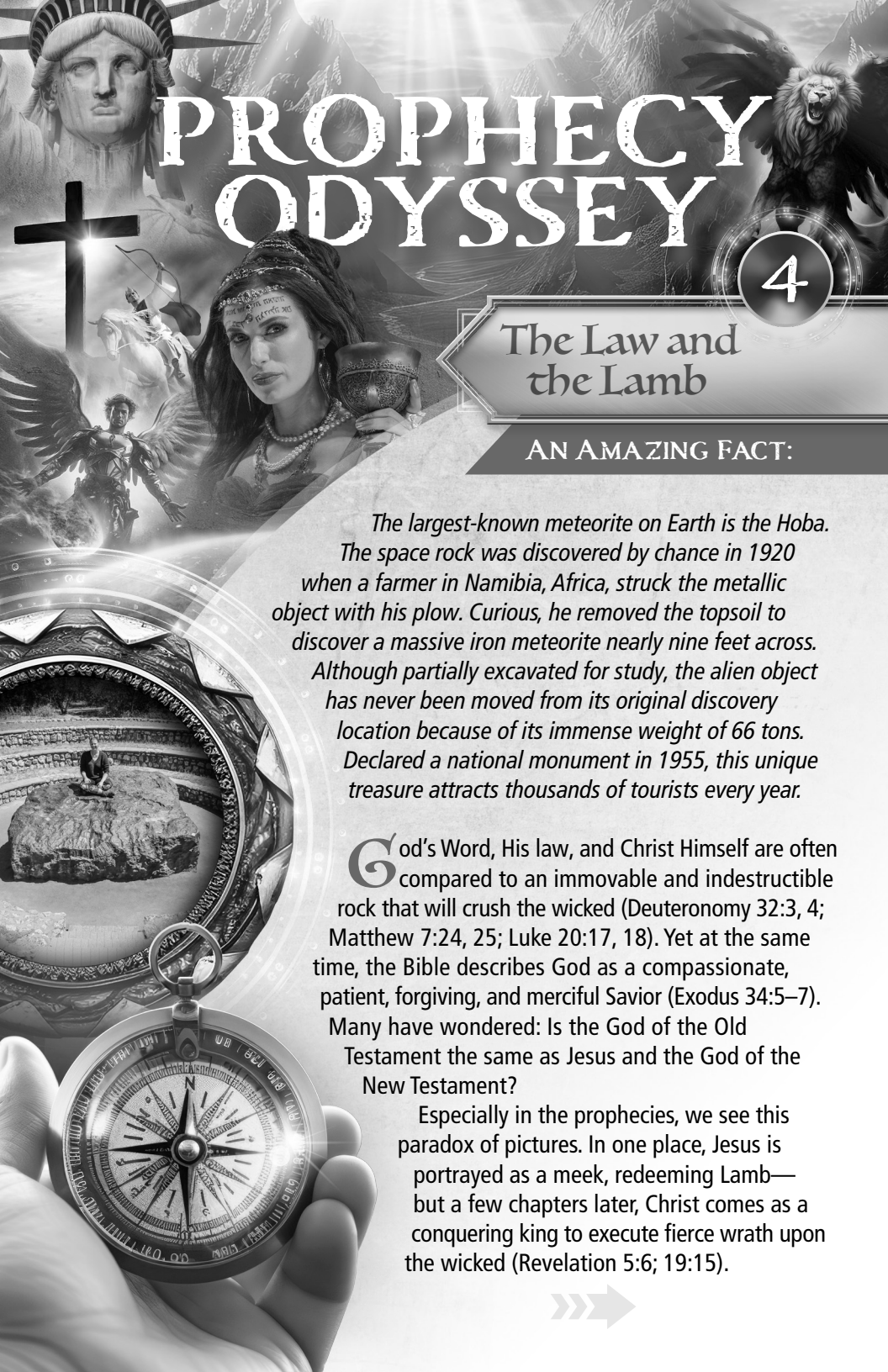




PROPHECY ODYSSEY

4

The Law and the Lamb

AN AMAZING FACT:

The largest-known meteorite on Earth is the Hoba. The space rock was discovered by chance in 1920 when a farmer in Namibia, Africa, struck the metallic object with his plow. Curious, he removed the topsoil to discover a massive iron meteorite nearly nine feet across. Although partially excavated for study, the alien object has never been moved from its original discovery location because of its immense weight of 66 tons. Declared a national monument in 1955, this unique treasure attracts thousands of tourists every year.

God's Word, His law, and Christ Himself are often compared to an immovable and indestructible rock that will crush the wicked (Deuteronomy 32:3, 4; Matthew 7:24, 25; Luke 20:17, 18). Yet at the same time, the Bible describes God as a compassionate, patient, forgiving, and merciful Savior (Exodus 34:5–7). Many have wondered: Is the God of the Old Testament the same as Jesus and the God of the New Testament?

Especially in the prophecies, we see this paradox of pictures. In one place, Jesus is portrayed as a meek, redeeming Lamb—but a few chapters later, Christ comes as a conquering king to execute fierce wrath upon the wicked (Revelation 5:6; 19:15).



So how do we harmonize these two seemingly contradictory pictures of God? Is God vengeful and angry—or is He kind and forgiving? How do we reconcile God’s loving mercy with His law and justice? A careful, prayerful study of the Bible reveals a beautiful balance between law and grace—a harmony between the Lion and the Lamb of Revelation.



When you see a blank, use your Bible to look up the missing word and fill it in.



Who is symbolized by the Lamb in Revelation 5:6?

JOHN 1:29 *The next day John saw _____ coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The _____ of God who takes away the sin of the world!”*

NOTE: The central character in Revelation is the Lamb of God—mentioned 27 times! When God tested Abraham by telling him to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, Abraham told his son, “God will provide Himself a lamb” (Genesis 22:8 KJV). From the Passover lamb in Egypt and throughout the Old Testament, a lamb represented a pure and innocent sacrifice. The Bible’s prophecies highlight this gentle creature as a symbol of Jesus, whose death would be the only hope for humanity.



Why was it necessary for Jesus to suffer and die?

ROMANS 3:23 *For _____ have sinned.*

ROMANS 6:23 *For the wages of sin is _____.*

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 *Christ died for _____ sins.*

1 PETER 3:18 *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the _____ for the _____.*



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NOTE: The Bible is priceless because it tells us how sin entered the world and how it will be removed. Prophecy says that God will not tolerate the ugly malignancy of sin in His creation for much longer. The penalty for sin is death. And when Adam and Eve sinned, the disease of sin passed to the entire human race. God's law and the penalty for breaking it could not be changed, so all people were doomed.

But God could not stand to be separated from those created in His image. So in an act of incredible love, He sent His Son into the world to suffer and die in our place. Your sins and death penalty were placed upon Him. If you choose to accept and follow Him, you are freed from the penalty.



What does Revelation call this plan to save people from death?

REVELATION 14:6 *Having the everlasting _____ to preach to those who dwell on the earth.*

NOTE: God's plan of salvation is called the gospel, which means "good news." It is the most wonderful news ever delivered to people! Jesus suffered and died for the sins of the whole world to provide a way for anyone to be saved from the awful penalty of sin. But there is something we must do to benefit from His sacrifice. The Bible tells us the problem *and* the solution.



According to the Bible, what is sin—and how do we recognize it?

1 JOHN 3:4 *Sin is _____.*

ROMANS 3:20 *For by the _____ is the knowledge of sin.*

NOTE: The law of God represents His perfect will for humanity. The devil hates the law because it makes us aware of our need for a Savior from sin. Romans 4:15 states, "Where there is no law there is no transgression." The law cannot save anyone, but it shows us God's perfection and our imperfection.

Any sin a person commits is condemned by at least one of the Ten Commandments. This is why God's law is called "broad" (Psalm 119:96) and "perfect" (Psalm 19:7). It covers the "whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13 KJV). (In this lesson, the term "law" is primarily referencing the Ten Commandments. There were a number of ceremonial laws that pointed to Christ; those requirements ended at His death.)



Can God's moral law be changed or repealed?

LUKE 16:17 *It is easier for heaven and earth to _____
than for one tittle of the law to fail.*

PSALM 89:34 *My covenant I will _____ break, nor _____
the word that has gone out of My lips.*

PSALM 111:7, 8 *All His precepts are sure. They stand fast
_____ and _____.*

MALACHI 3:6 *For I am the LORD, I do not _____.*

NOTE: No! Under no circumstances can God's law be amended or repealed. It is as permanent as God Himself. He spoke the Ten Commandments audibly before an entire nation and then wrote them in stone with His own finger to emphasize their permanent nature. God's law is, in essence, His character in writing. It is no more possible to change God's law than to change God Himself.



Did Jesus keep the Ten Commandments?

JOHN 15:10 *I have _____ My Father's commandments.*

1 PETER 2:22 *Who committed _____ sin, nor was deceit found in
His mouth.*

NOTE: First and foremost, a Christian is a follower of the teachings and example of Jesus. He perfectly obeyed all Ten Commandments as a model for us (John 15:10; 1 John 2:6:). If God's law could be changed, it would not have been necessary for Jesus to die on the cross. The fact that Jesus had to die for our sins is proof that the law is unchangeable!



Are New Testament Christians required to keep the Ten Commandments?

MATTHEW 19:17 *If you want to enter into life, _____ the commandments.*

JOHN 14:15 *If you love me, _____ my commandments.*

REVELATION 14:12 *Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who _____ the commandments of God.*

REVELATION 22:14 *Blessed are those who _____ His commandments.*

NOTE: Yes! The New Testament plainly teaches that God's people will keep His commandments. We all know that the world is in big trouble today because so many, even some professed Christians, no longer feel it is important to obey God's law. The Bible speaks of our day by saying, "It is time for You to act, O LORD, for they have regarded Your law as void" (Psalm 119:126).



What is the difference between the new and old covenant?

DEUTERONOMY 4:13 *So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the _____; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.*

HEBREWS 8:8, 10 *Because finding fault with _____, He says: "... I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ... I will put My _____ in their mind and write them on their _____."*

NOTE: The two covenants represent agreements between God and His people. The old covenant failed because it was partially based upon the faulty promises of sinful people to keep the law: "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient" (Exodus 24:7). The new covenant succeeded because it is based upon Jesus' promise to write His law in our hearts. Because a person's nature is changed, doing God's will becomes a pleasure. The new covenant is still based on the same law, but it is written in a different place (the heart) and based on better promises (God's).



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What is it called when we are converted and given a new heart?

JOHN 3:7 *You must be _____.*

NOTE: This glorious experience is known as a new birth because, like a newborn infant, we begin a fresh life—without one blot of guilt on our records.



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What must I do to be forgiven and cleansed from sin?

ACTS 3:19 _____ *therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.*

1 JOHN 1:9 *If we _____ our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

NOTE: True repentance means both a sorrow for sin and a willingness to turn away from it (Proverbs 28:13). Confession is a necessary part of repentance. Sins against God should be confessed to Him. Sins against another person should be acknowledged to that person (Matthew 5:24). Nowhere in the Bible are we required to confess sins to a priest.



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Who enters the heart of a born-again Christian—and what does He do?

JOHN 14:17 *The _____ of truth, ... you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.*

PHILIPPIANS 2:13 *Both to will and to _____ for His good pleasure.*

NOTE: Jesus dwells in a Christian through His Holy Spirit! He transforms our hearts, changes our desires, and He gives us the power to do His will.



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Why did God make such a fantastic sacrifice for us—and how do we accept it?

JOHN 3:16 *For God so _____ the world that He gave His only begotten Son.*

ACTS 16:31 _____ *on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.*

JOHN 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become _____ of God.*

NOTE: The strongest earthly tie is the love of a parent for a child. When God the Father was willing to allow His Son, Jesus, to suffer and die in our place, He demonstrated in the most powerful language how fervently He loves each of us. Jesus' offer of salvation is a gift (Romans 6:23). Your part is to believe it is true and to receive the gift by faith.



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Is anyone saved by keeping the law?

EPHESIANS 2:8, 9 *For by _____ you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

NOTE: No one is saved by keeping God's law. All are saved by the miracle-working grace of God. But those who are saved—that is, transformed—by the grace of Jesus will want to obey His law as an expression of their love and thanksgiving. "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).



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Isn't it true that once we are saved by grace, it's no longer necessary to keep the law?

ROMANS 3:31 *Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we _____ the _____.*

ROMANS 6:15 *Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly _____!*

NOTE: No—a thousand times, no! God's grace does not free us to disobey His law but empowers us to keep His commandments. Those who have been forgiven by Jesus for breaking His law are duty-bound to obey Him. And sensing the price He paid to secure their forgiveness, they are more desirous than others to follow Jesus.



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Can I be a true Christian without keeping His commandments?

1 JOHN 2:3, 4 *By this we know that we know Him, if we _____ His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a _____.*

MATTHEW 7:21 *Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who _____ the will of My Father in heaven.*



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Who does the devil especially hate in the last days?

REVELATION 12:17 *And the dragon was enraged with the _____ [the church], and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring [the end-time faithful], who keep the _____ of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

NOTE: Satan hates and is infuriated with God's end-time church, which obeys Jesus' commands and teaches people that there is divine power to change a sinner into a saint.



What motivates a person to obey God's law?

ROMANS 13:10 Therefore _____ is the fulfillment of the law.

MATTHEW 22:37–39 "You shall love the **LORD** your God with all your _____, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

1 JOHN 5:3 For this is the _____ of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

NOTE: Love is the magnificent motivator! The first four commandments have to do with our duty to God. When you love Him, obeying those commands is a pleasure. The last six commandments embrace our duty to people. If you truly love people, you will not want to do anything to hurt them.



What are some of the glorious rewards of accepting Christ and keeping God's law?

JOHN 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your _____ may be full.

PROVERBS 29:18 But _____ is he who keeps the law.

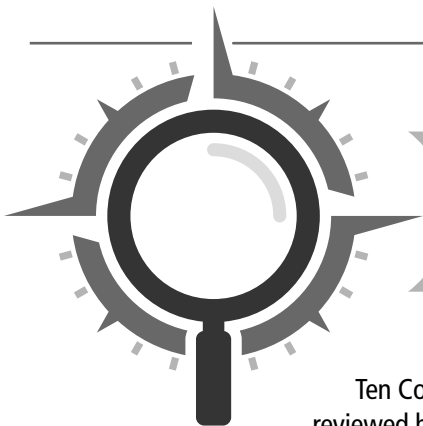
PSALM 119:165 Great _____ have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.

NOTE: Happiness, joy, peace, and more abundant living come to those who obey God's law. No wonder David said that God's commands are more desirable than gold (Psalm 19:10).

» YOUR RESPONSE

Will you decide now to accept Jesus' plan to save you and follow His teachings—or, perhaps, to renew that decision?

ANSWER: _____



FURTHER STUDY

Are some Old Testament laws no longer binding on New Testament Christians?

Yes! Moses made a distinction between the Ten Commandments and the other laws when he reviewed how the two laws were given: "He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess" (Deuteronomy 4:13, 14). Notice how Moses separated the Ten Commandments, which God "commanded *you*," from the statutes that God "commanded *me*" to give Israel. In another verse, God reinforces this distinction so that no doubt can remain: "They [must be] careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them" (2 Kings 21:8). Clearly, "the law that ... Moses commanded" was an addition to the law that "[God had] commanded." The Ten Commandments and the law of Moses had different authors, were written at different times on different materials, were placed in different locations, and had largely different content!

So, which laws were abolished when Christ completed His earthly ministry? Paul explains in Ephesians 2:15, "Having abolished ... the law of commandments contained in ordinances." The ordinances and feast days that regulated the priesthood and sacrificial system have been abolished because they prefigured Christ (Colossians 2:13–17). He fulfilled them as the true Lamb of God. The apostle also said circumcision, separate from God's moral law, is

no longer required: "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters" (1 Corinthians 7:19).

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS?

When a person is born again, Jesus Christ, through His Holy Spirit, moves into that person's life and miraculously makes obedience possible. "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). Rely wholly on Jesus, and He can help you do God's will! "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

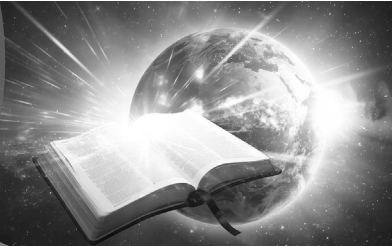
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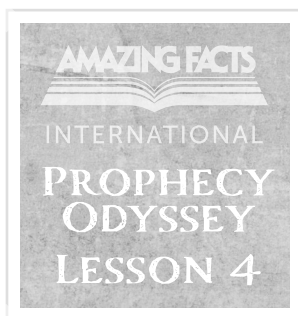
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