

“The Law is Holy, Right, and Good”

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths © - pastorpat@waukeshabile.org

April 29, 2007

I have always been perplexed by this idea. We are often contrasting the Law against grace and see the ideas as opposing armies locked in mortal combat. There is a sense in which this conclusion is correct, but there is another aspect of this relationship that needs to be opened.

The Law's foreboding presence is only because of the content of what it reveals. God is in the Law. His presence is a consuming fire. He manifests Himself with lightening and thunder. The earth quakes in His company. The Law tells me who I am and because of this, I hate it. But the fault does not lie in the Law, but in me.

When Isaiah saw the Lord, he said, “I am a man of unclean lips” (Isa. 6:5). When Samson's parents saw the angel of the LORD they said, “We will surely die, for we have seen God” (Judges 13:22). When Jesus stood before Peter, Peter said, “Lord depart from me for I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:8). All of creation bows before Him and cries, “We are not worthy.”

The Law is a shadow of who God is. Christ is the substance of the Law. He is the one who casts the shadow of Law. In the incarnation, the Law became man and dwelt among us. What we saw dimly in the Law became crystal clear in Jesus Christ. Because He fulfills the Law, the Law's purpose of shadow no longer was needed. There is no reason to embrace the shadow when the substance is present.

Because of Christ, the Law as a foreboding entity is tamed. In the power of His cross, the power of sin working through the Law is dead (1 Cor. 15:55-57). Because the believer has been “immersed” into union with Christ and His finished work has been accounted to him (Rom. 6:1-14), the threat of the broken Law has been removed. Believers are no longer under law. Why? We are not under the law because Christ is the fulfillment of the Law, the embodiment, the personification, the full expression of it.

For the believer to seek the Law instead of Christ is tantamount to kissing a picture of a loved one instead of the one they love. Pictures can never satisfy need. A picture of food will never stifle hunger and a picture of water will never quench thirst. Neither can pictures of Christ (i.e. the Law), be for us what Christ is.

Paul tells us that the Law is not sin. In fact, the law is holy, righteous, and good (Rom. 7:12). The weight of this statement can only be seen when we yield our thinking to the all consuming nature of who Christ is and what He has done and our union with Him. Jesus Christ is the Law.