

## What did the Apostle Paul Mean by, "The Law is Spiritual"?

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In Romans 7:14, Paul stated that God's law is spiritual and in Romans 8:7 he said that the carnal mind of man cannot be subject to the law of God unless a change in attitude and understanding takes place. This change involves repenting, or changing, from a life of transgressing God's law to a life that is willingly subject to the laws and commands of God. In order to assist those who repent, God grants His holy spirit when they are baptized (Ac. 2:38; 5:32 cf. Rom. 8:9).

God's law is spiritual because it comes from God who is spirit (Jn. 4:23-24). As the spirit realm preceded the physical realm in the creative order (Jb. 38:4-7), God's laws were in operation prior to the existence of any carnal being. In fact, scripture shows that an individual in the spirit realm actually transgressed God's law, and was exiled to the earth awaiting his judgment (Is. 14:12-21; Eze. 28:12-19; Lk. 10:18; Jn. 16:11).

As God is spirit and as His law is spiritual, this law will continue forever because God does not change (Mal. 3:6) and He cannot die (1 Jn. 1:2). However, as the physical realm is temporary and continually undergoing change (Rom. 8:20-22; 1 Jn. 2:17), God applies and adapts His law in accordance with His unfolding plan for the benefit of those who are captive to sin (Jn. 8:31-34) so that they might come to a better understanding of the end (goal/purpose) of the law (Eph. 5:17; Ro. 10:4). In Hebrews 8:1-5, Paul shows that many aspects of God's law reflect activities and realities in the spirit realm. He further explains that these spiritual realities are greater and more perfect than their physical counterparts (Hebrews 9:11). Nonetheless, it is very important that God's law and commandments be observed on this earth, so that the physical realm has the opportunity to function harmoniously (Mt. 6:10). The existence of God's perfect spiritual law (Jas. 1:25) proves that He loves His created beings, and wants them to be happy (Jn. 15:10; 1Jn. 5:1-3; 2 Jn. 6). Unfortunately, due to the influence of the god of this present age upon the thoughts and attitudes of mankind, most people do not want God telling them what to do (Jn. 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2: 1-3; Rev. 12:9). Consequently, God's love as expressed in His law is often viewed as interference and therefore people reject God's authority, which includes His law and commandments (1Sam. 8:7; 10:19).

When mankind, through the decision of Adam and Eve, accepted the authority of Satan's word over the word of God (Gen. 3:1-5), they became subject to a spirit-being who had previously rejected God's law and commandments (Jn. 8:44). Therefore, mankind under this rebellious attitude cannot be subject to God's spiritual law (Ro. 8:7-8).

Christ gave a number of examples showing how God's spiritual law is observed differently between heaven and earth. For instance, spirit beings cannot kill one another, but they have the freedom to choose whether they are going to love other spiritual family members or not. Therefore, if they hate one another, or say unkind things about each other, they harbor the spirit of murder and need to repent (Mt. 5:21-22). Consequently, if human beings want to keep God's spiritual law on earth, as it is in heaven, they will resist any attitude of hatred towards others. They will express outgoing concern for others and be quick to forgive, even if they are wronged in some way (Mat. 5:38-48; 23-26; 1 Cor. 6:4-8).

In Jude 9, we are given another insight into how spirit beings relate to one another and we see that not all spirit beings are willingly subject to God's spiritual law of love.

Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said "The Lord rebuke you!"

As the apostle Paul clearly demonstrated in the New Testament, the law of God has authority over all heavenly beings. Therefore, the same spiritual principles must have jurisdiction upon all physical creation.

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10b)

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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