

Was God's Law Abolished by Jesus Christ's sacrifice?

1 Timothy 4:1-16 NKJV

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, **2** speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, **3** forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; **5** for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. **6** If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. **7** But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. **8** For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. **9** This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. **10** For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. **11** These things command and teach. **12** Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. **13** Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. **14** Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. **15** Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. **16** Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

Context:

Timothy, a young fellow-worker of Paul was serving as a Church leader in Ephesus when he wrote this Pastoral epistle to him that is 1 Timothy in the bible. Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus to oversee the church there which was stated in Paul's epistle, 1 Timothy 1:3. Paul warns Timothy about false doctrine coming into the church in Ephesus. The port city of Ephesus in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) was an important large commercial, cultural and pagan religious center with a population of about 250 to 300 thousand in the first century AD. It was established around 1000 BC as an ancient Greek city and was annexed by the Romans in 133 BC. There had been a Jewish community in Ephesus for over three hundred years when Paul the Apostle visited Ephesus around 53 AD. The church of God in Ephesus included Jews and Gentiles and had difficulties in unifying themselves and keeping separate from the surrounding pagan culture.

Comments:

1 Timothy 4:1-6 Paul warns Timothy here about deceiving spirits entering church members in the latter days who would teach doctrines of demons and speak lies while being hypocrites with consciences that would not accept any guilt. So, they were teaching false doctrines which they did not live by themselves. The first false doctrine mentioned is "forbidding to marry". This was an ancient pagan Babylonian doctrine that has been revived in Roman Catholic doctrine, forbidding priests to marry. In the world of today, as we approach the last days of this age, we have witnessed the negative and harmful results of that false doctrine. The second false doctrine mentioned is "commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received". Paul warned that in the last days this false doctrine would be taught, and it also did become Roman Catholic doctrine in the form of abstaining from eating meat on Fridays. It is considered by Roman Catholic to be a sin to eat meat except for fish on Fridays. In the year 1966, the Roman Catholic bishops in the United States changed the doctrine to doing some type of penance on Friday. These scriptures do not indicate that God's food laws were abolished because no

law of God was ever a doctrine of demons. They do refer to pagan traditions and commandments that would enter the church in the last days.

Furthermore, Romans 3:31 KJV states: **Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.**

*God's law and commandments are still valid today for instruction in God's righteousness and defining sin, and we need to keep them written in our hearts and be obedient to God. If we confess our sins to God and repent by turning away from our sins, we are free from God's penalty for sin which is death (the second death or eternal death) and we are then under God's grace (freely given undeserved forgiveness of sins). Romans 6:14 NIV **For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.***

Revelation 14:12 KJV **"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus"**

THE BOOK OF ACTS – CHAPTER 15

Context:

Before going to the Jerusalem conference, in Acts 13 and 14 Paul and Barnabas had been preaching in Synagogues to Jews and Gentiles on Sabbath days in cities of Greece. They had encountered a Jewish sorcerer on Paphos who tried to stop them from bring the Word to Sergius Paulus, the proconsul there. They also faced opposition, persecution and a plan to stone them by both Gentiles and non-believing Jews, and they were driven out of several cities by Gentiles and Jews. All of these Greek cities were filled with pagan traditions and idols and had been for centuries. Despite all the opposition, they were having great success so that many Jews and Greeks believed.

While at the church in Antioch, Pisidia in Greece, men came from Judea teaching that the Gentiles must be circumcised and keep Jewish law for salvation. Paul and Barnabas disputed with them over this issue and determined to go up to Jerusalem to settle the matter with the apostles and elders. After much discussion with the apostles and elders, James declared how God had first visited the Gentiles, probably referring to Cornelius and his household in Acts 10, and verified with scripture that all the Gentiles called by His name would be included in the church. He then proposed to write a letter to the Gentiles telling them to abstain from the sins listed in verse 29 and the apostles and elders agreed.

ACTS 15 1-2 NKJV 15 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

² When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

ACTS 15: 6-11 NKJV ⁶ Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. ⁷ And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up *and* said to them: "Men *and* brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. ⁸ So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us, ⁹ and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke

on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

There is no indication in the bible that the God-fearing Jews were unable to bear or even considered that circumcision was a yoke on the neck of the disciples or their fathers. They had been keeping it faithfully for hundreds of years. There is also no indication that God-fearing Jews considered the Ten Commandments to be a yoke on their necks. The law was not an unbearable yoke on the neck of the God-fearing Jews but some Jews believed keeping the law was necessary to obtain salvation and that was an impossible task which is why God instituted the Sacrificial Laws to cover sins (transgressions of the law) until Jesus came to take away sins by repentance and faith in Him and His way. Peter was not saying that the law which is based on the Ten Commandments was not necessary to keep. He was probably speaking of the man-made laws and traditions which Jesus also rebuked the Pharisees for burdening the people with which they didn't keep themselves. Washing of hands and other traditions.

*The laws of God are summed up in the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were summed up by Jesus when He was questioned by the Pharisees about which is the great commandment in the law Matthew 22: 37-40 NKJV: ³⁷ Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is *the* first and great commandment. ³⁹ And *the* second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

In 1 John 5: 1-3 he explained: ¹ Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

The commandments are not burdensome if you believe Jesus is the Son of God and you love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and all your mind and choose to follow in Jesus's footsteps.

- 1. It should not be burdensome to not have any Gods before Him.*
- 2. It should not be burdensome to make idols and bow down and worship them.*
- 3. It should not be burdensome to not misuse God's name or to use it wrongfully.*
- 4. It should not be burdensome to rest and worship with Christians on the Seventh Day Sabbath.*
- 5. It should not be burdensome to honor your father and your mother.*
- 6. It should not be burdensome to not murder someone.*
- 7. It should not be burdensome to not commit adultery.*
- 8. It should not be burdensome to not steal.*
- 9. It should not be burdensome to not bear false witness against your neighbor.*
- 10. It should not be burdensome to not covet your neighbor's possessions.*

ACTS 15:24-29 NKJV

²⁴ Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "*You must be circumcised and keep the law*"—to whom we gave no *such* commandment—²⁵ it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. ²⁸ For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to

us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: ²⁹ that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

Comments: The direction to abstain from things offered to idols in Acts 15: 29 comes from the Mosaic law in Leviticus 17:7-9. NKJV

⁷ They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons, after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations. ⁸ “Also you shall say to them: ‘Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers (Gentiles) who dwell among you, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, ⁹ and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to offer it to the LORD, that man shall be cut off from among his people.

The direction to abstain from eating blood in Acts 15: 29 comes from the Mosaic law in Leviticus 17:10-12.

¹⁰ ‘And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers (Gentiles) who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. ¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.’ ¹² Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger (Gentile) who dwells among you eat blood.’

The direction to abstain from eating anything strangled in Acts 15: 29 is included in the Mosaic law in Leviticus 17:13-14.

¹³ “Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; ¹⁴ for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore, I said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.’

Many forms of sexual immorality were rampant in Gentile cities for hundreds of years and it was an acceptable part of their lifestyles, so it was necessary to warn them not to be involved in it. The direction to abstain from sexual immorality in Acts 15:29 although it is not in the Mosaic law, it is addressed in Numbers 25: 1-5 NIV where God lays down the law by making it clear to Israel that it was absolutely forbidden, when the men of Israel indulged in Harlotry with Moabite women. It is also one of the Ten Commandments law saying, “You shall not commit adultery”.

²⁵ While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, ² who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate the sacrificial meal and bowed down before these gods. ³ So Israel yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor. And the LORD’s anger burned against them. ⁴ The LORD said to Moses, “Take all the leaders of these people, kill them and expose them in broad daylight before the LORD, so that the LORD’s fierce anger may turn away from Israel.” ⁵ So Moses said to Israel’s judges, “Each of you must put to death those of your people who have yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor.”

Therefore, James and the apostles were not saying Gentiles did not need to keep any of the Jewish law because all these restrictions are in Jewish law. Jews and Gentiles were meeting and worshipping together in Synagogues in the early church period. These Jewish laws would be considered the minimum of Jewish law to follow in cities filled with these pagan traditions in order to have united fellowship with and worship God in the Synagogues while the Gentile Christians already knew the Ten Commandments needed to be kept. There would be tremendous animosity and division in the church if

the Jews were living by one standard of living and the Gentiles were living under another standard. There is only one Gospel of the Kingdom of God and Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians were to be united, each as a new person in Christ and all as one body united in Christ. From that point they would in time learn from teaching and fellowship in the Synagogues with mature Christians how God's laws and commandments were to be written in their hearts according to Jeremiah 33:31-34.

³¹ Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: ³² Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: ³³ But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.