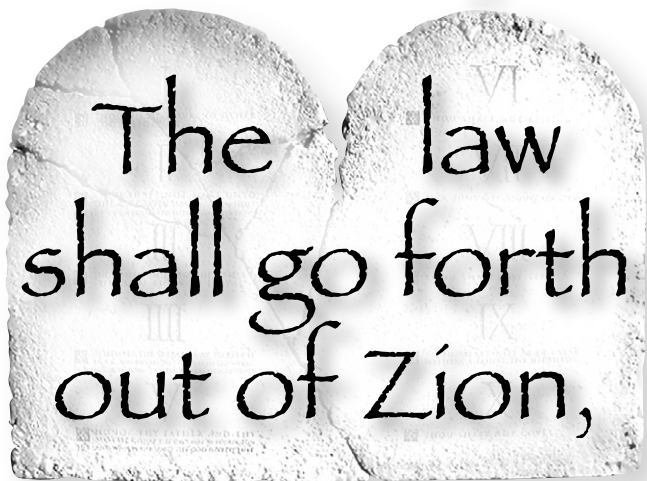


In the last days...



the word of the LORD
from Jerusalem.

Isaiah 2: 2-3

Part 1

“The Law Shall Go Forth Out of Zion”

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by Tom Quinlan

The Law Shall Go Forth Out of Zion
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A Scriptural look at the requirements of God as shown forth in the Ten Commandments, and an examination of our own hearts to see if we measure up to God's expected fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning Zion.

Zion

Zion—beautiful in its loftiness and the joy *of the whole earth*, says Psalm 48. It is mentioned 152 times in the Hebrew Bible, and many of those times are spoken with a pronounced sense of love and longing. Psalm 85 says, “the LORD *loves* the gates of Zion *more than all* the dwellings of Jacob.” An endorsement like that would make Zion worth looking into in and of itself. However, today we are considering Zion because Isaiah referred to it in his prophesy concerning the Law and the last days. So while we won’t examine Zion in depth, we ought to have at least a little foundational understanding of it’s importance to God.

The very first mention of ‘Zion’ in Scripture is 2nd Samuel 5:7—“David captured the fortress of Zion, the City of David.” In this one statement, Zion became forever associated with David, the man after God’s own heart, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel who was raised up on high as the king of God’s people. After capturing it, David immediately made Zion his home. In the book of Kings, God practically equates *the person* David with *the place* of worship He promised in Deuteronomy:

“Since the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city in any tribe of Israel to have a temple built for my Name to be there, but I *have* chosen David to rule my people Israel.” 1st Kings 8:16

So it shouldn’t surprise us that God chooses Zion, David’s home, as the place where He will dwell forever.

The LORD made a promise to David concerning one of his sons: “I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come

from your own body, and *I will establish* his kingdom. *He is the one* who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. *I will be his father, and he will be My son.*”
2 Samuel 7

Hundreds of years later, after Israel and her kings (the sons of David) had failed to fully follow the LORD, Zechariah prophesied: “This is what the LORD says: ‘I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain.’” Zechariah 8:3

From this passage we gather that God has left His beloved Zion. What will cause Him to return? Are we any better than those who so provoked Him to anger that He left His favored dwelling?

A basic reading of the Scriptures reveals that the LORD is not satisfied with a those who come with His word on their lips only. He is not fooled by outward appearances. Rather, He is longing for a transformed and purified people who have His law written on the fleshly tablets *of their hearts* and who will be living testimonies of His character in the earth. God’s holy Law will flow out from these people to all the nations. Then, God will be *drawn* to Zion in love, just as He was drawn when David was king.

Could *you* possibly be one of these “last days” people?

If you consider yourself to be a good person by God’s standards, let us take a few moments to shine on *your* heart the Ten Commandments, which are the essence of the law, to see how you measure up to this lofty standard.

The Law

- I I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Has God *always* been first in your heart? Have you *continually* sought Him above *all* else? “Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face *always*.” Ps 105:4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with *all* your heart and with *all* your soul and with *all* your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” Deut 6:4-7

Do these words describe you? Do you talk about His commands and meditate on His statutes day and night?

- II Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God...

Do you seek Him *as He knows Himself to be*, and has revealed Himself in scripture? Or, have you formed an image

of a god in your mind that never speaks or disciplines, and who allows you to live according to your own desires? A false *concept* of God is modern day idolatry and will lead you to “sacrifice to devils” (Deut. 32:17) just as if you had formed an idol of gold.

- III Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

God gave you life and sustains all things by His powerful word. His name “is a strong tower. The righteous run to it and are safe.” Pr 18:10 Psalm 124:8 says... “Our help is in *the name* of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.” Have you *ever* used His name in an empty way, as a meaningless figure of speech or perhaps even as an expression of disgust? How will you be delivered from your enemies, who are stronger than you are, if you do not revere the name of the only One who can rescue you from *all* your enemies?

- IV Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy... For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Have you *ceased* from *your* labors and worries, in faith casting all your cares upon Him? Have you *entered into* the priestly, strifeless work the LORD prepared for you before you were born, which is the true observation of His Sabbath? Or does He say of you: “They are a people whose hearts go

astray, and they have not known my ways.’ So I declared on oath in my anger, “They shall never enter my rest.” Ps 95:10-11

V Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Moses said, “You are the *children of the LORD* your God... for you are a people holy to the LORD your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the LORD has chosen you to be his treasured possession.” Dt 14:1-2 **Have you honored and obeyed Him among the nations?** “If I am a father, where is the honor due me?” Mal 1:6 “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.” 1 Sam 15:23

If you claim to honor the God you cannot see, how about your earthly parents whom you can see? Have you made their calling as parents a joy? Has the way you have lived your life brought honor to the name you have inherited from them? Have you cared for and honored them in their old age as you would like to be cared for and honored in yours?

VI Thou shalt not kill.

The LORD told the prophet Ezekiel, “When I say to a wicked man, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and *I will hold you accountable for his blood.*” Ez 3:18 So, if we regard someone with apathy or contempt, the last thing we have on our

mind is a desire to encourage, warn or pray for that person concerning their *eternal* standing with God. In this sense, to even *think* hatred toward a soul is to be in danger of God’s judgement of murderers.

VII Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Have **you** committed adultery? We will look at the importance of your thoughts and desires later, but for now consider this: God has *always* been faithful to you as He has to all of His people. When we stray from His loving arms it is like stabbing Him in His faithful heart.

“I have been grieved by their *adulterous* hearts, which have turned away from me, and by their eyes, which have *lusted after their idols.*” Ez 6:9

VIII Thou shalt not steal.

Have you ever stolen anything? Theft is the deadly fruit of covetousness which arises from believing that God *cannot or will not* provide everything you need to satisfy your soul.

According to scripture, the earth and everything in it are the Lord’s. Not only are we to trust Him to provide our daily needs, but God’s fully expects us to trust Him enough *to return* to Him the firstfruits of our increase. Have you always given the tenth of all that you have back to God? Through the prophet Malachi, the LORD asked... “Will a man rob God? Yet **you rob me.** But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ “In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me. Bring the *whole* tithe into the storehouse, *that there may be food in my house.*”

IX Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Have you ever manipulated the truth... bent it out of shape until it isn't easily recognizable as the truth anymore? Maybe you have even deliberately lied to hide an ugly truth. God Himself *is* the measuring stick of truth. When we lie, it is a futile attack on His being. We set ourselves against the testimony of God and of the entire created universe. Though a lie may obscure the truth for a short season, it will always give way to the eternal weight of truth. "Whoever slanders his neighbor *in secret*, him will I destroy... **No one** who practices deceit will dwell in my house; **no one** who speaks falsely will stand in my presence." Ps 101:5,7

The Holy Scriptures are the LORD's true and precious guide to lost humanity. Do you regard the words of Scripture above the words of men, giving God the benefit of the doubt when the two disagree? Or, have you placed a higher value on the opinions of religious teachers, philosophers, scientists and politicians? Have you then conveyed those ideas to others as if they were fact, without sifting them through the words of God? If so, you have been a false witness against God, *your heavenly neighbor*.

X Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy

neighbor's.

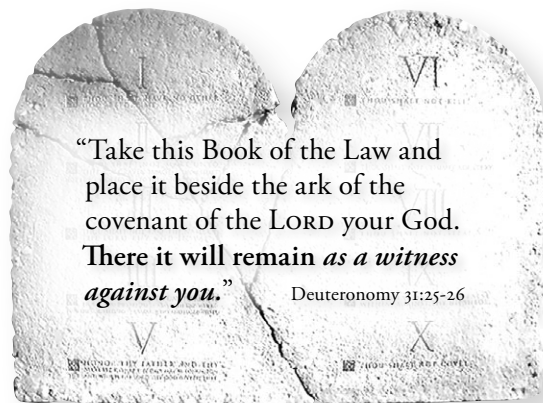
This last, but not least of the commands has to do with the very heart and foundations of your thought life. "Covet" means: to lust for or desire that which is unlawful to obtain or possess.

Rarely could another person know if you have broken this commandment. But God knows. It was covetous lust that *begun* King David's relationship with Bathsheba. It *led to* adultery and murder. Looking back in brokenness, David declared, "Thou desirest truth in the *inward parts*". (Ps 51:6) And, "The LORD searcheth all *hearts*, and understandeth all the *imaginations of the thoughts*..." 1Ch 28:9 God Himself is looking with "eyes like flaming torches" Dan 10:6 for *hearts and imaginations* that can bear the weight of His eternal holiness and glory.

Have you ever looked with lust at another person? Have you enviously desired the gifts and possessions of someone else? Remember, God is looking for truth in *your* inward parts, so be honest with Him.

To sum up this brief look at the requirements of the law, we could accurately say that the commandments describe the holy character of God *and* His sky high expectations of us. As He said to Abraham long before He gave the Law through Moses: "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and *be thou perfect*." Gen 17:1 By nature, the LORD *must* demand perfection in thought, word and deed. "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine." Lev 20:26

The LORD has no interest in how well you stack up against other



people. In the Law, He has made Himself the plum line to which we should compare ourselves to see if we are upright in heart.

Righteous Judgement

So, what is the verdict? Have you continuously and fully obeyed all that the LORD commanded through Moses? If God were to weigh you in His balances right now by His standard of perfection and holiness as described in the Ten Commandments, would you be a candidate for carrying forth his law to the nations? More importantly, would you even be able to withstand His holy presence? What would be left of your life, if everything within you which was not truly born of God was removed?

Maybe you are thinking that *everyone* would be blown away with

guilt if God were to judge us by this awesome standard. That is an excellent point, and scripture actually agrees when it says: “There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.” *Ecc 7:20* “The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, *any who seek God. All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.*” *Ps 14:2-3*

If you somehow made it through our examination of the commandments thinking you have kept them, these God inspired words are calling you a liar:

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? ‘I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.” *Jer 17:9-10*

“This is what the LORD says: ‘Your wound is incurable, your injury beyond healing. There is no one to plead your cause, no remedy for your sore, no healing for you.’” *Jer 30:12-13*

Based on these considerations, how can the Law *possibly* go forth out of Zion? It seems that no one is worthy of that task. In fact, a more pertinent question comes to the surface: When *you* cross the threshold of time, will you have within you the substance and life of God that is required to dwell with Him in His eternal kingdom?—or, will the fiery presence and righteous demands of such a holy and awesome God consume you?

Perhaps you are saying in your heart that your God would never be so harsh and judgmental. Let’s look at what scripture says:

“See, I set before you today *life and prosperity, death and*

destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to *keep* his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But *if your heart turns away* and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that *you will certainly be destroyed.* You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

“This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and ***death***, blessings and ***curse***. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the *LORD is your life...*” Deut 30:15-20

According to this passage of scripture, the sobering consequence for *not* continuously and fully keeping the Lord’s commands is *death* and *destruction*. The Lord told Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will *blot out* of my book.” Ex 32:33 Isaiah also prophesied *this* to Zion, “The *sinners in Zion are terrified*; trembling grips the goddess: ‘Who of us can dwell with the *consuming fire*? Who of us can dwell with *everlasting burning*?’” Is 33:14

“The soul who sins is the one who will die.” Ez 18:4

“See, the LORD is *coming with fire*, and his chariots are like a whirlwind; he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with *flames of fire*. For with *fire and with his sword the LORD will execute judgment upon all men*, and many will be those slain by the LORD... “And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me;

their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched,
and they will be loathsome to all mankind.” Is 66:15-16,24

“The fierce anger of the LORD will not turn back until he fully accomplishes the purposes of his heart. In days to come you will understand this.” Jer 30:24

This is bad news for all of us, and even worse news for God. Certainly He did not go to the extravagant lengths of creating an entire universe with so much attention to even the smallest details, just to see mankind, His prize creation, destroyed by His own Holiness.

So, is there any hope for you if you have fallen short of God’s Holy standard? And does God have any hope of reconciling His legal demand for righteous perfection and His desire to walk and commune with the creatures He once called “very good”?

We intend to explore that hope in Part 2 of this booklet.



If you are interested in Part 2 of this message visit:
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Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Psalm 96:3-5



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