

SIGNS *of the Times*

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?

Does Worship Really Matter?

If you're a sports fan, you've seen a coach arguing with an official about a close call—for example, whether his player was out of bounds when he caught the ball. But have you ever seen a coach argue that it didn't matter that his player caught the ball out of bounds? That his player shouldn't have to follow the rules?

We all understand that it's not possible to play a game unless everyone agrees on the rules and that all the players must follow them. Otherwise, it's just chaos.

But in the religious world, we often hear people say that rules aren't important. They say that, this side of the cross, God has done away with His rules—His law—and that those who try to keep them are legalists who are trying to earn heaven!

What about it? Is God's law still important for Christians?

LAWLESSNESS IN THE LAST DAYS

1. According to the Apostle Paul, what two things must take place before Jesus' second coming? (**2 Thessalonians 2:1-9**)
 - (a) unless the _____ away comes first (**vs. 3**)
 - (b) the _____ will be revealed (**vs. 3,8**)

Paul predicts a "falling away" among Christians before Jesus returns. Many will turn away from God. He also says that "the man of sin" ("the lawless one") will be revealed. In verse 7, Paul states that this "mystery of lawlessness" was already at work in his own day. The stage was already being set for the perilous times of lawlessness that would characterize conditions on earth just before Jesus returns.

2. How does the Bible describe conditions on earth in the last days? (2 Timothy 3:1-5)
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The last days are perilous times because people will be living without regard to God. It is a time of lawlessness.

DOES IT REALLY MATTER IF WE FOLLOW GOD'S RULES?

3. What does Jesus say is required in order to enter the kingdom of heaven? (Matthew 7:21)
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It's easy to claim to be a Christian, but we need divine help to live as a Christian. To those who profess to follow Him, but who do not do His will, Jesus says, "Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:23)

4. How does Jesus describe vain or useless worship? (Matthew 15:8-9)
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NO ONE CAN EARN SALVATION BY OBEYING THE LAW

5. Who is the only source of salvation for all sinful humanity? (Acts 4:12)
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6. How are men and women saved from sin? (Ephesians 2:8, 9)
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7. Can a person be saved from sin by his or her faithful obedience to God's law? (Romans 3:20)
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No matter how carefully we try to obey God's law, we can never earn salvation through our obedience. Salvation is God's free gift of grace. It comes only through Jesus Christ when we accept Him as our Savior by faith. No one has ever been saved by keeping God's law. Only the blood of Jesus saves us from sin.

WAS GOD’S TEN COMMANDMENTS LAW ABOLISHED AT THE CROSS?

8. How does the Bible define sin? (1 John 3:4)

Sin is lawlessness—breaking God’s law. If God’s Ten Commandments law was done away with at the cross, then there could be no sin. You can’t break the rules of a game if there are no rules. The fact that there is still sin in our world tells us that God’s law is still in place. He still expects us to do His will as spelled out in the Ten Commandments.



9. How long did Jesus say God’s law would continue? (Matthew 5:17, 18)

10. What does the Bible say about those who claim to know God yet do not obey His commandments? (1 John 2:3-6)

Obedience to God’s commandments really is important. The Bible is clear. God wants us to obey Him and His law. (Hebrews 5:9; Matthew 19:17)

OBEYING GOD’S LAW FOR THE RIGHT REASON

11. How does the Bible describe God’s faithful people in the last days? (Revelation 12:17)

God’s people in the final days of earth’s history will be keeping His commandments. His law will be written in their hearts (Hebrews 10:16, 17), and they will obey Him because they love Him.

12. What is the reason we should obey God's commandments?
(John 14:15)
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We obey God's commandments, but we don't do so to earn salvation—that's not possible in any case. We obey His law because we love Him.

13. Does God's grace do away with His law? (Romans 3:31)
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14. But doesn't the Bible say that Christians are not under the law, but under grace? (Romans 6:14)
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Christians are under God's grace, but that doesn't excuse them from keeping God's Ten Commandment law. Paul makes this plain in the very next verse: "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!" (Romans 6:15) When Jesus forgives us, He takes us out from under the condemnation of the law and gives us eternal life, placing us under grace. But His forgiveness is not a license to disobey God's Ten Commandments.

MY DECISION

- Jesus, I love You, and I want to follow You by keeping Your commandments. I ask You to live out Your will in me each day.

MY PRAYER

Father, thank You for the gift of eternal life in Your Son, Jesus. Help me to demonstrate my love for You by faithfully obeying You in all things. I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

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