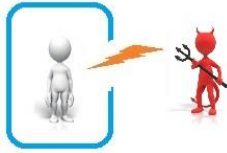


we make those wrong choices, we give Satan access to attack us through that breach – that weak area in our hedge of protection. And he is always looking for any opportunity to attack us (1 Pet 5:8) and then get us to think our misfortune comes from God.



Some go further and cast off God's law altogether, rejecting its protection and guidance. God honors our free will and permits us to go outside of His law if we chose. It is a hedge of protection not a prison wall. However, that freedom includes the freedom to experience the consequences of our choices.

If we rebel against God and reject His law; stepping outside of its protection altogether, then we are unshielded from Satan's attacks.



Then, when the troubles come, many think that it is God Who is afflicting them and they lose their trust in Him. And Satan has become very good at getting people to blame God for their problems; often even labelling natural disasters as "acts of God." But the afflictions we experience are just symptoms of, essentially, an illness characterized by a distrust of God and the wisdom of His laws. What is the solution? To again trust in God:



"O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." (Psalm 34:8)

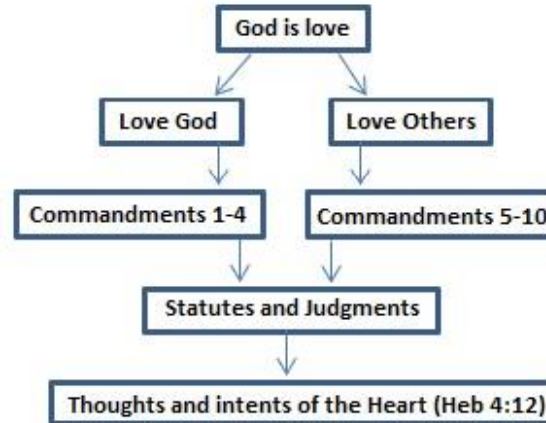
God is ever merciful. If we turn to Him in faith, He will again provide for and protect us.

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." (Eph 6:16)



That shield of faith (or trust) is really God's protection of us when we willingly place ourselves under it; that is, we again chose to obey His laws which are designed for our health and happiness.

Properly understood, all of God's laws can be seen to be based on the basic truth that God is love and to be for our benefit not for His:



It is vitally important that we understand the nature of God's law and His purpose for it. Then we will have a desire to allow Him write His law on our hearts which He will delight to do for us.

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<https://characterofgod.org/resources/>

Two Ways to Understand the Gospel



No. 2 - The Law of God

In tract 1, we learned that Paul warned of another gospel to come. "Gospel" means "good news." A perfect God would only give us a perfect gospel. Anything coming after would not be as good as the original good news. The law is an important part of the whole gospel message. There must be a sense in which the law is good news too. David said:

"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psa 40:8)

Perhaps we need a better understanding of the law so that it will be a delight to us as well.



Understanding the character of God to be one of only other-centered love as described in brochure 1 will

help us see that His law was given only for our good to save us from the state we are initially in. And we are in this state because of sin which John tells us has something to do with a broken law:

"Whoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
(1 John 3:4, American King James Version)

A good place to start to understand the law of God is to recognize that there are actually two distinctly different ways His law is claimed to function both of which claim the support of scripture. Let's take a closer look.

The Legal Model of the gospel emphasizes that God is sovereign, He is the boss and He can make whatever laws He wants. Basically, He dictates the rules and we are to obey. The laws are imposed upon us and obedience is required for us to avoid incurring a debt to God and, if they are transgressed, a punishment.

The Healing Model of the gospel emphasizes God's nature of love according to which He makes laws that are natural in that they relate to the risks that man faces because of his own nature, his natural environment and Satan's temptations. Those laws are for our good, our protection and our happiness. God made them for us, not for Him because He always puts others before Himself. They are like a hedge of protection.

We are the problem

Either way God's laws are understood, the problem is that we can't keep them. We don't have a nature that can keep the law. This is evidenced by much scripture:

"... they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Psa 53:3)

There is more evidence that we, in the nature we are born with, cannot obey:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ..."
(Jer 17:9)



Also see Rom 3:23, Eccl 7:20. So really, the problem, the fault (Heb 8:8) with us is our nature. We are "... by nature the children of wrath ..." (Eph 2:3)

So what is the solution? Here, the two models of the gospel diverge because of two different understandings of the nature of God's law and the solutions provided by the different models.

The Legal Model Described



The Legal Model can be understood much like a legal accounting system with laws and penalties imposed by the lawmaker for not keeping them. The Bible defines what sin is:

"Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God." (1 John 3:4, New Living Translation)

When a person breaks one of God's laws He is subject to a penalty much like the imposition of a fine for a traffic violation. In our earthly system, the governing authority decides on the traffic rules, sets penalties, monitors activity, charges offenders and demands payment of fines. When the offender makes payment he is then released from his debt.

The penalty God has decided to impose to fit the crime of sin (whatever the actual sin might be) is this:

"For the wages of sin is death ..." (Rom 6:23)

That death is more than the death we all die (the first death) as both saved and lost people are subject to that. The wages of sin is what the Bible calls the second death from which there is no resurrection. So what is the solution in the legal model?

Since we have all sinned (Rom 3:23), we all owe this debt and we can pay it ourselves but only by dying the second death. But that would be the end of us and God wants to save us, so He has appointed someone else to pay our debt for us. By having His only-begotten Son die (the penalty) on our behalf, God's justice could be satisfied by the payment of Jesus' shed blood to cover the debt we owe because of the sins on our accounts. Then the debt we owe is cancelled and, in the judgment, God can regard us as though we were not sinners and grant us the gift of eternal life.

In most minds, this understanding works well. As long as our sins are "covered by the blood" we are safe. However, there are some serious scriptural difficulties with that view. While we have escaped the penalty, is our sinful nature really changed or healed? Is the problem really fixed?

The Healing Model Described



In the Healing Model of the gospel, again, we keep stepping outside of the law not realizing laws are designed for our good like a hedge of protection. When