

Fulfilling the Law

Key Verse: “*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*”
—**Matthew 5:17**

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 5:17-20

The Law Covenant had been added to the Abrahamic Covenant because of sin. (Gal. 3:19) God delivered the terms of the covenant through Moses on Mount Sinai saying, “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.” (Exod. 19:5) However, it took a perfect man to keep the covenant. Speaking of this weakness of the Law arrangement, the Apostle Paul states, “If a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin.”—Gal. 3:21,22, *New American Standard Bible*

The Law was a temporary arrangement, to last until the arrival of the promised seed. (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:1,19) During this period, every Jew under the Law was trapped in sin by its very commandments. This delay offered Israel an opportunity to learn the nature of sin. The apostle describes it this way: “We know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law,

WHEN JESUS BEGAN HIS ministry following his baptism at the Jordan River, he did so as a Jew. He was therefore bound to keep the commandments of the Mosaic Law as every other of his kinsmen. Our Key Verse, however, says in addition that he was going to “fulfill” the law.

The Law Covenant had been added to the Abrahamic Cove-

so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in his sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”—Rom. 3:19,20, *NASB*

The Law was also given to provide important types and shadows which pointed to Christ. Citing one of many notable examples, the Apostle Paul points out that the continual sacrifices offered by the Aaronic priesthood on behalf of the sins of the people, were shadows of better things to come. He says Jesus was a High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec. Of the typical sacrifices the apostle says, “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins,” but the sacrifice of Jesus took away sin “once for all,” after which he was exalted to sit “on the right hand of God.”—Heb. 5:1-6; 8:1-6; 10:1-18

These were things Israel should have been looking for under the Law Covenant. However, as a nation they failed to see that the spirit of the commandments was based on love instead of rote memory. The failure to appreciate this principle obscured their vision when Jesus arrived as the long awaited Messiah. The Apostle Paul told the early Jewish converts: “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”—Gal. 3:24-26

This change from works to faith is what Jesus accomplished by fulfilling the Law. Since the Law could not permanently take away sins, a new and better sacrifice was needed. The Apostle Paul described this process in Colossians 2:13,14: “You, ... hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” ■