

Breaking the law of gravity

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I received my degree in physics and maybe get a little snobbish about it at times. For instance, I cringe whenever I hear a preacher or other speaker talk about what happens when we “break the law of gravity”. Here is someone that thinks about physical laws like moral laws. As an example, if the law tells us to limit the speed of our vehicle to 55 mph, then we can push the accelerator a little more and travel 60. We are then breaking this governmental law with very little effort.

But when we hear about breaking the law of gravity, the example is usually given that if a man breaks the law of gravity by jumping off a cliff, the law of gravity will break him. Now this may sound cute to some, but the idea behind it is totally wrong. Pardon me for being picky, but when you jump off a cliff you are not breaking the law of gravity, but obeying it. You are broken because you broke some kind of law of common sense, but the law of gravity was followed absolutely.

There is a fundamental difference between laws of nature and the law of God. God has given us the power of choice, by which we can live for Him or against Him. The laws of nature are fixed such that only God can intervene and work around them, since He created them. I am not even sure that the word “break” is the right one to be properly applied to God’s miraculous activity. God’s omnipotence encompasses all of the creation.

The reason that we cannot break the law of gravity is because it is a part of the fundamental nature of the universe. It is firmly entrenched; it is not something that is loosely joined together so that we can sneak through a crack (with all respect to quantum tunneling). Such things as flying and space travel do not break the law of gravity either. They simply utilize the complete nature of the universe to counteract or overcome the force of gravity. This is a difference that we must all realize.

I mentioned our ability to break the speed laws. This, of course, has its limit as well, for we cannot as far as we know travel faster than the speed of light. Once again we encounter the hard structure of the universe that God has set up. Even in our moral choices I believe that God will only let man go so far. We know that he destroyed the earth by flood because man had reached this limit.

I think that in a similar way we can break the moral law unless it is such a part of you that you cannot. The more we make God’s truth a fundamental part of our spiritual makeup, the more difficulty we have in breaking His laws. As we read in Jeremiah 31:3,

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

God’s word has a similar permanence, for we find Jesus referring in John 11:35 to the Scripture as that which “cannot be broken”.

I see this structure in us growing and becoming stronger as we mature in Christ, similar to the cartilage in our bodies that changes from our infancy to become solid bone. We must be continually strengthening from within so that it becomes harder and harder to be unlike God. We think of how wood can gradually become petrified, replacing the woody components with that of much harder stone. Usually this is thought of as a bad example, in that we no longer are flexible. But in this sense I am just trying to make you see you our inner being must become more inflexibly like God. This doesn’t mean that we do not have understanding and can’t bend about things that are not critical. But we must be like a sort of marshmallow man which is sensitive on the outside to the needs of others, but surprisingly firm and unshakable when we are tempted to drift off into the world of sin.

Jesus came to this earth as the image of God. He was God in man, the “radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being,” Hebrews 1:3. He did not compromise and allow temptations to divert Him from his track. He did not break the nature of God that was within Him, even though the body He housed was weak and temporary. He was faithful unto death; this is the goal that each of us should dare to have.

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