

# DISCOVER PROPHECY



## Violence in America

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### Increase in Violence

More and more it seems as if violence is increasing. Violence of every kind. Murder, rape, robbery. Guns, knives, and everything imaginable. Sadly enough, America is noted as one of the most violent countries of the world with crime crossing age and cultural barriers. Once people assumed that it was among the minorities, but crime is equally throughout races within America. It was believed that crime was only in the big cities, but crime and murder are on the increase in the suburban areas too.

Our children are more and more becoming violent, taking weapons of destruction and danger to schools. It may very well be because the children are exposed to so much violence that it deadens their feelings toward it. In fact, the average 18 year old has witnessed 200,000 violent acts and some 40,000 murders in the comfort of his living room via the television set.

Facts about crime: There is a serious crime committed in the United States every 2 seconds. Every 23 minutes someone is murdered. A rape occurs every six minutes, robbery every 58 seconds, car theft 27 seconds and a burglary every 8 seconds. Are we safe anymore?

### Law Abiding Citizens

God desires that we be law abiding citizens and keeping the laws of the land and more importantly, His law. "The works of His hands are truth and justice; all His precepts are sure. They are upheld forever and ever; they are performed in truth and uprightness" Psalm 111:8. God's law, His ten commandments are sure and trustworthy. And He desires them to be upheld forever and ever, not just by the Jewish nation, but for all believers in God. If we as a society did, truth and justice would exist instead of the increase in violence and immorality.

Shortly after the children of Israel left Egypt, God presented Moses with two tablets of stone on top of Mount Sinai. These two stones contained the ten commandments or the moral law to not only the nation of Israel, but to all the world. You can find these ten commandments in Exodus chapter twenty. Summarized, these are the ten commandments:

1. *You shall have no other gods before Me.* God desired that we would worship Him and Him alone, not other things that we would consider worthy of praise. This would also apply to those things that we seem to worship over and above God, like possessions.
2. *You shall not make for yourself an idol.* Here was a commandment asking that we not make images of worship. Either of things of this world, or of things of heaven. There is nothing wrong with images in themselves, but we are not to bow down and worship before these images.
3. *You shall not take the name of the Lord Your God in vain.* This has two meanings. First, to take lightly the name of God or Christ in conversation. Swearing and using God's name to do so would be a violation of this commandment. Also, God doesn't want us to take halfheartedly His name as Christians. We are Christians, therefore we should act like one.
4. *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.* For six days we are to work and carry on our business. The seventh day is for our time in worship to God, to spend quality time with family and to receive both physical and spiritual rest.
5. *Honor your father and mother.* To respect the authority of our parents. Even if we don't agree with them and their values, it is important that we still bring them honor.
6. *You shall not murder.* Oh how I wish people followed that one!! It brings me pain to see how individuals can so easily take the life of another without thinking through the consequences.
7. *You shall not commit adultery.* This one's been in the news lately. Even our politicians are breaking this commandment. And we have seen how doing so can hurt so many people and effect far more than just a small few. A moment of passion for a great deal of heartache and pain to yourself and so many others.
8. *You shall not steal.* Simply put. If it doesn't belong to you, don't take it without permission to do so. To take something otherwise, is stealing and breaking God's law.
9. *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.* This is another way of saying, don't be deceptive

or a liar. Be honest and truthful. Our previous national president would have left the office with greater integrity if he had just been honest about the mistakes he'd made.

10. *You shall not covet.* To covet is to desire something that belongs to another. You can covet your neighbors home, belongings, spouse, or anything. It is essentially not being content with what you have and seeking after something that someone else owns or has.

These ten commandments are not ten recommendations. Remember that these were placed in the ark of God or Mercy seat (Exodus 25:16), representing something that was at the foundation of His kingdom and government. It is Satan that wants us to avoid and forget these laws. In fact, to put emphasis upon the importance of these laws above the civil laws that were given to Moses; to show how these laws were for all mankind and not just the Jewish nation; so that people would know how important these are to God, He wrote these ten commandments on the stones with His own finger (Exodus 31:18) before presenting them to Moses.

### **Salvation By Grace**

Though the law of God is very important and valuable, it is not the method of salvation. This is where people seem to get confused so often. Most everyone would say that we should keep the ten commandments. Rarely do I come across someone who likes the idea of others breaking these laws. But we then recognize that the method of salvation is not by keeping the law. This is not a dichotomy. There is reconciliation on this subject. How does the law of God and salvation fit together? "For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace" Romans 6:14. We don't receive salvation by "being good" but rather by grace in Jesus Christ who died upon calvary's cross for us!!! We are saved by grace alone.

### **Do Away With The Law?**

One day, while driving home and in a bit of a hurry, I got pulled over by a police officer for speeding. I had just passed from a 55 speed zone to a 35 speed zone and had not yet slowed down. Before I did, the officer, who was strategically parked, clocked my speeding and pulled me over.

He asked for the typical registration and proof of insurance and then went back to his car. I waited for the verdict. I had broken the law. I deserved a ticket. I knew I was going too fast. You break the law, you pay the price.

When he returned, he said that he would let me off with a warning. Being nice to me, I avoided the penalty of breaking the law. I deserved it, but he, having the right, let me off the hook. We call this grace and mercy. That's when you don't get what you deserve!

Now do you suppose that after he let me off I tore out of there and assumed that I could go as fast as I wanted because I had received grace and mercy? Absolutely not. In fact, because I knew how nice he was to me, I remained in the speed limit for the longest time.

Do you suppose that just because we receive grace and mercy from God, that we have the freedom to go and break His law? Of course not. In fact the Bible says quite the opposite. "What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? May it never be" Romans 6:15. And elsewhere it says the same thing, "Do we then nullify the law through faith? may it never be! On the contrary, we establish the law" Romans 3:31. The New Testament also says that "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness" 1 John 3:4. To break God's law is to sin.

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not short that it cannot save; neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities [sins] have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear" Isaiah 59:1,2. When we sin (break God's law) it causes a natural separation between us and God. Of course, God doesn't like a separation between us, so He wants us to receive reconciliation so that we might be drawn closer to Him.

### **Purpose Of The Law**

Romans 3:20 says that it is by the law that we understand what our sin is so that we may be reconciled. "For through the law comes the knowledge of sin."

The law is very much like a mirror. Let's say I was out working on the car and came in with a spot of grease on my nose. My wife, Andrea notices my smudge and tells me about it. How would I know for sure if there was some mar of grease on my face? Look in the mirror, of course. I pick up a mirror and notice my need of cleansing. Now do I seek to fix my problem by attempting to rid myself of the knowledge of my spot? Does destroying or putting away the mirror fix my problem? No, absolutely not. Do I use the mirror to clean my nose, trying to wipe it off with the glass? Of course not, the mirror only reveals my need for cleansing. I use water, soap and a rag to be made clean again.

The same goes with the law of God. When we spend time in His word, when we understand and know His will for our lives, when we read the ten commandments, we will learn of our need for cleansing. This then draws us to Jesus where He will offer both mercy and cleansing from our sins so that we might appear before God clean.

As a result of being made whole again by the grace of God; because Jesus paid the price of death on the cross for us, we don't just assume we have free reign to break the law, but instead, motivated out of appreciation and love for our God; out of love for the sacrifice Jesus offered in our behalf to uphold the law, we keep the law. We do so not to be saved, but because we have been saved. We do it because we love Him.

"If you love Me," Jesus said, "you will keep my commandments" John 14:15. "And by this we know that we have come to know Him," speaking of our love for Jesus, "if we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has been perfected" 1 John 2:3-5. If we don't keep God's law, it is because we don't love Him.

### **Nailed To The Cross?**

Some have come to the conclusion that the law of God is no longer significant since Jesus died on the cross. This approach to scripture assumes that the people of the Old Testament were saved by works compared to the New Testament salvation by grace. It also assumes that God has had two separate methods of salvation offered to two different time periods. This view also sadly misses what Jesus was trying to accomplish on the cross.

"Do not think that I came to abolish the law or the prophets," Jesus said, "I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the law, until all is accomplished" Matthew 5:17,18. Jesus didn't come to put away the law, but to save us from sin, which is the transgression of the law. If we destroy the law and consider it no longer necessary to keep, then we take away the cause of sin. If that occurs, we nullify what Jesus did on the cross. He died for nothing. His sacrifice is in vain. God's desire to uphold the law hasn't changed. Not one small part of the law has been done away with. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the law to fail" Luke 16:17.

What about Colossians 2:14? It says, "He has taken

it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." But the question is raised: What is nailed to the cross? As always, we want to study the Bible for ourselves. We want to examine the scriptures and let them speak. We don't want to read anything into the text, but rather, let the text speak to us. This is done by reading the context. Back up to verse 13. Let's go through it step by step. "And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh..." Transgression is another name for sin or the breaking of God's law. "Remember when you were condemned to death because you were breaking God's law," the Bible writer Paul is asking? The wages of sin is death. We are condemned to death because of our breaking God's law. This is the condition of mankind. But he continues... "He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgression..." Instead of receiving death, as we deserve, we receive eternal life. How? Because we have been forgiven our sins. We receive the grace of Jesus Christ because of Calvary. Now notice what it says next... "having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile toward us..." What was canceled out? Read it again. What was canceled? God canceled out the certificate of debt. "The wages of sin is death" Romans 6:23. Because we broke the law, we are going to have to pay the price. The bill is needing to be paid. The accounts payable in heaven says that we have a debt to be paid. We can pay this price ourselves by dying and receiving eternal loss, or we can claim the blood of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sin. When we receive Jesus as our savior, that debt that is charged against us is canceled! Amen! The debt was canceled, not the law. How was it canceled? Because Jesus paid the price! If we do away with the law, we make Jesus' death worthless, but Jesus instead paid the price of our sin, canceling our debt. "He has taken it out of the way," speaking of our debt, not the law, "having nailed it to the cross."

### **Old Testament Salvation**

Were the people in Old Testament time saved by works and we in this time by faith? Has God changed His approach to salvation? Jesus summarized the ten commandments and encourages our keeping them, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment, and the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depends the whole law and the prophets" Matthew 22:37-40.

The ten commandments were essentially, according to Jesus, made up of two parts. The first half focused on our love toward God. You could show your love to God by obeying the first four commandments. You can then show your love to mankind by keeping the other six commandments. Jesus says that this is what is important. Loving God and loving mankind. And the ten commandments of the Old Testament is an expression of that love.

We know that the ten commandments are both supported in the Old and New Testaments, what about faith? Hebrews, the New Testament book on faith answers our question concerning the Old Testament method of salvation. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval" Hebrews 11:1,2. And for the entire rest of chapter eleven, Paul describes person after person of the Old Testament and how they gained their approval from God not by keeping the law, but rather by their faith in God. This is just like us today.

### **God's People Delight In The Law**

God's people don't keep the law in order to receive approval or salvation by God, but rather, because we have experienced the salvation from God, we delight in keeping His law and making it a part of our hearts. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after these days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their minds, and will write them upon their hearts" Hebrews 8:10. God desires His law to be written upon our hearts and a delight to us. "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy law is within my heart" Psalm 40:8.

The qualities of God's people in the last days are those that recognize God's government as supreme and seek to follow His will and law. Even though the Devil is very upset with those who are obedient to God. "Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus" Revelation 14:12. And the Devil doesn't like it, "And the dragon was enraged with the woman and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" Revelation 12:17. The question is, who do you want to make happy? God, who provides salvation freely or the Devil who is trying to undermine God's government and law? It's your choice to make!

