

Was the Law Nailed to the Cross?

Note from ***Blow the Trumpet***

The article that follows was written by Dr. Robert J. Thiel, a longtime member of God's church and a well respected authority on a variety of issues effecting God's people today. Dr. Thiel attends the Living Church of God and is the architect of one of the most visited COG websites (COGwriter). Additionally, although Dr. Thiel is not affiliated with ***Blow the Trumpet*** we feel his writings with respect to Biblical subjects reflect a forceful yet mature perspective. This particular article was selected by ***Blow the Trumpet*** because of its thoughtful analysis and succinct approach to an issue that profoundly impacts the lives of God's people. The article has been formatted to be consistent with the design of our website.

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## Were the Ten Commandments "Nailed to the Cross"?

By Dr. Robert J. Thiel

Some try to ignore the Bible's teachings on the ten commandments by saying they were done away at the crucifixion. Some try to teach that the ten commandments were "nailed to the cross". Is that what the Bible teaches?

There is only one scripture that uses the "nailed it to the cross" expression (AV/NKJ), it is Col 2:13-14, in which Paul states, "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross". Were the ten commandments the "requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us"? Let us examine the words of Paul to see.

### Commandment 1:

Paul said, "God, who made the world and everything in it...they should seek the Lord" (Acts 17:24,27). Paul also said, "I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law" (Acts 24:14). "And what agreement has the temple of God have with idols?" (II Cor 6:16). "you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (I The 1:9). "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 The 2:3-4).

### Commandment 2:

"we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols" (Acts 15:20). "Now while Paul waited for them in Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols...Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said...God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything" (Acts 17:16,22,24-25). "Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four footed animals and creeping things" (Rom 1:22-23). "But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is...an idolater" (I Cor 5:11). "Neither... idolaters...will inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor 6:9-10). "And do not become idolaters as were some of them...Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry" (I Cor 10:7,14). "And what agreement has the temple of

God have with idols?" (II Cor 6:16). "Now the works of the flesh are evident...idolatry" (Gal 5:19,20). "For this you know that no...idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph 5:5). "Therefore put to death...covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col 3:5). "you turned to God from idols" (I The 1:9).

### **Commandment 3:**

"they are all under sin...Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (Rom 3:9,14). "Let all...evil speaking be put away from you" (Eph 4:31). "But now you yourselves are to put off all these:...blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth" (Col 3:8). "they may learn not to blaspheme" (I Tim 1:20). But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be...blasphemers" (II Tim 3:1,2).

### **Commandment 4:**

"Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures...And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 17:2;18:4 see also 13:14,27,42,44). "let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give to him who has need" (Eph 4:28) and "For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: 'If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat'" (II Thes 3:10); (recall that the requirement to work is also part of the Sabbath command, thus even that portion of the commandment is repeated in the New Testament.) "And to whom did He swear they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?" (Heb 3:18). "For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works'" (Heb 4:4). "There remains therefore a rest (literally *sabbatismos*, 'Sabbath rest') for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His" (Heb 4:9-10).

### **Commandment 5:**

"being filled with all unrighteousness...disobediant to parents" (Rom 1:29,30). "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother', which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth" (Eph 6:1-3). "the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience" (Col 3:6). "Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord" (Col 3:20). "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be...disobediant to parents" (II Tim 3:1,2).

### **Commandment 6:**

"being filled with all unrighteousness...murder" (Rom 1:29). "You shall not murder" (Rom 13:9). "Now the works of the flesh are evident...murders" (Gal 5:19,21). "the lawless and insubordinate... murders... manslayers" (I Tim 1:9).

### **Commandment 7:**

"being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality" (Rom 1:29). "So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress" (Rom 7:3). "You shall not commit adultery" (Rom 13:9). "But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral" (I Cor 5:11). "Neither... adulterers, nor homosexuals...will inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor 6:9-10). "Nor let us commit sexual immorality as some of them did" (I Cor 10:8). "Now the works of the flesh are evident...adultery, fornication" (Gal 5:19). "For this you know that no fornicator...has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph 5:5). "the lawless and insubordinate...fornicators...sodomites" (I Tim 1:9,10). "fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb 13:4).

### **Commandment 8:**

"You shall not steal" (Rom 13:9). "nor thieves...will inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor 6:10). "I have been...in perils of robbers" (II Cor 11:25-26). "Let him who stole, steal no longer" (Eph 4:28).

#### **Commandment 9:**

"You shall not bear false witness" (Rom 13:9). "Therefore, putting away lying" (Eph 4:25). "Do not lie to one another" (Col 3:9). "the lawless and insubordinate...liars...perjurers" (I Tim 1:9,10). "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy" (I Tim 4:1-2). "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be...slanderers" (II Tim 3:1,3). "God, who cannot lie" (Ti 1:2). "it is impossible for God to lie" (Heb 6:18).

#### **Commandment 10:**

"being filled with all unrighteousness...covetousness" (Rom 1:29). "You shall not covet" (Rom 7:7). "You shall not covet" (Rom 13:9). "But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is...covetous" (I Cor 5:11). "nor covetous...will inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor 6:10). "we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted" (I Cor 10:6). "you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal 5:16). "For this you know that no fornicator...nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph 5:5). "Therefore put to death...covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col 3:5). "For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness" (I The 2:5). "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have" (Heb 13:5).

## **Entrance into The Holy City**

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Rev 22:14). Since "those who do His commandments...have the right to enter...the city" (Rev 22:14), the ten commandments could not be "contrary to us". So then, if the ten commandments were not "nailed to the cross", what was? What does the Bible say? "having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col 2:14). It was the handwriting of requirements. Which requirements were wiped out? It appears that two things were wiped out. One would be the requirements of the Levitical priesthood (Heb 9:1,6-10). And why? "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins...By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all" (Heb 10:4,10). The other (which is related) would be the death penalty, as "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:23). It is of interest to note that the expression "the handwriting of requirements" is a Greek legal term that signifies the penalty which a lawbreaker had to pay--through Jesus the penalty was wiped out ("the handwriting of requirements"), not the law! "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them" (Heb 10:16).

Some will argue that you still cannot keep the ten commandments (for "all have sinned"), even if they are all mentioned as being in effect after the crucifixion. Does this mean one should not try?

#### **Paul's Other Writings**

Paul wrote "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" (Heb 10:26). He also warned that those who break various of the ten commandments will not inherit the kingdom of God (Eph 5:4-5) and then said, "Let no man deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them" (Eph 5:6-7).

Some have been confused about Paul's writings, but as Peter warned, "Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things in which are

some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the scriptures" (II Pet 3:15-16). Perhaps the most confusing to some is, "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle the wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity" (Eph 2:14-16). It is clear that Paul could not be talking about the ten commandments as he mentions parts of at least eight of them as still being in existence in the same book (see above, the other two are alluded to as well, Eph 5:31--anger, which is like murder according to Jesus; plus the comment about being a prisoner of the Lord also would show the first commandment, Eph 4:1). It needs to be remembered is that the wall of separation that was broken down the middle, was the large veil in the temple that split when Jesus died (Mat 27:50:51). Thus it was the ordinances of the Levitical priesthood which were abolished. This is what Paul also wrote elsewhere (Heb 9:1,6-10).

The entire book of Galations is confusing to many. Suffice it to say that at least four of the commandments are mentioned in that book, and for violating some of them Paul wrote, "those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal 5:21). Paul is telling people that they cannot earn their salvation through works (Gal 5:4-5) which of course is true. He never tells anyone to violate any commandment (not in Galations nor any other book) and reminds people that they will reap what they sow (Gal 6:7). Actually, he commended Christians who obey (Phil 2:12).

Paul himself said, after his conversion to the leaders of the Jews, "Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans" (Acts 28:17). If Paul had intentionally violated any of the ten commandments (or advocated this of others) he could not have said this. Paul also said, "Therefore I urge you, imitate me" (I Cor 4:16) and "Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ" (I Cor 11:1); Jesus, as we saw earlier, both kept and taught observance of the ten commandments.

Paul wrote, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin...I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet'...Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Rom 3:20;7:7,12). **Paul taught each of the ten commandments after the crucifixion** (please see the commandments quoted above). Regarding faith and the law, Paul specifically wrote, "Do we make the void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary we establish the law" (Rom 3:31). Even after his conversion Paul state that he was, "concerning righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phi 3:6).

Paul warned, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Col 2:8); Jesus kept the ten commandments! He also warns that "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work" (II The 2:7). Lawlessness is breaking the law. Why would Paul warn about lawlessness if he felt all the law was done away?

## Other New Testaments Writers

Did the other New Testament writers teach the ten commandments were to be followed after the crucifixion. In this section, the portions of the New Testament that Paul did not write, but which discuss the ten commandments individually will after the crucifixion will be quoted.

## Commandment 1

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I Joh 2:15); which is another way of saying, put nothing in the world before God. "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God" (Rev 14:9). "Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his

image" (Rev 20:4). "But the...unbelieving...shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev 21:8).

## **Commandment 2**

"we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols" (Acts 15: 20); "abominable idolatries" (I Pet 4:3). "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (I Joh 5:21). "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam...to eat things sacrificed to idols" (Rev 2:14). "Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, because you allow...My servants to...eat things sacrificed to idols" (Rev 2:20). "But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk" (Rev 9:20). "But ...idolaters...shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev 21:8). "But outside are...idolaters" (Rev 22:15).

## **Commandment 3**

"Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so" (Jas 3:10). "He is the antichrist who denies the Father and the Son" (I Joh 2:22).

## **Commandment 4**

"That day was the Preparation and the Sabbath drew near...And they rested on the Sabbath in accordance with the commandment" (Luk 23:54,56). "But when they departed from Pegra, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down" (Acts 13:14), they seemed to be following this admonition from John, "He who says he abides in Him ought also to walk just as He walked" (I Joh 2:6), since Jesus always went to the synagogues on the Sabbath (Luk 4:16).

## **Commandment 5**

"They have a heart trained in covetous practices and are accursed children" (II Pet 2:14). "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God" (I Joh 3:1).

## **Commandment 6**

"But let none of you suffer as a murderer" (I Pet 4:15). "For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder'. Now if you do no commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law" (Jas 2:11-12). "You lust...You murder" (Jas 4:2). "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and we know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (I Joh 3:15). "And they did not repent of their murders" (Rev 9:21). "he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword" (Rev 13:10). "But ...murderers...shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev 21:8). "But outside are...murderers" (Rev 22:15).

## **Commandment 7**

"Do not commit adultery" (Jas 2:11). "You lust...Adulterers and adulteresses!" (Jas 4:2,4). "having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin" (II Pet 2:14). "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes...is not of the Father but is of the world" (I Joh 2:16). "Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation" (Rev 2:22). "And they did not repent of ...their sexual immoralities" (Rev 9:21). "But the...sexual immoral...shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev 21:8). "But outside are...sexually immoral" (Rev 22:15).

## **Commandment 8**

"But let none of you suffer as...a thief" (I Pet 4:15). John seems to have expanded on the theme of this commandment when he wrote, "whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts

up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him" (I Joh 3:17). "And they did not repent of ...their thefts" (Rev 9:21).

### **Commandment 9**

"Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie...You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3,4). "They also set up false witnesses" (Acts 6:13). "having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who defile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed" (I Pet 3:16). "By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not stumble" (II Pet 2:3). He who says 'I know Him', and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I Joh 2:4). "I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth" (I Joh 2:21). "And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars" (Rev 2:22). "But ...liars...shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev 21:8). "But outside are...whoever loves and practices a lie" (Rev 22:15).

### **Commandment 10**

"By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not stumble" (II Pet 2:3). "You lust...and covet" (Jas 4:2). "They have a heart trained in covetous practices and are accursed children" (II Pet 2:14). "For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world" (I Joh 2:16).

It is of incidental note, but most of the other New Testament writers wrote after Paul and seem to mention the commandments as a matter of obvious fact. James wrote, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (Jas 1:22); similarly he warned, "But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and destroy" (Jas 4:11-12). James even emphasized that you must keep all of the commandments, "If you really fulfill the royal law according to scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder'. Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law" (Jam 2:8-11). John similarly wrote, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (I Joh 3:4).

John also wrote, "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil...In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother" (I Joh 3:7,8,10). What does the Bible teach is righteousness? "For all Your commandments are righteousness" (Ps 119:172).

**After the crucifixion, the Bible shows that all ten commandments are still to be followed. And it does this several times for each.**

### **To Summarize**

"Now by this we know we know Him if we keep His commandments. He who says 'I know Him', and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk just as He walked...These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you" (I Joh 2:3-6,26). Interestingly, Jesus praised those at Ephesus for doing this same thing, "And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars" (Rev 2:22).

Who are true Christians? Let's see what the last book of the Bible says. "And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who **keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ**" (Rev 12:17). "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Rev 14:12).

All of the ten commandments are mentioned as being in effect before Mount Sinai, Jesus taught all ten of them, Paul taught all ten of them, they were all in effect after the crucifixion, Paul specifically taught they were not done away (Rom 3:31), and all of them are mentioned by the other New Testament writers. The opinions that state otherwise seem to be "traditions of men" which Jesus warned against (Mat 15:6). The last chapter of the Bible states, "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" (Rev 22:14). Therefore, it would not appear wise from a biblical standpoint to teach that the ten commandments are not in effect. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all" (Ecc 12:13).