

A The nature of the Law:

❖ Love and love.

- God's Law, recorded twice—once in Exodus 20 and once in Deuteronomy 5—is all about relationships. Relationships with God, and relationships with our neighbors:
 - (1) THE LORD YOUR GOD: (I) Do not have relationships with other lords; (II) Do not use intermediaries in our relationship; (III) Be respectful in your relationship with me; (IV) Reserve one day a week to relate with me.
 - (2) YOUR NEIGHBOR: (V) Respect your parents; (VI) Respect your neighbor's life; (VII) Respect your spouse; (VIII) Respect what belongs to your neighbor; (IX) Respect your neighbor's dignity; (X) Admire your neighbor, but do not covet what is his.
- As Jesus said, these relationships marked by the Law must be an expression of love (Mt. 22:37-39.)

❖ Holy, righteous and good.

- The Law, as a reflection of God's character, not only reflects His love, but also other divine characteristics (Rom. 7:12): His holiness (Rev. 4:8,) His justice (Jn. 17:25) and His goodness (Lk. 18:19.)
- Written in stone, the Law is a testimony to God's unchanging character (Ps. 19:7-8.)
- But did not Jesus make void the Law by nailing it to the cross, as many teach? As Paul said, "God forbid!" (Rom. 3:31.)
- The apostle clearly says that, once saved by Jesus, we should not continue sinning (Rom. 6:1-2.) This implies that the Law is still in force, since it is what tells us that we are sinners (Rom. 7:7; 1Jn. 3:4.)
- Christ did not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill all that was promised in the Law and in the Prophets. That is why He insists that "while heaven and earth exist," "not one letter, not one point of the Law will pass away" (Mt. 5:18.)

B The function of the Law:

❖ Law and Grace.

- Just as many think that love and justice are mutually exclusive, they also think that Grace and Law are antagonistic. But the truth is that each has its own function:
 - (1) The Law teaches us to differentiate between good and evil
 - (2) Grace forgives us when we break the Law, and enables us to continue choosing the good.
- Furthermore, they work together in purpose. God's Grace works within us, engraving the Law on our hearts (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10.)
- The Law, on the other hand, shows us our sin and leads us to Christ, through whom we obtain forgiveness (Gal. 3:24.)
- Salvation is a free gift from God (Eph. 2:8.) We do not keep the law to save ourselves, but because we have been saved and, as a consequence, we want to put our lives in harmony with God's will.

❖ Law and freedom.

- The law that gives freedom (James 2:12)? Shouldn't James have said the law of restrictions?
- In reviewing the Law, Moses gave us a reason to keep it: we have been freed from sin (Deut. 5:15.) The Sabbath (the fourth commandment of the Law) constantly reminds us of that freedom.
- The freedom that God gives us should lead us to a special fulfillment of the Law: to love. The Sabbath also gives us an example of love interwoven with the commandment.
- Isaiah links the Sabbath with love for God (Is. 56:6,) and with love for one's neighbor (Is. 58:10-14.)
- Love is the fulfillment of the Law (Rom. 13:10.) But it goes beyond formal fulfillment. Keeping the Law is actively doing good; performing works of love; doing justice; caring for others.

❖ Law and Love.

- James gives us an interesting example: a rich man is treated with deference, while a poor man is treated with contempt. And that is within the church! (James 2:1-13.)
- To entertain someone from whom we can benefit is not to love. To despise someone who has problems is not to love. And he who does not love does not fulfill the Law (James 2:8.)
- What defines us as followers of Jesus is love (John 13:35.) A love that "covers a multitude of sins" (1Peter 4:8.)
- When we love the world as Christ loves it, then we are prepared for Heaven.