

INTRODUCTION

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ insisted that He came NOT to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came to fulfill the law and the prophets

-in His works done as foretold in the prophets, and

-in His interpretation of the morality commanded in the law.

The morality commanded in the law was not changed by our Lord Jesus, and cannot be changed all during this age. Heaven and earth would sooner pass away than one jot or tittle pass out of God's law.

When the Lord Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said...but I say to you," the Lord Jesus was not repealing or altering The Ten Commandments. Instead, He was defending them from the corrupt interpretations that the scribes and Pharisees had been teaching the people.

He clarified for us that the real danger in breaking the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" lies not in what the judgment and punishment from men might be, but what the judgment and punishment from God is sure to be.

He clarified for us that the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery" examines not only the acts of the body, but also the lusts in the heart; and that the commandment cannot be circumvented by some clever use of divorce.

Our Lord Jesus said most definitively that He did not come to abolish the law or the prophets.

However, it may have occurred to you that our Lord's apostle Paul wrote something that sounds like the very opposite of that. Of course, what our Lord's apostles said and wrote, as recorded in the scriptures, was not really contradictory to what He Himself said. But as the inspired theologians made important fine distinctions between one thing and another, it can sometimes sound that way until we understand what they are getting at.

So, not that we are setting Paul and the Lord Jesus against each other, but we want to know more about this matter of abolishing or not abolishing the law. Because The Ten Commandments sit there very prominent in the Bible, and very strongly recommended by previous generations of Christians. And we really need to know what to do with them, and whether or not they are abolished in Jesus Christ.

TEXT

Eph 2:11-16

BODY

- I. There Used to Be a Wall Separating Man into the Jew and the Gentile (Eph 2:14)
 - A. In Jerusalem, at the temple, there was a literal wall stopping the Gentile from coming any further into the temple than the outer courtyard; but
 - B. Although this scripture in Ephesians might allude to that, it is not talking about that *literal* wall; instead, it is talking *figuratively* about something that was *like* a wall dividing the Jew from the Gentile

There used to be, figuratively speaking, a wall separating Man into the Jew from the Gentile

- II. Christ Jesus Broke Down that Wall, So That It No Longer Separates Man Into Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:14)
 - A. Our English Bibles translate verse 14 slightly differently, but all say essentially the same thing: he has broken down the wall
 1. Geneva: he...hath broken the stoppe of the partition wall
 2. KJV: he...hath broken down the middle wall of partition
 3. NKJV: He...has broken down the middle wall of separation
 4. ESV: he...has broken down...the dividing wall
 - B. The Jew and the Gentile are now one man rather than two, since Jesus has broken down the wall that had divided them; He has made both one
 - C. All mankind is one man essentially
 1. there is a unity to our race; God has made all nations of one blood; we all are descended from Adam; even much more recently, we all are descended from Noah
 2. that truth comes out in the old records in Genesis, telling the origin of the human race; then it comes out again strongly in the preaching of the apostle Paul
 3. that there is more than once race among men is not a biblical concept, and not biblical terminology;
 - a) according to the Bible, God has made of one blood many nations
 - b) isn't that an extremely helpful way of looking at ourselves and at each other?
 - (1) if we look at the shade of our skin, or at the shape of our eyes and noses, we seem to be different; but if we look at the color of our blood, clearly we are the same
 - (2) two men, because their skin looks different, knife each other or shoot each other; but when their blood runs out on the ground together, it all looks the same
 - D. Christ Jesus returned man, which had been divided into Jew and Gentile, to the essential unity in which he was created in Adam, and in which he is descended from Noah

There used to be a wall separating man into the Jew and the Gentile; but Christ Jesus broke down that wall, so that it no longer separates man into Jew and Gentile

III. The Wall that Christ Jesus Broke Down, Was the Law of Commandments in Ordinances (Eph 2:15)

- A. There are commandments that separated man into the Jew and the Gentile, which now by Christ Jesus are abolished or abrogated
- B. Are there commandments that did *not* separate man into Jew and Gentile, and so are not abolished or abrogated by Christ Jesus
 1. was man separated into Jew and Gentile by the commandments God gave to Adam when he was created? - e.g. Genesis 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. is that commandment abolished or abrogated by Christ Jesus?
 2. was man separated into Jew and Gentile by the commandments God gave to Noah after the great flood? - e.g. Genesis 9:6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man." is that commandment abolished or abrogated by Christ Jesus?
 3. was man separated into Jew and Gentile by the commandments that appear in the Bible, but that the Gentile also observes even if he does not know the Bible? - Romans 2:14-15 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, (15) who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them... is that law abolished or abrogated by Christ Jesus?
 4. APPLICATION: you know that the overall plan I am following in preaching these sermons is the Ten Commandments; I am speaking to you today from Ephesians 2 to help you know what to do with the Ten Commandments; take this point with you about that: Jesus Christ broke down the wall consisting of commandments in ordinances, those commandments that had separated man into Jew and Gentile; that does not mean He abolished the commandments that are common to both Jew and Gentile, those commandments given to our whole race in one man, whether Adam or Noah, long before God spoke to Israel at Mt. Sinai
- C. So, not *all* commandments separated man into Jew and Gentile; but there are *certain* commandments that separated the Jew from the Gentile;
 1. called here "commandments in ordinances"
 2. called in Theology "ceremonial law"
 3. 1689.19.3 ...God was pleased to give the people of Israel ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances...all which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are, by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only law-giver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end, abrogated and taken away. (One of the scripture proofs given is Ephesians 2:14-16.)
 4. this is very standard Christian doctrine, not distinctive to Reformed churches or to Baptist churches
 5. however, many Christians are poorly informed on that subject, thinking that
 - a) people who ethnically are descended from Israel, still are supposed to follow those commandments in ordinances; but note that Jesus abolished them; they are not in effect anymore, even for those who are Jews according to the flesh

- b) even people who are not ethnically descended from Israel will do better if they follow those commandments in ordinances than if they don't; but note that the unity between the Jew and the Gentile is not in *both* observing the ordinances, but in *neither* observing them

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- IV. Christ Jesus Broke Down the Wall of Commandments and Ordinances in His Flesh (Eph 2:14)
- A. This refers to our Lord Jesus' death on the cross to save sinners (Eph 2:16)
 - B. In mentioning His flesh, or body, it includes also His blood (Eph 2:13)
 - C. In another place Jesus had said that He was establishing the New Covenant or New Testament in His blood - Matthew 26:28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.
 - 1. In Hebrews it is explained to us that the coming of the New Covenant made the Old Covenant pass away
 - D. When Jesus died on the cross, God tore the veil of the temple in two from top to bottom - Matthew 27:50-51 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. (51) Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,
 - E. So when our passage says that Jesus abolished the law of commandments in ordinances in His flesh, it means that when He died on the cross, the provisions of the New Covenant came into effect, while the provisions of the Old Covenant were abolished or abrogated; when Jesus Christ gave up the ghost, the old testament ended and the new testament began
 - F. So, in the flesh of Jesus Christ (and in His blood), the wall dividing man into Jew and Gentile was broken down
 - G. Thus, the one-and-only Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, now reconciles sinners to God not as the old Jew and Gentile, but as one new man.
 - H. The abolishing of the enmity between Jew and Gentile is wonderful; but really it is only a distant second in importance to how Jesus Christ abolishes the enmity between sinful man and holy God: In the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, not only is the enmity between men abolished (Eph 2:15), but the enmity between man and God is abolished (Eph 2:16).

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The wall that Christ Jesus broke down was the law of commandments in ordinances---the ceremonial law

Christ Jesus broke down the wall of commandments and ordinances in His flesh, when He died on the cross for sinners

[If time is up at this point, I may conclude here.]

- V. See How Our Lord Jesus Taught This to Peter (Acts 10:9-28)
- A. The law of commandments in ordinances, the ceremonial law, had established a separation between the Jew and the Gentile, including the apostle Peter and a roman army officer named Cornelius
 - B. By that law of commandments in ordinances, the ceremonial law, the Jew was holy or clean, and the Gentile was common or unclean.
 - 1. some of the most obvious of those ordinances were the food laws, in which God, through Moses, had called some food “clean,” and some food “unclean”
 - C. But Jesus taught Peter that the Jew no longer was subject to those ordinances that previously had separated him from the Gentile
 - 1. Acts 10:13 And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."
 - 2. Acts 10:15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."
 - D. Peter, the Jew, expressed what he had learned about this to Cornelius, the Gentile
 - 1. Acts 10:28 Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean."
 - E. Cornelius and his household then were baptized just as Peter and the others had been (Acts 10:44-48)
 - 1. the Holy Spirit came upon them just as He had upon Peter and the others of the circumcision; in the next chapter, Peter will refer to this as being baptized by Christ with the Holy Spirit
 - 2. so Peter ordered them baptized in water just as he himself had been baptized
 - F. So, by means of the vision of the sheet of animals, with the command to kill and eat them; and the command from the Lord not to call anything unclean that God had cleansed; and the obvious conversion of Cornelius and his household; our Lord Jesus taught Peter that the wall between Jew and Gentile was broken down; the law of commandments in ordinances was abolished; the ceremonial law was abrogated

CONCLUSION

There used to be a wall separating man into the Jew and the Gentile

Christ Jesus broke down that wall, so that it no longer separates man into Jew and Gentile

The wall that Christ Jesus broke down was the law of commandments in ordinances---the ceremonial law

Christ Jesus broke down the wall of commandments and ordinances in His flesh, when He died on the cross for sinners

[The Lord Jesus showed this to Peter in how He sent Peter to preach to the household of Cornelius.]

So now, in Christ Jesus, the sinner repenting of his sins, trusting in Jesus, is reconciled to God as one man with all others who also are so trusting.

Roel - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Luke 2:8-11

Thad - Scripture Reading - Psalm 16

Alex - Congregational Prayer

Benediction -

Rita - Prelude

Rita - Trinity 149 "Joy to the World" - Andrew lead

Haven - Trinity 581 "To Thee, O Lord, I Fly" - Andrew lead

Rita - Trinity 431 "Just As I Am"

the division between the descendents of Israel and the rest of the world is not natural; it was established by God at a certain time in history, by means of commandments in ordinances that He gave to Israel through Moses at Mt. Sinai

God was pleased to establish and maintain that division for a long time, for something like 1,500 years; but then He also was pleased to abolish that division through Jesus Christ

Matthew 27:50-51 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

God has destroyed the veil in the temple, showing that the ceremonial law of the Old Covenant has been destroyed.

VI. There Is an Apparent Contradiction Between Jesus’ Saying About Not Breaking the Law, and Paul’s Saying About Breaking the Law

VII. There Is No Real Contradiction Between These Two Doctrines: Jesus Came to Abrogate and Take Away the Ceremonial Laws, But Not the Moral Law As Stated In the Ten Commandments

How can I best understand and put to the congregation these two scriptural sayings?

According to our confession, Mt 5:17-19 speaks of the moral law, while Eph 2:11-16 speaks of the ceremonial laws.

<p>Matthew 5:17-19 Think <u>not</u> that I am come <u>to destroy the law</u>, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 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. 19 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.</p>	<p>Ephesians 2:11-16 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath <u>broken down</u> the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having <u>abolished</u> in his flesh the enmity, even <u>the law of commandments contained in ordinances</u>; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one</p>

	body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:
<p>1689.19.5 The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof, and that not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it; neither doth Christ in the Gospel any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation. ¹²</p> <p>¹² Matthew 5:17-19; Romans 3:31</p>	<p>1689.19.3 ...ceremonial laws...are, by Jesus Christ...abrogated and taken away. ⁸</p> <p>⁸ Colossians 2:14, 16, 17; Ephesians 2:14,16</p>