

Hymns: 58 Rock of Ages  
Psalm 19:7-14

3 Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound

The date was November 15, 2013 and the time 10:15 a.m. I took the South Saunders Street exit from I-40 heading on a leisurely trip downtown. As I reached the crest of the hill, the clear, sunny day drew my attention to the Raleigh skyline. I admired the tall buildings as they stretched into the bright, blue sky. How different it looked from when I first came to town over forty years ago.

Then suddenly, out of the blue, came a blue light of a different sort. Through the back window, to my dismay, I saw a police car with flashing lights speeding toward me. Unbeknown to me, I was speeding.

The speed limit had just changed from 45 MPH to 35 MPH. The road elevation changed to downhill. The road had transitioned to a six-lane divided highway. Ahead was a controlled-access style interchange. It was (and still is) a perfect speed trap. I was not in any hurry to get to my destination. As far as I can recall, I was moving with the traffic. But none of that mattered. I had broken the law. The police officer gave me a ticket and quickly moved on to his next victim.

This was the second speeding ticket I had ever received in about 45 years of driving. The first was about 25 years ago. Have you ever wondered how many speeding tickets are issued each year? Well, thanks to the website [statisticbrain.com](http://www.statisticbrain.com), we can answer that question and more.

<http://www.statisticbrain.com/driving-citation-statistics/>

- There are about 200 million drivers in the U.S.
- Of that number, over 40 million people or 20% of all drivers receive a speeding ticket annually.
- The average cost of a speeding ticket including fees was \$152
- That works out to over \$6.2 million per year and about \$300,000 per year per police officer.

So Boss Hogg notwithstanding, speeding tickets are good business. Could it be that Georgia is a high-ranking state for issuing speeding tickets? Yes as a matter of fact, it is. But so also is North Carolina. Here's the top ten list. Can guess some of them? [Read in reverse order.]

1. Ohio
2. Pennsylvania
3. New York
4. California
5. Texas
6. Georgia
7. Virginia
8. North Carolina
9. Massachusetts
10. Connecticut

And for those of you looking for no speed limits, you can try sections of the German Autobahn or rural areas of the Isle of Man.

Today, we want to look at another law *the Law of God* to better understand its purpose and its impact upon us personally.

### Review

The last time we got together we witnessed an eighty-year-old Moses climbing up and down the mile-and-a-half-high Mount Sinai over and over to receive the law from the Lord. We learned that the Lord Himself wrote the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone. We also learned that the Israelites three times made a solemn oath to follow the law and then turned around and worshiped a golden calf that they had made.

After Moses saw the golden calf and the people dancing and naked, he sent faithful men to kill 3000 unfaithful men (Exodus 32:19-28). Moses prayed to God for his people, interceding for them (vv. 30-32), and God sent a plague to judge them. Then, we have a rather strange section of the story that we didn't get into last time.

Exodus 33

*[18] And he [Moses] said, I beseech thee, **shew me thy glory.***

*[20] And he said, Thou [can] not see my face: for ... no man [can] see me, and live.*

*[21] And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:*

*[22] And **it** shall come to pass, while my glory [passes] by, that I will put thee in a [cleft] of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:*

*[23] And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.*

For many of you these tender words surely bring to mind the beloved Fanny Crosby hymn "He Hideth My Soul." This tread of **glory** continues:

Exodus 34

*[29] And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai **with** the two tables of testimony in [his] hand, ... , that Moses [did not realize] that **the skin of his face shone...***

*[30] And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, **behold**, ... **they were afraid to come** [near] **him.***

Moses told them the commandments that the Lord gave to him, but in order to do that

*[33] ... **he put a vail on his face.***

We're told that **when** Moses spoke with the Lord, he took the vail off, but when he spoke with the people, he put it back on. Is there something more here?

**What's** the best commentary on the Bible? The Bible. In fact, there's a specific passage that sheds more light on this incident. We want to go to that passage, but before we do, let's first look at **what** some other verses have to say about the law. Our question is, **how** does the Bible describe the law?

### The Law, Statutes, and Commandments Are:

Psalm 19

[7] The law of the LORD is **perfect**, converting the soul:  
the testimony of the LORD is **sure**, making wise the simple.  
[8] The statutes of the LORD are **right**, rejoicing the heart:  
the commandment of the LORD is **pure**, enlightening the eyes.

Psalm 119 has much to say about the law of the Lord:

[86] All thy commandments are **faithful**:...  
[142] ...thy law **is the truth**.  
[143] ...thy commandments are my **delights**.  
[172] ...all thy commandments are **righteousness**.

Romans 7

[12] Wherefore the law is **holy**, and the commandment **holy**, and **just**, and **good**.

So from scripture we learn that this law is a **very** good thing. Next, let's look at **why** was it given.

Romans 3

[19] Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that  
**every mouth may be stopped, and  
all the world may become guilty before God.**

[20] Therefore **by** the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for **by** the law is **the knowledge of sin**.

Romans 5

[15] Because the law **worketh wrath**: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

If I drove in a rural section of the Isle of Man, would I have gotten a ticket? No! My speed would not have mattered. There's no speed limit there; therefore, I cannot exceed the speed limit. God's law identifies man as a lawbreaker, a sinner. If there were no law, man **would** not be able to break it.

Have you ever considered the progression of laws that have been imposed upon the human race. How many laws did Adam and Eve have to follow? One.

When we fast-forward **to** the time of Moses, we have God giving ten commandments plus a few pages of civil as well as religious laws. The Jews have identified 613 laws in the Torah. For us today, these laws evolved to English Common Law and finally the current avalanche of laws that encumber us. According to an accounting firm (Commerce Clearing House) that tracks and publishes this information, the U.S. Tax Code alone encompasses about 74,000 pages. According to Wikipedia, the body of federal laws alone, called the U.S. Code, is over 200,000 pages in length. While some laws are written to protect our freedom, the vast majority restrict and limit freedom in a futile attempt to control and tame the evil desires of the human heart.

If man is **incapable** of living up to it, what then was the purpose of the law?

Galatians 3

[24] ... the law was our **schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith**.

The purpose of the law is to bring us to Jesus Christ. To show us that we are sinners, hopeless, and in need of a Savior.

John 1

[12] *But as many as received him [Jesus Christ], to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that **believe** on his name:*

[14] *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his **glory**, the **glory** as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of **grace** and **truth**.*

[17] *For the law was given by Moses, but **grace** and **truth** came by Jesus Christ.*

We know that this word *grace* refers to our unmerited favor received from God.

Romans 4

[15] *Because **the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.***

[16] *Therefore it is **of faith**, that it might be **by grace**; to the end the promise might be sure to all...*

Romans 5

[12] *Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] **sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:***

Sin entered the human race through Adam. God pronounced the penalty of death for sin. All men have the sin nature, and therefore all men must die.

[18] *Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [Jesus Christ] the **free gift** came upon all men....*

[19] *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

With that background, let's now move to a passage in the New Testament that explains that incident with Moses and the vail in greater detail.

II Corinthians 3

In verse 3, Paul refers to the Corinthian Christians as proof of the saving power of Jesus Christ:

[3] *... written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; **not in tables of stone** [an obvious reference to the Ten Commandments], **but in fleshy tables of the heart** [referring to grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ].*

He goes on to further contrast the covenants of law vs. grace:

[5] *... God;*

[6] *Who also hath made us able ministers of the **new testament**; not of **the letter**, but of **the spirit**: for the **letter killeth** [the law condemns], but the **spirit giveth life** [grace through faith brings life].*

[7] *But if the **[ministry] of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious,***

And indeed it was glorious as we saw the Bible clearly teaches.

so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the **glory** of his countenance; ...

[8] How shall not the **[ministry]** of the spirit be [more] glorious?

[9] For if the **[ministry] of condemnation** [the law] **be glory**,

much more [does] the **[ministry]** of righteousness [grace] exceed in glory.

[13] And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

He goes on to say that the vail also symbolizes the continuing blindness that the nation of Israel has toward the new covenant. While the law indeed is glorious, the covenant of grace has superseded it with **far greater glory**.

### **Application**

(I close today with a real-life illustration.)

The date was November 10, 2013.

At 2:30 p.m., I took our puppy out for some fresh air at the lake. There, she met a five-month-old Yorkie who really wanted to run and play. At first, our puppy engaged with her, but her interest waned. I let her off of the leash to play with another dog and swim. She did wading, dragged a log out of the lake, and chewed on it.

When the Yorkie left, she ran after it. Then, she spotted a gray Heron and chased after it. The Yorkie wanted to play. I called our puppy back. She came running, but ignored the dog. Then when it ran toward the lower gate by the lake, our puppy used that as an excuse to head toward it.

A girl was coming up the hill from there with her dog. Our puppy decided to greet that dog. Then she went over to a couple **with four dogs** near the end of the Greenway. A young woman was there with the dogs along with a man about 45 years old with short graying hair and slender build. Our puppy approaches new dogs that show any fear or social problems in a very non-threatening way. She did that as she approached this man's dogs. The dogs were all leashed and seemed to be mixes of the aggressive Bulldog, Pitbull, or Boxer types.

The man **shouted repeated profanities at me**, approached me, **shoved me**, and told me my dog was supposed to be leashed. **“It’s the law!!!”** He obviously had an anger-management problem. I told him there was no cause for such an outburst from him and that his dogs would be better behaved if he would treat them better. I also reminded him he was close to finding out about **laws** written to protect peaceful citizens from people like him. I wondered later how long it had been since he had broken the speed limit. After all, “it’s the law” too.

After that outburst, our little dog came to my side. I reached over, gently grabbed her collar, attached her leash, and walked away — rolling the incident around in my brain. I felt **little or no fear as I faced this angry man nearly nose to nose and looked him straight in the eyes. I knew the Lord would protect me** as He always has in the past. Looking at him seemed like I was **staring down Satan himself**. It was quite an experience.

Oh and by the way, the name of our friendly little dog? You guessed it. It's *Grace*.

So there you have it, the intersection of the law with Grace. It was no accident that God wrote the law on hard, cold tablets of stone. It was no accident that the tablets were broken as soon as they were written as man is incapable of abiding by the law. Satan wants to point to the law and call **you** a lawbreaker.

As glorious and perfect as God's law is, we're all **guilty** of breaking it. The Bible says, "all have sinned and come short of the **glory** of God." God offers to us **grace**, unmerited favor, in exchange for our trust in the finished work His Son did on the cross for us. God has **shown us His glory** in the **person of Jesus Christ**. Are you resting in God's **grace** today? If not, I trust you will make the decision to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ alone as your Savior.

Let's pray.

### **Benediction**

*Now the grace of the Lord Jesus,  
the love of the Father,  
and the power, presence, and peace of the Holy Spirit,  
be with you,  
and keep you,  
and teach you,  
both now and forever. Amen. (II Corinthians 13:14 expanded).*

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