

“The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 6

At first glance the Old and New Testaments are very different. One seems predominantly harsh and judgmental, the other seems to teach love and acceptance. It is true that the New Testament writers found themselves reinterpreting the Old Testament scriptures in the light of Jesus, who did not conform to traditional expectations of the messiah. He died and rose from the dead, opening way to the forgiveness of sins and personal relationship with God through faith in him.

But where did that leave the law of Moses, which said that people lived or died according to how well or how badly they observed it?

In the light of Jesus, the true purpose of the law became evident. No one could attain to righteousness and salvation by observing the law of Moses, because it is God's law and is therefore perfect. When Paul said that the wages of sin is death, he meant that death is the penalty for infringing even the smallest of God's commands. No human being is perfect, and so everyone falls short of obedience to God's law in some way. Only Jesus, the only perfect person, was able to fulfil God's law to perfection and qualified to be a perfect sacrifice for sin.

So there is nothing wrong with the law of God, but it's ability to cause us to live lives that are pleasing to God is hampered by our imperfect, fallen, human nature. Even those who claim to observe the law in all its complexity fall far short of God's perfection, since they are claiming that by their own effort and merit they have become righteous and deserve God's favour and acceptance.

Jesus himself also had a novel way of interpreting the purpose of God's law. When asked what were its greatest commands he said “Love God with your whole heart, mind, soul and strength, and love your neighbour as yourself.” This, he said, sums up the law and the prophets. The Old Testament law, according to Jesus, are about how to live in love for God and others.

In Jesus, then, there is a new understanding of the law of God. When we come to faith in him, he infuses us with his life, sharing our lives by his Holy Spirit, who begins to transform us into people whose lives are pleasing to God. We start to live according to his law, not because we are under the threat of death if we do not, but because we love him.

### Prayer

Father, your law is perfect, but I am imperfect and fall far short of your just requirements. Thank you that Jesus came and fulfilled your law by his perfect life, death and resurrection. May I never trust in my own righteousness, merit, effort or ability to make myself acceptable to you, but put my faith and trust in Jesus for forgiveness and salvation. In Jesus' name, amen.

*All these devotionals can be found on our website [inghamitechurch.org](http://inghamitechurch.org) on the 'Resources' page. Click on the link to go there.*