

Did the Early Church Teach Obedience to God Involved Keeping Only the Ten Commandments?

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All scripture is applicable to those who claim to follow the one true God (2Tim. 3:16).

Christ commanded that his followers live by every word that proceeded from the mouth of his Father (*Matthew 4:4; cf. Proverb 30:5).

The apostle Paul stated that the followers of Christ are expected to apply all the teachings that are in accordance with the Law and written in the Prophets (Ac. 24:14).

This covenant is not limited to the first five books of the Bible, nor is the law of God, as evidenced by the following scriptures:

- John 10:34 refers to Psalms 82:6
- John 12:34 refers to Micah 4:7
- John 15:25 refers to Psalms 35:19; 69:4; 109:3-5
- 1Corinthians 14:21 refers to Isaiah 28:11-12.

Adam broke a commandment that is not included in Exodus 20 (Gen. 2:16-17). The consequence for his disobedience is the same as it is for everyone - death (Rom. 6:23). Therefore, obedience to God is not confined to the commands given at Mount Sinai, rather it must include His every word (* Matthew. 4:4).

It is interesting to note that the weightier matters of the law (Mt. 23:23) are also found, in many cases, outside the first five books of the Bible as we see below:

- Justice: Ps. 33:5; Jer. 5:1; Mic. 6:8; Hab. 1:4; Zec. 7:9; Pr. 21:3; Jer. 22:15; Mic. 6:8.

- Mercy: De. 13:17; 2Sam. 24:14; Ps. 86:15; 119:156; 145:8-9; Pr. 11:17; Isa. 63:9; Hos. 6:6; Zec. 7:9.
- Faith: De. 7:9; 32:4; 1Chr. 28:9; 2Chr. 20:20; Ps. 4:5; 25:2; 37:3, 5; Dn. 6:23.

In summary, the law of God includes more than just the first five books of the Old Testament (* Matthew. 4:4).

* When Almighty God first gathered His people Israel, He established them as a nation led by the Angel of Yahovah, under the authority of God, the Father (Ex. 14:19; 23:20; Isa. 63:9; 1Cor. 10:4). At Sinai, Israel was given God's law, commandments, statutes, judgments, and ordinances, as part of the system under which they would function as His people (Ex. 19, 20). Included in the law of God are commandments and judgments concerning crime and punishment that were observed and executed by the Israelites under Moses, and later, under the judges (Ex. 21-23). This system was a theocracy, that is, a nation governed by God through the Angel of Yahovah, and administered through a human priesthood and judges (Ex. 18:17-26).



**BUT HE ANSWERED, "IT IS WRITTEN:
MAN MUST NOT LIVE ON BREAD
ALONE BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT
COMES FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD."**

Matthew 4:4

Almighty God does not establish law and commandments by whim (Ps. 19:7; 119:151; Jas. 1:22). He is perfect and eternal, hence His words and actions are deliberate, perfect and eternal, therefore His divine law and commandments are deliberate, perfect and eternal (De. 32:4; 2Ki. 17:37; Ps. 105:8; 119:44; Rom. 16:26).

The fact is God's people walked according to His law prior to Israel's slavery in Egypt and the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai subsequent to their exodus (Gen. 5:22; 6:9). Abraham, for example, was instructed to teach his children in righteousness and justice and to keep the way of the Lord (Gen. 18:19). His descendants include all Israel who will eventually become too great to number – like the sand of the sea, for this also comprises all spiritual offspring according to the promise of God (Gen. 32:12; Ps. 103:20-22; Gal. 3:26-29).

Unfortunately, ancient Israel was influenced by the nations around them and their pagan-based systems of government. This led to Israel's desire to have a human king over them rather than the Anointed of God - the Angel of Yahovah. Before granting Israel's wish for a human king, they were informed by God through the prophets that a king would introduce many negative and burdensome changes (1Sam. 8:1-22), some of which were contrary to the law of God. Their decision would ultimately lead to Israel's rebellion and subsequent capture, imprisonment, and disbursement under the hands of their enemies.

Within the second covenant system, those who constitute the servants of God are not determined by nationality or ancestry, rather, the congregation of God is determined by God's calling and election (Mk. 16:15; Gal. 3:26-29). Now each chosen individual is a priest who carries the personal responsibility of administering the will of God in their own lives, in a world we are not to be a part of (1Pe. 2:9; Rev. 1:5; 5:10). Therefore, the body of Christ or church of God includes people from many nations, languages, and regions (Rev. 5:9; 7:9). Consequently, God's servants recognize Jesus Christ as the Head of the church and king of kings, but as a people we are no longer a physical theocracy whose members are determined by ancestral lineage (Gal. 3:26-29).

However, as mentioned previously, all of mankind is now governed by a system that runs contrary to many of God's laws. This makes it very difficult to fully administer certain aspects of God's law pertaining to governance, which would include certain legal judgments (i.e. Nu. 35:16-21; Lev. 20:27; Lev. 24:13-16; Deut. 13:6-10; Deut. 21:18-21; Deut. 22:13-29).

Nonetheless, the spiritual principles behind the legislation and indeed, all of God's commandments still apply. It is only under Jesus Christ during the millennium (Rev. 20:4-6) that God's people will be able once again to fully administer all of God's laws, including judgments pertaining to crime and punishment. Until that time, God's servants apply His commandments while seeking to fulfill the spiritual principles of His laws wherever possible.

Did the early church teach obedience to God involved keeping only the Ten Commandments? (*Paragraph 2; *Paragraph 5; *Paragraph 7)

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor. 11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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