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The terms of the Covenant renewal

The belief that “there is no need for Christians to obey the Law (Ten Commandments) because we can only gain righteousness through faith in Christ” sounds to me like a gratuitous excuse for shifting our personal responsibility and excusing ourselves from complying with our part of the deal in God’s covenant with humanity. The way the aforementioned statement is formulated seems to imply salvation is guaranteed without the need for us to have to pull our way at all. I am more inclined to believe that faith in Christ along with our wholehearted commitment to living a righteous life will lead us into salvation.

I do believe Christians are called to follow the Ten Commandments given to Moses by God in the Old Testament; those are a universal, unshakeable, unchanging, and timeless set of moral standards written in stone for the ages - to unite, guide, protect, bless and instruct the people of God how to live in the ways of the Lord at that historical past time, in our present time, and until the end of times, and the coming of the Kingdom of God. “The statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do forevermore.” (2Kings 17:37, KJV).

It is also true that we are made righteous through faith in Christ. In Rom. 5:1, KJV, we are reminded that “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”. This is the sign of the new covenant renewal that we are presented with, in the New

Testament. God sent his only Son Jesus Christ to the world, to straighten up a nation that had lost its moral compass, indulged in all kinds of idolatry and sinful behavior, and displayed a great deal of arrogance and hypocrisy. In particular religious leaders and high priests would follow ceremonial laws that appeared to honor God in the surface; they took pride in following the Law by the book, yet, they were full of themselves, had no love or compassion for others, and ignored the poor and the destitute. Jesus rejected and challenged that state of affairs which eventually led to His death on the cross and resurrection. Through his atonement, Jesus washed away the sins of the world and provided Jews and Gentiles, righteous and sinners, and the lost and the found, with a path for reconciliation with God, and the promise of salvation and eternal life if they truly believed, repented, and sought God with a humble and contrite heart.

Christ did not abolish the Ten Commandments, on the contrary, He stated: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill”. (Matt. 5:17, KJV).

In the New Testament, Jesus reinstated and summarized the Ten Commandments into two main mandates: love the Lord and love your neighbor as yourself. “ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matt. 22:40, KJV). With this new commandment, Jesus freed us from all the other civil, religious, ceremonial, and purity related ancient Torah laws that were given to Moses in the covenant that God established with Israel. Jesus came to bring the good news of salvation and to unify all nations under one God; it was no longer necessary for Gentiles to follow the other over six hundred Jewish ceremonial traditions and laws such as circumcision.

As for the Old Testament concept of salvation, it did not include the resurrection of the dead and eternal life as we know it after the coming of Jesus Christ. Up until the exile, Israel

thought that death meant the end of life. Ezequiel's vision of the "Valley of Dry Bones" shines a light on the revelation of the resurrection of the dead. The chosen nation saw God as their Lord, the provider, protector, and deliverer from slavery, oppression, exile, famine, and drought. The Jewish people saw salvation as the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, the reestablishment of a strong New Jerusalem and its temple, a blessed fertile and prosperous nation that would be a blessing to other nations, and the coming of a messianic king from the line of David, that would bring victory, prosperity, and peace to the land until the end of times. Some prophets preached prophetic eschatology, meaning God would bring divine judgment and establish his kingdom on earth; others prophesied apocalyptic eschatology, the result of which would be the destruction of evil, and the establishment of a heavenly kingdom for God's faithful people.

The people of Israel believed that following the Ten Commandments and all the other Laws of the Torah would ensure the continuation of their relationship with God and would therefore grant them their idea of salvation. The Law of God was observed and passed through the generations. However, every time Israel broke the covenant with God, destruction, war, annihilation, domination by other nations, and natural disasters ensued. Time and time again, faithful religious and political leaders, as well as the prophets led the people of Israel back to the restoration of their broken relationship with God by exhorting their nation to repent, humble themselves, turn to God and seek God's mercy and forgiveness as the path to avoid destruction and condemnation, and receive insurmountable blessings, restoration, and redemption.

In conclusion, obeying God's Ten Commandments, as well as following the example Jesus set for us with the help of the Holy Spirit, is the way for all Christians to be granted God's blessings on earth, attain salvation, and eternal life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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