

Conflict Resolution



Establishing Our Perspective

“And Jehovah commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear Jehovah our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. And it shall be righteousness unto us, if we observe to do all this commandment before Jehovah our God, as he hath commanded us” (Deuteronomy 6:24–25).

In this passage three things would be accomplished by adherence to the law: 1) It would be to the good of the nation, and people. 2) It would preserve them alive. 3) When observed, God would esteem them as righteous and respond to them accordingly.

The Conflict: The Law of Moses was both civil and religious: establishing righteous conduct, thus, regulating moral and ethical conduct for Israel as a physical nation, as well as a kingdom of priests. Therefore, often times, severe consequences were applied to the violators, i.e., death, because the violations were a detriment to the nation. Our society fails to see that immorality will lead to national ruin. Solomon said, “Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34).

Righteousness is a standard, i.e., right-wise-ness. However, the standard is not of man, but of God: The nation of Israel was under a theocracy, i.e., “A form of government in which God is recognized as the king or immediate ruler.” The Law itself “is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good” (Romans 7:12), and “the law is good, if a man use it lawfully” (1 Timothy 1:18). When properly observed, the “commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; And reproofs of instruction are the way of life” (Proverbs 6:23).

However, Solomon also revealed, “Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; But he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Proverbs 29:18). The term “vision” is contrasted with “keepeth the law.” Therefore, without the Law, i.e., vision, “people cast off restraint.” If the source of law is simply from man, there is no error, there is no right, there is no wrong, there is no evil, there is no good, there is only “preference,” and when preference is the rule the society casts off restraint, and only perversions remain.

When Abraham sojourned in Gerar, “Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah” (Genesis 20:2). After God “came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, because of the woman whom thou hast taken” (Genesis 20:3). Thus, “And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place” (Genesis 20:10–11). Abraham perceived that where a lack of “the fear of God” is, so also is immorality, i.e., “Abraham said, “they will slay me for my wife’s sake.” Look at the nations where there is no fear of God, where man is led by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, and note the oppression of the people, the rulers tendencies to murder ethnic and religious groups of people, and genocides that have been attempted throughout history, and know that if laws are simply that which has been conjured up in the mind of man then no man, group of men, nation of men or world of men have a right to adopt their particular flavor of right and wrong, justice or injustice, above that of any other. However, as was revealed to

Nebuchadnezzar, “the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men” (Daniel 4:32), and as Jehovah said unto Abram, “the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full” (Genesis 15:16), when it became full, and overflowed, Moses said to Israel, “When Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and shall cast out many nations before thee, the Hittite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; and when Jehovah thy God shall deliver them up before thee, and thou shalt smite them; then thou shalt utterly destroy them: thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them” (Deuteronomy 7:1–2).

The reason for such a judgment was stated by Jehovah, saying, “Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you; and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants” (Leviticus 18:24–25).

God’s judgment was not limited to the Amorites alone, but also unto Israel, and by extension any nation which will progress to such immorality, “Ye therefore shall keep my statutes and mine ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations; neither the home-born, nor the stranger that sojourneth among you; (for all these abominations have the men of the land done, that were before you, and the land is defiled); that the land vomit not you out also, when ye defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. For whosoever shall do any of these abominations, even the souls that do them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep my charge, that ye practise not any of these abominable customs, which were practised before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am Jehovah your God” (Leviticus 18:26–30). Although Israel had been warned they did not heed, thus, “O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth

confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness; for we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of Jehovah our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even turning aside, that they should not obey thy voice: therefore hath the curse been poured out upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God; for we have sinned against him. And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil; for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet have we not entreated the favor of Jehovah our God, that we should turn from our iniquities, and have discernment in thy truth. Therefore hath Jehovah watched over the evil, and brought it upon us; for Jehovah our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth, and we have not obeyed his voice” (Daniel 9:7–14).

The Resolution: Unto Israel, Jehovah said, “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” (Ezekiel 33:11).

As it was under the Mosaic dispensation, so also today. Moses said, “Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him” (Deuteronomy 18:15–19). Of this prophecy, the apostle Peter affirmed, “The God

of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old. Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days. Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities" (Acts 3:13–26).