the Commandments or law of God. It has nothing to do with the Biblical law.

Let's look at the context. The apostle Paul was writing to the church in Colossae. In pagan Greek religious practice, which the members of the church at Colossae formerly participated in, they had a written account of one's sins called "a note of debt". A man was required to keep a written debtor and creditor account with himself of the acts of each day. Based on the year end summary the man had to reconcile his actions. If favorable he had established the foundation of a stock of merit for the next year, if it was against him, it must be liquidated by future good deeds, justification by works. ("The Two Babylons" by Alexander Hislop). These dogmas, written decrees, were done away with, nailed to the cross, when Jesus was crucified and died for our sins.

If we move back to verse 13 and look at it with a proper understanding of verse 14 it puts the entire issue in context,

13 "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;". The practice of the "note of debt" of sins was done away with not the law or commandments of God.

Ephesians 2:15-16 is rendered this way in the Amplified Bible, 15 "By abolishing in His [own crucified] flesh the enmity [caused by] *the Law with its decrees and ordinances* [which He annulled]; that He from the two might create in Himself one new man [one new quality of humanity out of the two], so making peace. 16. And [He designed] to reconcile to God both [Jew and Gentile, united] in a single body by means of His cross, thereby killing the mutual enmity and brining the feud to an end." What we see by this quick analysis is the difference of "*the law of commandments contained in ordinances*" in the KJV and, "*the Law with its decrees and ordinances*", in the Amplified Bible.

Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus. Here there was considerable enmity between Jews and Gentiles. The strict traditions and laws of Judaism, the written decrees, were mostly responsible for this problem. These decrees were contrary to the commandments and law of God. Because of the written decrees most Jews looked down on Gentiles with contempt.

Paul acknowledges the problem and shows how, through the coming of Christ Jesus and His Gospel these things were put aside (Ephesians 2:11-16). Jesus also chastised the Pharisees for their "traditions" (Mark 7:5-8; also in Matthew 15:6-9). 5 "Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? 6 He said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied

of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do."

In addition to the above explanations we need to remember Jesus did not come to earth to do away with the law or commandments of God, He expected us to obey and keep them.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, not one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Matthew 5:17-18).

Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man (Eccl 12:13).

And they were both righteous before God, and walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless (Luke 1:6).

Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping of the commandments of God (1 Cor 7:19).

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (1 John 2:4).

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not grievous. (1 John 5:2-3).