

**Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes**  
**Second Quarter 2014: *Christ and His Law***  
**Lesson 9 “Christ, the Law and the Gospel”**

**Read for this week’s study**

Rom. 7:7–12; Deut. 30:15–20; Matt. 7:24–27; Acts 10:34, 35; John 15:10; Eph. 2:1.

**Memory Text**

“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17, NKJV).

**Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide**

- I. Introduction
- II. Sin and the Law
- III. The Law and Israel
- IV. The Law and the Nations
- V. Grace and Truth
- VI. The Law and the Gospel
- VII. Further Study

**Questions and Notes for Consideration**

**Moderator: Jon Paulien**

1. Read John 1:14-18. What is the significance of the series of contrasts in this passage? Note particularly the contrasts between Moses and Jesus in verses 17 and 18. What do both grace and law tell us about God? (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. Read Romans 7:7-12. What is Paul saying here about the relationship between sin and law? Why does he ask such a question as “Is the Law sin?” What is the meaning of Paul’s reference to the tenth commandment in this passage? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Deuteronomy 30:15-20. What is the relationship between the law and the promises of God (made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob)? How do the law and the promises apply to us today? How are obedience and faith related in your own personal experience? (Monday’s lesson)
4. Read Acts 10:34-35; 17:26-27; Romans 1:18-20; 2:14. What is the central teaching of these texts? What does it mean for a person to “suppress the truth?” In what ways have the things of this world both attracted you and disappointed you? (Tuesday’s lesson)

5. What do Philippians 2:8; John 15:10 and Matthew 26:39 tell us about the kind of life that Jesus lived? What relation do they have to John 1:17-18? What do all these texts tell us about God? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. Read Romans 6:23 and Ephesians 2:8. What is grace? On what basis does Jesus supply grace to human beings? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. In what ways do Romans 6:23, 7:24 and Ephesians 2:1 describe the impact of sin? (Thursday's lesson)
8. What would you say is the meaning of life? What difference does it make to know that there is a resurrection from the dead? (Thursday's lesson)
9. If we are truly saved by grace through faith, how does the Sabbath fit in? (Friday's lesson)
10. If God truly does speak to all people on earth, what is the purpose of missionaries and evangelists? (Friday's lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

What about the believer who carelessly falls into sin, who in unguarded moments reveals some of the same old traits he so much deplored on the occasion of his baptism? Does this mean he has never been converted?

John answered this when he wrote to struggling beginners, "I write these things to you, my children, to help you to avoid sin. But if a man should sin, remember that our advocate before the Father is Jesus Christ and he is just, the one who made personal atonement for our sins" (1 John 2:1, 2, Phillips).

Even Moses, the one who talked to God face-to-face lost his temper in sinful pride just a few steps from the Promised Land. But Moses was no faithless rebel. He was one of the best friends God ever had on this sinful earth. How Moses repented of what he had done! Just when God wished to reveal himself to his grumbling people as the gracious provider of all their needs—in spite of all their ungrateful complaints—Moses by his anger misrepresented God as unforgiving and severe.

And God said to Moses, "Because... you were unfaithful to me in the presence of the people of Israel...[and] you dishonored me in the presence of the people,... you will not enter the land that I am giving the people of Israel" (Deuteronomy 32:51, 52, GNT).

God could not take lightly so hurtful a sin. Misrepresenting the truth about God is the most damaging of all sins. But how God comforted and honored his repentant friend! He took Moses into his confidence more than ever before as they talked together about future plans. The Bible says that God himself finally buried his old friend (Deuteronomy 34:6), then soon came back to take him up to heaven (Jude 9). Years later, when Jesus was here on his lonely mission, God

asked Moses, his trusted friend, to come down and give encouragement to his Son! (See Matthew 17:1–8.)

This is the God we face in the judgment. By his side stands the One who was so gracious to Peter, Mary, and Simon, and even to Judas. John calls him our “advocate with the Father” (1 John 2:1). Paul describes him as interceding in our behalf (Romans 8:34; see also Hebrews 7:25).

But Jesus told his disciples there was no need for him to plead with the Father to be generous with his children. “I do not promise to intercede with the Father for you, for the Father loves you himself” (John 16: 26, 27, Goodspeed). Would Jesus be pleading with the Holy Spirit? Paul describes the third person of the Godhead as joining with the Father and the Son in working on our behalf: “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words” (Romans 8:26).

The Good News is that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all on our side in the judgment. As they are one with each other, so they are one with all loyal believers in meeting the accusations of our common enemy (see John 17:20–23).

For we have an enemy in the judgment. John calls him “the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night” (Revelation 12:10, NIV). Just as Satan accused God before the heavenly council, so he accuses God’s people now. He accused Job before the heavenly council (Job 1:8–11) and Joshua, the high priest, in the presence of the Lord (Zechariah 3:1, 2).

Satan knows all the sins he has tempted us to commit, and he can present these before the angels as evidence that we are not fit to be saved. If he is to be destroyed, he argues, justice demands that sinners should perish too.

Who would defend us against such charges? When Satan accused God, he was forced to lie. When he recounts our sins, he is telling the truth.

Paul answers this question in his letter to Rome: “If God is for us, who can be against us? Will not he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, with that gift give us everything? Who can bring any accusation against those whom God has chosen? God pronounces them upright; who can condemn them? Christ Jesus who died, or rather who was raised from the dead, is at God’s right hand, and actually pleads for us” (Romans 8:31–34, Goodspeed).

God pronounced Job a “perfect and upright” man, not because he had lived a sinless life, but because of his trust and faith. Satan was permitted to test Job to the limit, but Job could still cry in faith, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15, KJV). God had predicted in the

hearing of the heavenly council that Job would never let him down, and Job honored the confidence God placed in him.

What God is looking for is faith. Were we to be judged, as Satan insists, on the record of our sinful lives, not one person on this planet could pass the test. God is not concerned, however, with our sinful past but with the kind of people we are now.

Have we been won back to trust him? Are we willing to listen and accept his forgiveness? Do we trust him enough to allow him to heal us? Have we, like David, welcomed the Holy Spirit to create new hearts and right spirits within us? Could we be trusted with the privileges of freedom and eternal life?

Has all rebelliousness gone, and has love taken its place? As more light has come, do we always say yes to the truth? For we have much yet to learn about our Infinite God. We may know as little theology as the thief on the cross; but if we love, admire, and trust in Christ as he did that crucifixion day, we are safe to admit to the kingdom (see Luke 23:39–43). Like Mary, it will be our greatest delight to sit at Jesus' feet and hear him tell us more about the Father.

The people Christ cannot defend in the judgment are those whose lives are still accurately described by the records of their sinful past. There has been no real change. They prefer darkness to light, Satan's lies to the truth. They have rejected the Good News. Their rebelliousness has not been healed.

Jesus explained to Nicodemus that there is nothing arbitrary about the judgment. All depends upon how each person chooses to respond to the truth. God longs to save each of his children, but the decision to trust him is ours.

“God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life. It was not to judge the world that God sent his Son into the world, but that through him the world might be saved.

“The man who puts his faith in him does not come under judgment; but the unbeliever has already been judged in that he has not given his allegiance to God's only Son. Here lies the test: the light has come into the world, but men preferred darkness to light because their deeds were evil. Bad men all hate the light and avoid it, for fear their practices should be shown up. The honest man comes to the light so that it may be clearly seen that God is in all he does” (John 3:16–21, NEB).

Later Jesus explained still further to his disciples that the question in the judgment is whether or not we have chosen to trust in God: “When a man believes in me, he believes in him who sent me rather than in me; seeing me, he sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that no one who has faith in me should remain in darkness. But if anyone hears my words and pays no regard to them, I am not his judge; I have not come to judge the world, but

to save the world. There is a judge for the man who rejects me and does not accept my words; the word that I spoke will be his judge on the last day” (John 12:44–48, NEB).

When the judgment is finished, God turns sorrowfully away from those who still reject him as untrustworthy. Preferring to stay in darkness, they have lost the power of sight. More revelation, more persuasion, more discipline—nothing would be of any use. This is the meaning of that warning in Hebrews 10:26, 27: “If we purposely go on sinning after the truth has been made known to us,... all that is left is to wait in fear for the coming Judgment and the fierce fire which will destroy those who oppose God!” (GNT). Over such confirmed rebels the Father cries out as he did in the days of Hosea, “Like a stubborn heifer, Israel is stubborn.... Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone” (Hosea 4:16, 17).

If this were an arbitrary, legalistic decision, lost sinners might hope to “make a deal” with God, to “plea bargain” with the Lord. Jesus predicted that some will arise in the resurrection of the wicked and be dismayed to find they are not among the saved. They plead with the Savior, “Lord, Lord, open up for us. Did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name? Think of all the tithe we have paid, all the offerings we have given—enough to buy many tickets to the kingdom!”

But the Lord sadly replies, “I know what you have done. But you did it all for the wrong reason. You served me only because you feared me as arbitrary, unforgiving, and severe. Go away! I never knew you. We never were really friends” (see Matthew 7:21–23; 25:11, 12). And genuine friendship is the essential quality God desires in our relationship with him. (1 John 4:20).

{Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 120-125. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002} <http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-11>

Lou: And many sincere individuals, Christians who have felt that somehow God’s law was something from which they wanted to be free. For example, I’ve heard the Romans 10:4 text mentioned so often: “Christ is the end of the law.” Doesn’t that mean real freedom from the law? Wouldn’t that be the answer to the problem of the law being a hindrance to our freedom? “Christ is the end of the law.”

Graham: We don’t have to love and behave anymore. We can be disorderly and live in chaos?

Lou: Well, what does that text mean?

Graham: Yes, that’s the thing. The text needs to be analyzed, first for the words and then for the context. First of all, the word “end.” Now, a rare meaning is the purpose of the law, but I doubt that’s the meaning in the context. I think it means termination, all right. Law does not have an article in front of it, meaning any particular law. Although, whether the article is there or not is not totally convincing in the context. You’ve got to read the whole setting. In the

setting, Paul all the way through the book of Romans is contrasting the obedience that springs from love and trust, and the obedience that springs from law. And the obedience that springs from law is often the obedience that comes from fear, and that even turns us into rebels as we obey. So he comes to 10:4. It's interesting—10:4—doesn't that mean the end of something in radio communications? "Ten-four," "Christ is the Ten-four." The meaning is "Christ is the termination of law as a way of being saved."

Lou: All right.

Graham: It's the end of legalism, is what that means. Phillips has a marvelous rendering of that. "Christ means the end of the struggle for righteousness by works of law, that everyone who has faith in God may be saved." That's beautifully done.

Lou: But along with a text like Romans 10:4, I think of the one in Romans 6 which I could hear someone asking. It says, "We are not under the law, but under grace." Now isn't that another statement of real freedom to not be under the law but under grace?

Graham: And again, what is the meaning of being "under the law?" And we often explain that as meaning we're not under the condemnation of the law. I think again, it's this contrast with Paul; that in our relationship with God, we're not under law, we're under grace. We do not deal with a legalistic god. We deal with a God who is graciousness personified. And he says, "If you would realize you are dealing with a gracious God, then that helps to get rid of sin." Because when you're dealing with God in a legalistic manner, it even provokes the sin.

And you remember in Romans 7 Paul describes this. He says, "There was a day when I looked at the law and it provoked me to sin. Especially Number Ten irritated me, until I realized God's gracious purpose in giving it to us." "Now," he says, "I delight in the law." So one really cannot understand law until one understands God's gracious purpose, which means one has to know what He's like. And that's his message. We do not deal with a God of legalism, but a God of graciousness. It makes all the difference in the world. That makes sin even more serious.

{Graham Maxwell and Lou Venden. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, session 12 Discussion, "God's Law is No Threat To Our Freedom", recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>*

And so having talked of the mistakes they made, can you see how 10:4 means, "Christ is the end of all this legalism. Christ is the end of law as a way of being saved, that everyone who has trust and faith may be," how shall we translate it? Set right, declared right, made right, rightified, righted, justified. What word should we use? Obviously there's something wrong that needs to be made right, and set right. If we trust God there is nothing that's wrong that cannot be set right, or made right. And I'd rather leave it right there. Because as you read all the way

through the rest of Scripture you don't find much of Paul's more technical and sometimes legal sounding language. I think he did it on purpose as an illustration. But if you take the Bible as a whole, there is something wrong in this universe. Think what God has done to set it right! On this planet look what's wrong with us, and it all stems, every symptom that we suffer from, stems from our distrust in God. The remedy is to be won back to trust and faith. If we trust God, the most important thing has been set right, rebellion is gone, trust has taken its place, and if we trust Him there isn't anything you can name that He cannot set right. So I'm leaning more and more towards "set right." And later I'd like to quote again Ellen White's statement that Christ's whole purpose in coming to this world was to "set us right and keep us right" with God. It at least means that. In fact to me, righteousness by faith is pre-eminently this; however we go on discussing the details.

So Christ is the end of the law. How do your versions read on this? Of course, I'll see in the papers a great variety I assume. But mine, *The Revised Standard* of '52 says, "For Christ is the end of the law."

Do you think saying Christ is the termination of the Decalogue seems at all relevant to this discussion? But if the idea is that Christ should mean the end of all this struggle to achieve salvation, to right oneself by legalistic attempts at righteousness by works of law, you can see how this would make sense and that's why Phillips leaned that way. For Phillips surely shows that he tried to view the Bible as a whole. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 10, recorded December, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/19MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/20MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

The wages of sin is death he said at the end of chapter 6. If we were under law, we would be reaping the consequence and the penalty of having violated that law. But we are not under law, we are under grace. To be under law is very discouraging. To be under grace is to be most encouraged. In fact, Paul says that so long as we attempt to overcome by means of law, this thing we call legalism, we're doomed, it just doesn't work. We'll go on sinning and we'll reap the consequence in death. For the law has no provision for helping us overcome sin, it has no method of healing, or saving. "In fact," Paul says in verse 5, "rather than helping us obey; the law actually irritates me and provokes me. The law even arouses sin." How that works we perhaps should save for verse seven where he says, "I should not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said 'you shall not covet.'"

And the next verse he speaks of how the law has provoked him to sin. "Now," he says though, "realizing I'm not under law in my relationship with God, but under grace, I even find that the law doesn't provoke me anymore. Having a new relationship with God, I have a new

understanding of His law.” This is the interesting thing that the gospel does for one, the good news about our gracious God. That if only we knew the truth, the truth would set us free, does not turn us away from the law, but the message of grace, and healing, and freedom, is actually what enables us to do what we have wanted all along and actually keep that law. And this brings up the age-old question of the relationship between the law and the gospel, the issue at the Minneapolis General Conference. The big shift now, in Paul’s life, seems to be that he’s turned from trying to relate to and obey an impersonal code, which he never found he could successfully do. Now he is not preoccupied with that code. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 7, recorded November, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/13MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/14MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

When the law was proclaimed from Sinai, God made known to men the holiness of His character, that by contrast they might see the sinfulness of their own. The law was given to convict them of sin, and reveal their need of a Saviour. It would do this as its principles were applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. This work it is still to do. {DA 308.2}

The system of types that pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God was to be abolished at His death; but the precepts of the Decalogue are as immutable as the throne of God. {DA 308.3}

The first step in reconciliation to God is the conviction of sin. “Sin is the transgression of the law.” “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” 1 John 3:4; Romans 3:20. In order to see his guilt, the sinner must test his character by God’s great standard of righteousness. It is a mirror which shows the perfection of a righteous character and enables him to discern the defects in his own. {GC 467.3}

While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God’s free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires. But the Pharisees rejected Christ; “being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness” (Romans 10:3), they would not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God. {MB 54.2}

Jesus proceeded to show His hearers what it means to keep the commandments of God—that it is a reproduction in themselves of the character of Christ. For in Him, God was daily made manifest before them. {MB 55.1}



Christ came to magnify the law and make it honorable. He showed that it is based upon the broad foundation of love to God and love to man, and that obedience to its precepts comprises the whole duty of man. In His own life He gave an example of obedience to the law of God. In the Sermon on the Mount He showed how its requirements extend beyond the outward acts and take cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart. {AA 505.1}

“We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Christ is the sinner’s advocate. Those who accept His gospel behold Him with open face. They see the relation of His mission to the law, and they acknowledge God’s wisdom and glory as revealed by the Saviour. The glory of Christ is revealed in the law, which is a transcript of His character, and His transforming efficacy is felt upon the soul until men become changed to His likeness. They are made partakers of the divine nature, and grow more and more like their Saviour, advancing step by step in conformity to the will of God, till they reach perfection. {6BC 1096.4}

When he sees in Christ the embodiment of infinite and disinterested love and benevolence, there is awakened in the heart of the sinner a thankful disposition to follow where Christ is drawing (MS 87, 1900). {6BC 1110.2}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience; and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {PP 34.3}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. “Come now, and let us reason together” is the Creator’s invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}