

Heidelberg Catechism 92-93 – Foundations of the Law

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Today you will hear from God's Word about the foundations of the 10 commands, sometimes called the Decalogue (十诫). We must examine the 10 commands carefully as we are bound to live by the law, which is our expression of love for our Savior.

We will ask three questions to learn about the foundation of the law, and these are our headings.

From whom did the law come?

For what purpose did the law come?

To what extent (程度) must you obey the law?

Our goals are: **That because you are the redeemed (被赎之人) of God in Jesus, you will carefully learn God's laws so that you can faithfully obey them.**

From whom did the law come?

92 Q. What does the Lord say in his law?

A. God spoke all these words: 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage (捆绑, 奴役).

1. God is the source of the Law—the 10 commands.

He is the only ultimate authority qualified to make law. While God made Moses codify (编成法典) his law, God spoke directly all the words of the law. **Whoever is God makes the law.**

Deuteronomy 5:22 "These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly (会众), in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

Whenever man makes a law in conflict with God's law, **then man is acting as God.** Even God did not make up any more laws after these 10. All consequent laws are based on the principles of this law! There is no more need for any other law. God has never amended any of his laws. And because the laws come from God, they are precious. They are better than real money.

Psalms 119:72 The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of coins of gold and silver.

2. God's will is represented in the 10 laws.

The law of God is not based on what you might like...or what you think makes sense...or what you think is logical...or what you think is reasonable.

3. The law represents the nature of God.

God is perfect, merciful, good, and unchangeable. His law naturally reflects God's nature.

This is why God's laws are immutable (不可改变的). (Woe to those who try to change any – as many are trying to do in our society!)

4. Since God is the source of the Law and the sole arbiter (独立裁判, 裁决人) of what is right and wrong, when a government makes laws contrary to God's law, it is usurping (篡夺) God's authority and making itself higher than God.

Look at some examples:

a. When the government says that capital punishment (死刑) is illegal even if one is an intentional murderer 故意杀人犯, it is attacking the 6th command which dictates the value of life.
The government's laws attacks and insults the image of God in man.

b. When a husband demanded that his wife not remarry if he died first, he is making himself higher than God. He has no authority over his wife after he dies.

c. When politicians allows and funds the murder of children by abortion (堕胎), they have made themselves god over God. But God is jealous of his position. Who can stand a jealous God?

d. When parents say that spanking (打) a child is cruel and wrong and they would rather imprison their children in their bedroom, they are acting above God.

e. When a church teaches that the Sabbath Day (安息日) is obsolete (过时的), it is acting above God.

f. When politicians (like one did this week) say that it is immoral not to demand a higher percentage of rich people's income, the government is stepping above God and his 8th command.

God's law must be reflected in every aspect of society and by everyone, regardless (无论) of culture or religious beliefs. If

you don't submit to God's law wholly, you have signed your own death warrant (保证书)!

But isn't this evidence of the need for evangelism(传福音?) And do you get why you so badly need to pray for politicians and preachers who change God's law? They are a step away from hell!

5. The "law" is sometimes used in a general sense where it refers to the whole Bible – which contains explanations and applications (应用) of God's law.

6. The God of the 10 laws is a covenant (圣约) God.

He used the term "LORD" which is translated "Jehovah," the covenant name for God. So while all men are bound to obey God's law, he has a special relationship with is covenant children.

Ezekiel 36:27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes (律例典章), and you will keep My judgments and do them. 28 "Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

Knowing that his children could not keep the law, **he provided someone to keep the law for them.** And knowing that his children deserved death for not keeping the law, **he provided someone to die for their sins.** Jesus obeyed and suffered for his covenant children. All of God's children now have his Spirit within them who testifies that they are children of God.

7. All other laws must be grounded in his law.

No law must be contrary to God's law in any area of society – not in home, school, church, or state. There is only one God – the God of the Bible – all other gods are false – so all men are bound to obey the covenant God of the Bible.

For what purpose did the law come

93 Q. How are these commandments divided? A. Into two tables. The first has four commandments, teaching us what our relation to God should be. The second has six commandments, teaching us what we owe our neighbor.

1. The law was not given to enable you, by your obedience, to attain your own salvation.

That is impossible. How can I say that the law cannot save you if you obey it perfectly? Man became sinful in Adam and therefore lost the ability to keep God's law perfectly. He can't even want to keep the law.

2. So why then did God give his law?

There are 3 main reasons:

a. The law is a Mirror – or the law is pedagogical (用于教学的) : God gave the law to show man his sins and his need for a Savior. When you see the greatness of your sin by the law, you

are able to see the greatness of the rescue work of Jesus Christ for you.

b. The law is a Guide: God gave the law in order that his people might have rules for living once they have been saved. Each member will know how to live in God's family. This is evidence of God's true love for his covenant children. God's house is not a house of chaos. In addition, your obedience to God's law was intended to **reflect your love for God and man.** It is a perfect law for righteousness (义). Love is reflected in your obedience to God's law.

Matthew 22: 37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall **love the LORD your God with all your heart**, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 "This is the first and great commandment. 39 "And the second is like it: 'You shall **love your neighbor as yourself.**' 40 "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Romans 13:8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; **therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.**

John 14:15 -"**If you love Me**, keep My **commandments.**

c. The law is for Restraining (节制) sin: God gave the law in order that mankind might have a basis for civil law (民事法). And notice that this is not a law that will stop as long as God's family is on earth.

Matthew 5: 17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19 "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

3. What is the result of keeping God's law?

You are rewarded (得奖赏) with God's blessings in this life and in the life to come.

Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb (蜂房). 11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in **keeping them there is great reward.** 12 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. 13 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous (自以为是的, 冒失的) sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression.

If you read Psalm 119, you will find numerous references to benefits of obeying God's law. In keeping God's law there is **great** reward.

James 1:25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty (放纵) and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, **this one will be blessed in what he does.**

Of course "honor your father and your mother" has an explicit blessing attached to it. This was a covenant blessing to the whole nation.

To What extent must you obey the law

1. One of the biggest mistake you can make is to try to obey God's law literally (按字面意思地).

This is called “literalism.” (拘泥于字句)

Literalism is like the man who could not open a bank account because he had no job to put for occupation. Literalism is like the man who willfully drove 99 KPM on the 401 Highway and was rightly ticketed for hindering traffic. He obeyed the letter of the law, but broke the spirit (intention) of the law, which was to keep people safe on the roads. Literalism is dangerous. The letter kills, but the spirit gives life.

This means you have to take time to learn what the intention of the law is. And this is why we are going to take our time to study God’s law. This is why you need to ask for the help of the Holy Spirit when you study God’s law.

2. Each of the 10 commands is representative (代表性的)

While a command states the worse particular sin (or the strongest duty) in that category of sins, it represents all sins in that category. So “you shall not murder” (the worst sin) requires that you must not abuse (虐待) others (a lesser sin that might lead to murder).

3. Further, the opposite of what is forbidden in a commandment is required.

So “you shall not kill” (which is forbidden) means you must work to protect life (which is required).

Conclusion:

The Law comes from God. The Law reflects God –so it is perfect and unchangeable in every way. The Law is good and shows God’s love for you. God gave his law so you could **see your sins** (a mirror). God gave his law so you have a **rule for life** and show your love for his salvation. God gave his law as a **rule for civil law**.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. It is deadly to disobey God’s law. To disobey is to show a lack of love for God and it shows an exaltation (抬高) of yourself above God. The exaltation of self is called self-love, which is sin. The arrogant will die a thousand deaths in hell for rejecting God’s law.

2. But what wondrous blessings, in this life and the next, you get from obeying the spirit of God’s law!

3. So let me encourage you to study God’s law, now that you love him. Study his intention! Study how it is applied in the Scriptures. **Teach them to your children. Advocate for God’s law to your teacher, your boss, your Member of Parliament.** If you do, then they might see their sins and look to the Savior. **Help them share in the benefits that come from God’s law as you do.** Help them raise praise to God.

Finally, if you are not a believer let me warn you that you can only go before God and

plead for mercy through the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ and through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ as your offering to the Father. Pray and ask God to open your eyes that you might see your sins. Make this plea today.