

WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO, THE GOSPEL DOES

Rom.8:1-4

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Our text speaks of “God sending his own Son the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,” to accomplish something “the law (of Moses) could not do.”
2. This text is the basis for our study of the topic: **WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO, THE GOSPEL DOES**, as we continue our study of **THE TWO COVENANTS**.
3. By speaking of what the law could not do:
 - a. Don’t make the mistake of thinking we are suggesting, or that the Bible teaches, that God gave the Israelites a law, the Law of Moses, which they could not keep. In fact, just the opposite is true.
 - b. Don’t forget that God gave them that law with specific instructions that they were required to keep it, with the dire consequences of the guilt of sin upon their soul if they did not keep it, Exo.19:1-6; Deut.5:1 (marg. “keep to do them”); Deut. 5:31-33; 6:1-3; 4:13; 11:26-28; 28:1,2,14-20; 29:29; 30:1-3.
4. There is no way it could be true of God, who is infinitely holy, just, good and fair, that he would give his people Israel a law they could not keep or obey and then condemn them under the guilt of sin because they did what they could not keep from doing.
 - a. That is not the God they served, nor the one we serve!
5. What we are talking about is what the law could not do for the person under the law after he had become guilty of sin by breaking or violating the law. See Heb.10:1-4,11; Ac.13:39; 15:10; Gal.3:10; Heb.7:19.
6. Now to our study of **THE TWO COVENANTS** from the viewpoint of **WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO, THE GOSPEL DOES**.

II. DISCUSSION

- A. SEE CHART: THE TWO COVENANTS -- WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO, THE GOSPEL DOES.** (from my Home Bible Study series)

B. STUDY AND SUMMATION OF ROM.8:1-4, OUR INTRODUCTORY TEXT.

1. V.1: “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,”
 - a. This doesn’t say or mean that once one is in Christ Jesus that one can never so sin as to be lost.
 - b. It does not teach the impossibility of apostasy, or “once saved, always saved.”
 - c. This statement is qualified by, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” V.1b. Cf. V.4.
2. V.2 assigns the reason as to why there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus.
 - a. Because “in Christ Jesus” we have been made free from that which causes condemnation – namely, “the law of sin and death,” which is the law, or the rule, of sin in our members.” Cf. Rom.7:23
 - (1) “The law of sin and death” is not “the law of Moses.
 - (2) If it were, the putting of Vv.2,3 together, Paul would be making the absurd statement that “the law of Moses could not deliver us from the law of Moses.”
 - b. This freedom is accomplished by “the law of the Spirit of life,” which is the gospel by which we are saved or made free from the guilt of sin, Rom.1:16,17; 1Cor.15:1,2; Mk.16: 15,16.
3. V.3 affirms that what the law (of Moses) could not accomplish, in that “it was weak through the flesh”, God accomplished by “sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin (or, “and as an offering for sin”) condemned sin in the flesh.”
 - a. The law of Moses could not free the sinner from the law of sin and death.
 - b. But God did that very thing by the plan of salvation perfected by the mission of his Son into the world, including his death on the cross as a sin offering.
 - c. Therefore, now in this dispensation all sinners who believe and obey the gospel of Christ are forgiven and freed from the condemnation that rests upon them as sinners.
 - d. Thus, in his flesh he condemned sin, which formerly reigned as master, and held the sinner captive.
 - e. Before the time of Christ and the gospel sin is personified and the sinner was said to be slave of sin, under the rule of

or the dominion of sin; that sin was their master. See Jno.8: 34; Rom.5:21a; 6:12,14a,20a; 7:8,11,14b,23-25. Cf. Heb.10:1-4,11.

- (1) Under the law of Moses, they had forgiveness only in the relative sense.
 - (2) While under Christ and the gospel, we have it in the absolute sense.
- f. Under the gospel, when the sinner accepts Jesus Christ as Savior by faith obeying the gospel, sin as his master is destroyed – blotted out – absolute forgiveness. See Rom.6:1-18-23; 7:24-8:4; Heb.9,10.
- g. His coming “in the likeness of sinful flesh” proves human flesh is not sinful in and of itself; for if so, the flesh of Jesus was sinful. Why?
- (1) Because he was a man who was “in all things...made like unto his brethren.” Thus, he was a man and had in his nature all that the word “man” implies, 1Tim.2:5; Heb.2:11-17; 4:15.
 - (2) Therefore, if his brethren were born sinful and he was not, then he was not like them in all things!
- h. The law, which was holy, just and good (Rom.7:12), as well as glorious (2Cor.3:7,10), was not weak in itself; “it was weak though the flesh.” But what does this mean?
- (1) It was weak relatively speaking; it was weak through the flesh of those under it.
 - (2) In other words, through weakness of the flesh, the law was not kept, Heb.8:7-9.
 - (3) Then, when once broken, the law was powerless to deliver the sinner from the guilt of his sin.
 - (4) The law could deliver only on condition of being perfectly kept, Gal.3:10-12.
 - (5) But since all those under the law, i.e. all except Jesus himself, were guilty of breaking the law; and since the law provided no escape, in the absolute sense, from the guilty of sin, there was need for another way, which God provided through his Son in the flesh by means of the gospel.
 - (6) For what the law could not do, the gospel does.

4. V.4
 - a. “The righteousness (or justification) of the law” is the justification the law required and sought; but which it never realized, namely, complete acquittal from the guilt of every sin.
 - b. This is the righteousness or the justification which is now, in Christ, by means of the gospel, accomplished in us (or in our case) “who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.”

III. CONCLUSION

1. In concluding our study of WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO, THE GOSPEL DOES, by adding the following texts, we complete the picture, i.e. that we are complete in Christ – that in Christ nothing is lacking that is necessary for man’s spiritual welfare, Eph.1:3-10; 3:8-12,19; Col.1:18,19; 1:8-10; Heb.9:26b-10:14.
2. Rom.1:16,17; 3:19-26; Gal.2:16.