

Christ Came to Fulfill the Law - Your Reward Is In Him

The glory of Jesus Christ shines more clearly when we see him in his proper relation to the Old Testament. He has a magnificent relation to all that was written. It is not surprising that this is the case, because he is called the Word of God incarnate (John 1:14). Would not the Word of God incarnate be the sum and consummation of the Word of God written? Consider these summary statements and the texts that support them.

1. All the Scriptures bear witness to Christ. Moses wrote about Christ.

John 5:39, 46: You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me. . . . If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.

2. All the Scriptures are about Jesus Christ, even where there is no explicit prediction. That is, there is a fullness of implication in all Scriptures that points to Christ and is satisfied only when he has come and done his work. "The meaning of all the Scriptures is unlocked by the death and resurrection of Jesus." (Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, p. 54)

Luke 24:27: And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

3. Jesus came to fulfill all that was written in the Law and the Prophets. All of it was pointing to him even where it is not explicitly prophetic. He accomplishes what the Law required.

Matthew 5:17-18: Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

4. All the promises of God in the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. That is, when you have Christ, sooner or later you will have both Christ himself and all else that God promised through Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:20: For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

5. The law was kept perfectly by Christ. And all its penalties against God's sinful people were poured out on Christ. Therefore, the law is now manifestly not the path to righteousness, Christ is. The ultimate goal of the law is that we would look to Christ, not law-keeping, for our righteousness.

Romans 10:4: For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

The reason we believe in a singular eternal reward for all the saints--a reward that neither varies in degree or intensity based upon one's life on earth--is because receive Christ's reward for obedience.

Because the Messiah has fulfilled the Law, everything has changed

1. The blood sacrifices ceased because Christ fulfilled all that they were pointing toward. He was the final, unrepeatable sacrifice for sins. Hebrews 9:12: "He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption."

2. The priesthood that stood between worshipper and God has ceased.

Hebrews 7:23-24: "The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever."

3. The physical temple has ceased to be the geographic center of worship.

Now Christ himself is the center of worship. He is the "place," the "tent," and the "temple" where we meet God. Therefore Christianity has not geographic center, no Mecca, no Jerusalem. John 4:21-23: "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. . . . But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.'" John 2:19-21: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . He was speaking about the temple of his body." Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

4. The food laws that set Israel apart from the nations have been fulfilled and ended in Christ.

Mark 7:18-19: "[Jesus] said to them, 'Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him . . . (Thus he declared all foods clean).'"

5. The establishment of civil law on the basis of an ethnically rooted people, who are ruled directly by God, has ceased.

The people of God are no longer a unified political body or an ethnic group or a nation-state, but are exiles and sojourners among all ethnic groups and all states. Therefore, God's will for states is not taken directly from the Old Testament theocratic order, but should now be reestablished from place to place and from time to time by means that correspond to God's sovereign rule over all peoples, and that correspond to the fact that genuine obedience, rooted as it is in faith in Christ, cannot be coerced by law.

The state is therefore grounded in God, but not expressive of God's immediate rule. Romans 13:1, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." John 18:36: "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting."

(c. John Piper).