

Episode #336 – We Establish the Law 12: Israel Under the Law

I. The Lord said in Romans 3:31, “We Establish the Law.” We are not under the law, but with proper teaching, we establish the law in its rightful place. That is what we will be seeking to do through this current series.

II. The Ten Commandments were in fact the ten terms of a covenant God made with the people of Israel. Yet Israel broke that covenant when they made the golden calf. The covenant, once broken, was null and void. There was no chance for Israel to try again.

III. The Curse of the Law.

A. Exodus 32:21-28. Three thousand fell for their sin instead of receiving a blessing.

B. Exodus 32:30-32. Moses knew they could not enter again into the covenant, but makes a touching plea on their behalf, and offers himself in their place.

C. Exodus 32:33-35. Moses’ plea is refused. Nevertheless, the judgment of God on Israel is postponed. From now on they are under the curse of the law.

1. Example: the law against murder. This is good and protects us. We would want such a law if there was none. But it is dormant to us.

2. If I murder, suddenly this law is no longer in my favor. It moves against me powerfully to harm and curse me. I cannot get out from under it unless some way of redemption is provided. Since there is none, nothing remains but for me to pay its penalty.

3. When God gave the law to Israel, it was not only holy, just, and good, but it was in their favor and for them, not against them. From Exodus 20-32, they were on top of the law. At Exodus 32, they violated it, and came under the law. Now they were under its curse.

4. To be under the law is not saying it applies to me, but that I broke it.

D. Scripture speaks of without the law, in the law, and under the law.

1. To be *without the law* was to be among those nations to whom it did not apply. I Corinthians 9:21. Greek not “under the law,” but “inlawed” to Christ.

Romans 2:14-15. To be without the law is not to be lawless.

2. Romans 2:12. To be *in the law* was to be among the number to whom the law was given at Sinai. A blessed state, but not for Gentiles.

3. To be *under the law* was to be under a curse. Galatians 3:10-13. This was undesirable, but nothing could redeem Israel from this state until the death of Christ.

E. Israel became under the law when they sinned the great sin of the golden calf. The broken tables indicated the broken covenant, but this did not end their obligation nor cover their sin.

G. God gave the tables again. They were placed in the ark under the blood-sprinkled mercy seat. Now they were a perpetual witness of Israel’s transgression and their dire need of redemption from the curse of the broken law. The grounds of redemption: the blood of the Lamb of God.

1. Israel now entered into a new relationship with the law. It was no longer the minister of blessing and great good. It now ministered death and condemnation. The law was not now the terms of an agreement, but an inflexible law that must be kept.

2. Galatians 3:19. The law no longer dispensed blessings. Instead, it punished transgressors.
3. Galatians 3:24. The law became a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ.
4. An illustration: a boy brings home a poor report card. His father promises him \$20 if he will do better next time. When he again fails, the father is angry. He will not reward him if he brings home a good report card next time, but he will severely punish him if he does not.

IV. I Timothy 1:7 speaks of those who desire to be teachers of the law. This is commendable. Many try to get people to memorize the Ten Commandments, or to keep certain parts of the law. Yet these remain in ignorance of all the Bible says about it. A true teacher of the law sets forth accurately and fully all that the Bible says about it.

V. Conclusion: The ten commandments were the ten terms of a covenant God made with Israel, which they broke. The law then became a curse to them, since they were under its penalty, which was never fully enacted. Christ was the Redeemer to rescue Israel from the curse of a broken law. Praise God that He is also the Redeemer to rescue all of mankind from our sins!