

## **Are You A Legalist?**

George Burnside

To accuse a fellow Christian of being a legalist is to disobey our Lord and Savior. Here is our Lord's plain statement.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." MATTHEW 7:12

To accuse anyone of being a legalist is to judge his motive, for a "legalist" as the term used by religionists today means that a person is looking to self for salvation, and not depending on Jesus to save. Jesus warns against judging another's motives. To accuse one of legalism is to place one's self under the judgment of God. Jesus refers to the accuser in the strongest of terms. Note the words of Jesus:

"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of your own eye; and then shall you see clearly to-cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." MATTHEW 7:5

No true Christian would dare to accuse a fellow believer of legalism. We dare not judge motives as the one judged may be humbly obeying his Lord because he loves his Lord. This may be his motive.

Jesus said "If ye love me, keep my commandments." To those who give to Jesus loving obedience, our Lord gives the promise: JOHN 14:15

"And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." The Holy Spirit, the greatest of all gifts, is not given to the critics that cry "Legalist! Legalist!", but to those who trust and lovingly obey. The Spirit could not be given to the critics, for they disobey Christ. JOHN 14:16

"The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." The Comforter is not given to the one Christ calls a "hypocrite" who judge those who render loving obedience, by crying "legalist, salvation by works and filthy rags". Jesus further points out those who are going home to glory with Him, with these words: ACTS 5:32

"Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. REVELATION 14:12

Jesus calls them, not legalists but "saints" Again Jesus says:

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." The poor judging critic who judges others with the cry of "Legalism", "Catholicism" and "Filthy rags" may get nowhere for Jesus says only commandment keepers will enter heaven. REVELATION 22:14

### **IS KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD LEGALISM?**

Read the preface to the ten commandments in Exodus 20:1, 2 and ask yourself is this legalism?

Read the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:17-19. Dare you say this is filthy rags or Catholicism?

In Matthew 7:21 Our Lord declares "Not every one that said unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Dare you charge Jesus with teaching legalism? Would it not be better to pray that Jesus, our gracious lawgiver, write His law on our hearts, the law that He once wrote on the two tables of stone?

Instead of branding Christ's "saints" as legalists, pray that we all may be soon pointed out by his nail-scarred hand "Here are they that keep the commandments of God". Christ here shows us that the "commandments of God" are as much part of the "everlasting gospel" as they were when contained in the ark of the covenant, which were enshrined and crowned by His own majestic glory, His visible presence. How can you brand as legalist and catholic, one who loves Him and keeps His commandments?

"He shall magnify the law, and make it honorable". Did our Lord of Calvary magnify the law that we, mere mortals, may downgrade it and call it filthy rags, and legalistic? ISAIAH 42:21

Did Christ make the law honorable that we should make it contemptible? Did Jesus fulfill the law that we may disregard it? Did our Lord uphold that "royal law" that we may brush it aside with the sneer of legalism! Works! Filthy rags? Did Emmanuel leave heaven and go through Calvary for such a purpose?

Surely none but Satan could inspire such deception. May we all ever point bewildered lost sinners to our loving Lord, through whom they may find pardon and power - law fulfilling power, "that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us". Then, instead of crying legalism, filthy rags, works and Catholicism, we may always call it "the royal law", "the perfect law of liberty", the law of God.

## **Old Testament References**

### **1. Our meditation all the day long.**

Blessed [is] the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. But his delight [is] in the law of the LORD; and in his law does he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he does shall prosper. **Psalms 1:1-3.**

### **2. The law of God is perfect converting the soul.**

The law of the LORD [is] perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD [is] sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD [are] right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD [is] pure, enlightening the eyes. **Psalms 19:7-8.**

### **3. God's law is a delight within our heart.**

I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. Psalm 40:8.

### **4. The Ten Commandments are for His people.**

For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children. That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born. Who should arise and declare [them] to their children. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. **Psalms 78:1-7.**

### **5. The eternal law of God**

The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for

ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. **Psalm 111:7, 8.**

**6. The angels keep the commandments of God.**

To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, you his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. **Psalm 103:18-20.**

**7. The Ten Commandments are binding for 20,000 years.**

He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac. And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant. **Psalm 105:8-10.**

**8. God will destroy the lawless ones.**

It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law. They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law. **Psalm 119:126,150.**

**9. The law is our guide and lamp.**

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. **Psalm 119:105.**

**10. Depart from evil and obey the Commandments**

Depart from me, you evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God. **Psalm 119:115.**

**11. It is our peace and delight.**

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight. **Psalm 119:165, 174.**

**12. Our whole duty before God.**

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. **Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14.**

**13. God will seal the law among His disciples.**

Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. **Isaiah 8:16.**

**14. The commandments are a test of truth and error.**

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, [it is] because [there is] no light in them. **Isaiah 8:20.**

**15. The Sabbath will be kept in heaven.**

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, said the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, said the LORD. **Isaiah 66:22-24.**

## **New Testament References**

### **1. Jesus came to uphold the Ten Commandments.**

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach [them], the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **Matthew 5:17-19.**

### **2. Keep the Ten Commandments to enter heaven Jesus said.**

And he said unto him, Why do you call me good? There is none good but one, [that is], God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He said unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shall do no murder, Thou shall not commit adultery, Thou shall not steal, Thou shall not bear false witness. Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. **Matthew 19:17-19.**

### **3. If you love Jesus keep the Commandments.**

If you love me, keep my commandments. **John 14:15.**

### **4. Jesus is our example and He kept the law of God.**

If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. **John 15:10.**

### **5. The Sabbath still existed after Jesus died on the cross.**

And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulcher, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment. **Luke 23:54-56.**

### **6. The doers of the law are justified.**

For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. **Romans 2:13.**

### **7. Breaking the Commandments is Blasphemy**

You therefore which teaches another, teaches you not thyself? You that preaches a man should not steal, do you steal? Thou that say a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhors idols, do you commit sacrilege? You that make your boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonors God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. **Romans 2:21-24**

### **8. The law gives a knowledge of right and wrong.**

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. **Romans 3:20.**

### **9. We establish the law.**

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. **Romans 3:31**

**10. Sin is the breaking of the law.**

Because the law works wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. **Romans 4:15.**

**11. Sin is the breaking of the law and existed since Adam and Eve.**

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. **Romans 5:13-15.**

**12. Sin is the breaking of the law.**

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shall not covet. **Romans 7:7.**

**13. The law is holy, just and good.**

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. **Romans 7:12.**

**14. The true Christian serves the law of God.**

I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. **Romans 7:25.**

**15. The true Christian obeys the righteous law of God.**

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. **Romans 8:1-4.**

**16. The evil mind rejects keeping the commandments of God.**

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. **Romans 8:7.**

**17. True love is obeying the law of God.**

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loves another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shall not commit adultery, Thou shall not kill, Thou shall not steal, Thou shall not bear false witness, Thou shall not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. **Romans 13:8-10.**

**18. Keeping the Commandments is what really matters.**

Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

**1 Corinthians 7:19.**

**19. Jesus gave the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai.**

Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the

cloud, and all passed through the sea. And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. And did all eat the same spiritual meat. And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. **1 Corinthians 10:1-4**

**19. The Ten Commandment Law is good in Paul's day.**

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully. **1 Timothy 1:8**

**20. The Sabbath rest remains on the seventh day.**

For he spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. There remains therefore a rest [Greek - Sabbath] to the people of God. **Hebrews 4:4, 9.**

**21. The Ten Commandment Law is part of the New Covenant.**

For finding fault with them, he said, Behold, the days come, said the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, said the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, said the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. **Hebrews 8:8-10.**

**22. The who keep the law are blessed by God in what they do.**

But they who look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein, they being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. **James 1:25.**

**23. We will be judged by the Ten Commandments.**

If you fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself, you do well. But if you have respect to persons, you commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak you, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. **James 2:8-12.**

**24. We must keep the Commandments to know Jesus.**

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that said, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But who so keeps his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. **1 John 2:3, 4.**

**25. We must keep the Commandments to abide in Jesus and the Holy Spirit.**

And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keeps his commandments dwells in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. **1 John 3:22, 24.**

**26. Sin is transgression of the law.**

Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. **1 John 3:4.**

**27. The love of God is to keep His Commandments.**

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

**1 John 5:2, 3.**

**28. The Ark of the Ten Commandment Covenant still in heaven.**

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament. And there were lightning, and voices, and thundering, and an earthquake, and great hail.

**Revelation 11:19.**

**29. The Ark of the Ten Commandment Covenant still in heaven.**

And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

**Revelation 15:5.**

**30. God's saints keep the commandments.**

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. **Revelation 12:17.**

**31. God's saints keep the commandments.**

Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. **Revelation 14:12.**

**32. Commandment breakers cast into the Lake of Fire.**

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. **Revelation 21:8.**

**33. God's saints keep the commandments.**

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. **Revelation 22:14.**

**34. Lawless people are excluded from the Paradise of God.**

For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whore mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loves and makes a lie. **Revelation 22:15.**