



A Law that could not bring life

READINGS FOR THIS LESSON – Hebrews 9 & 10.

We must have laws

Have you ever thought what would happen in one of our busy towns if every driver drove just as fast as they wanted, and went anywhere on the road without thinking of other people? There would soon be many serious accidents.

Wherever men and women live together in towns and villages, they must have laws. They must have good laws, and there must be someone to see that these laws are kept.

The Law of Moses



Do you remember how God brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt; and how He gave them the land of Israel to live in? In Lesson 6, we learnt that God was their King, and He gave them laws.

We call these laws, "The Law of Moses"; because it was to Moses that God first gave them, and Moses passed them on to the people. One of the most important parts of the Law of Moses are the 10 Commandments found in Exodus 20. The first commandment is:-

"You shall have no other gods before me." Verse 3.

A law given by God

Because God gave the Law to Moses, it is different from the laws which men make.

There were the rules to guide them in everyday life. There were rules to teach the people what they should eat; the kind of clothes they should wear; and the way in which they should behave towards each other.

There were other laws teaching the people how they must behave towards God, and the way in which they should worship Him.

When the people came to God to ask His forgiveness for their sins and to offer Him thanksgiving and praise, they would bring an animal – usually a lamb or goat – and sacrifice it to God.

The animal sacrifices were to remind the people that they were sinners, and that they must worship God in the way in which He commanded, and not in the way they chose themselves.



The Law was hard to keep

The Law of Moses was given by God and was a very good law. Paul writes in Romans 7:12, that,

"So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good"

But men are not naturally good. Those who tried to keep the law, failed, and they realized that they were sinners.

We learnt that the Law of Moses was necessary to govern the nation of Israel. But it did something else besides this. It made men realise that they were sinners, and unable to keep God's law. And because they sinned, they should die.

Paul writes in Romans 3:19,

"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God."

A better way

The law taught men that they should die because they sinned. They needed someone to save them from their sins.

The law itself could not save them – it could only show them their sinfulness. So God, in His love, provided something better. God gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, to be a sacrifice for sin.



We read in Psalm 40:6-8 a prophecy about Jesus,

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced; burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, Here I am I have come — it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will. O my God; your law is within my heart."

Jesus always did the things that pleased God. He was the perfect sacrifice, offering himself so that we can be saved.

We no longer have to bring an animal to sacrifice, when we come to worship God.

We have to come to Him through Jesus Christ, who said,

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

Paul adds to this in Galatians 3:24-25 in writing,

"So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law."

Lessons for us from the Law

The Law helped faithful Jews to come to Christ, because it showed them how hopeless and helpless they themselves were. This is a hard lesson for men and women to learn; but we, too, have to learn it, before we can come to God, and ask His help.

The Law of Moses can help us in this. We are no better than the Jews – we would have failed just as they did. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:6,

"Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did."



The law can teach us a great lesson; that God is holy, and we are sinful; and we can only come to Him in the way in which He has provided – that is, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believers in Christ are not under the Law of Moses as were the Jewish people. But God has recorded this Law in the Bible to help us, so that by reading and thinking about it, we may learn more about His character and His ways.

Summary

1. The Law of Moses was a law given to Israel by God.
2.
 - (a) It contained rules covering their daily life.
 - (b) It also taught them how they must worship God.
3. The law was good; but men, being evil, could not keep it.
4. God provided a new way in Christ.
5. The Law of Moses is contained in the books of the Bible called Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. There are many things we can still learn from it today.