

# The Strictness of God's Law

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It is significant that nothing in the Bible is emphasized more than the demand to respect and obey the commands of God. In both Old and New Testaments it is significant that when people obeyed God they were blessed, but when disobedient and incorrigible, they were punished. To the apostles, Jesus said, "**He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.**" (Matt. 10:40). Conversely, Luke 10:16 states, "**He that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.**"

Observe in **John 16:13-15** that God gave the word to Christ, who in turn sent the Holy Spirit, who gave it to the apostles. This is the source of all authority in religion — God to Christ to the Spirit to the apostles through whom the word was first revealed and now recorded for the world to obey and abide by to serve God and be saved eternally. In the above quotes, our Lord simply meant that those who received the word received the Godhead, and those who rejected the word rejected God, Christ, and the Spirit. So it is now. When one rejects the authority of the Bible he is rejecting the Godhead.

In view of the widespread attitude that God's word is not binding, that it is not necessary to be so concerned about God's word as law, it is in order that we be reminded that nobody presumptuously sets it aside without guilt. God's laws are not given according to human wisdom (**1 Cor. 1:18-31**), and God demands that His word be respected. Things written aforetime in the Old Testament were written for our learning (**Rom. 15:4**), and can make us wise unto salvation (**2 Tim. 3:15**). Wherefore, note:

## Some Apparently Foolish Laws Of God

- 1. The Passover.** Unquestionably, God could have saved Israel from Egypt without any conditions, but in preparation for their departure he ordered the placing of the blood of a lamb upon the door posts and lintels of the houses, otherwise the firstborn in every house would be destroyed if not so protected. To fail was folly. God kept His word and at the appointed time He passed over and the death of the firstborn resulted. Present-day preachers would have rationalized that such an arrangement was foolishness and would have sought to set aside that which became law to Israel on this occasion. Read **Exodus 12** and note the results.
- 2. The Brazen Serpent.** Israel sinned against God by rebelling and complaining (**Num. 21:4-9**). Fiery serpents were sent among them. Many were bitten and vast numbers died. When Moses asked for mercy, the Lord instructed him to make a serpent of brass, place it on a pole in the midst of the camp, and those who would look upon it would live. This was highly contrary to human wisdom, but not the results: Those who looked in exercise of faith lived, others died. It was strict, but no amount of rationalization could set it aside.

3. **Naaman Healed Of Leprosy.** This captain of the host of the king of Assyria was a great man, but afflicted with that dreaded disease. After a series of mistakes, he finally found his way to the house of Elisha the prophet. Naaman was instructed to go wash in the Jordan seven times for healing. As with so many today, when God commands, he thought that such unnecessary and that God's law could be set aside by substitution of prayer and miracle without doing anything himself. But God did not change His word to satisfy the whims of Naaman. He could obey and be healed, or he could reject God's provision and rot. Read **Second Kings 5** and get the picture.

Other examples could be given, but these suffice to show that God does not order His own ways or design His laws according to human wisdom, but demands compliance, regardless of what man thinks.

### Examples Of God's Strictness

1. **Cain And Abel. Genesis 4:1-8** gives the first record of worship. God bore witness that Abel was righteous (**Heb. 11:4**). This testimony was based upon Abel's faithful obedience. Cain's offering was rejected. Why? Cain was a liberal. He felt it unnecessary to abide within the limits of God's law. He seemed to think because he had faith — some kind of faith — that he ought to be accepted. He was not accepted, and should serve as a warning to us today. God is not now pleased with some faith, or some kind of faith, but demands that we stay within the bounds of **"the faith once for all delivered to the saints..." (Jude 3)**.
2. **Strange Fire.** Nadab and Abihu offered incense in the tabernacle service, using fire from an unauthorized source (**Lev. 10:1-2**). The incense burned and the odor ascended, but they were destroyed. They took undue liberty with God's law. The fire they used was not consecrated by the sacrifices upon the altar. When Jehovah tells us what to do and how to do it, that eliminates all else. No act of worship, unauthorized by the New Testament, reaches the throne of God. **"Add thou not to his words, lest he reprove thee and thou be found a liar." (Prov. 30:6)**
3. **Uzzah's Innocent Act.** In being removed from the house of Abinadab, the ark of the covenant was hauled on a new cart driven by Uzzah and Ahio. When the ark was shaken, Uzzah spontaneously put forth his hand to steady it, and when he touched it, **"the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God." (2 Sam. 6:1-7)**. Why? Was he not honest? Was his heart not right? Perhaps. But he violated a positive command of God: **"Neither shall ye touch it lest ye die."**

The liberties taken by the denominational world, and many of our brethren who seek to copy their ways, cannot be classified as innocent as this act by Uzzah. Such departures from God's word are generally presumptuous. Upon what ground, therefore, can anyone justify sectarian practices? How can anyone conclude that God does not mean what he says, that one can do as he pleases as long as he is sincere? This is nothing short of perversion and draws the wrath of God (**Gal. 1:6-9**).

## The Law Of Christ Is Stricter Than Moses Law

Seeing that every transgression under Moses' law received a just recompense of reward, the question is asked, "**How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?**" (**Heb. 2:1-4**). Reference is made to that spoken by the Lord. There is no escape. Every soul that will not hear (obey) the voice of Christ will be destroyed (**Acts 3:22-23**).

To take undue liberty with God's word is to despise it. Those who despised Moses' law died without mercy (**Heb. 10:28**). The punishment for those who despise the law of Christ will be greater (**Heb. 10:29**). What can be greater than physical death as punishment? The punishment being *greater*, we can see that the law of Christ is stricter than the Old Testament law.

The word of Christ is unalterable and indestructible (**Matt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:23**). Everyone shall meet it at the judgment (**Jn. 12:48-50; Acts 17:30-31**). To merely call Christ "Lord" is insufficient (**Lk. 6:46**). To be saved, one must *obey* the will of Christ (**Matt. 7:21; Rev. 22:14**). Jesus showed that the difference between the wise and the foolish is determined by whether one obeys the word of Christ (**Matt. 7:24-27**).

From the examples given herein, which could be multiplied, nothing is more plainly taught in the word of God than that nobody is allowed the privilege of taking liberties with it. *God has always forbidden addition, subtraction, or substitution in any way* (**Deut. 4:2; 5:32; Gal. 3:15; Rev. 22:18-19**).

Those who are inclined to liberalism — in or out of the church — should take another look at what God has commanded and what He requires now. "**He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool...**" (**Prov. 28:26**). Let us not be of that number.