

THE LAW, *which law is obsolete?*

“But if you are led by the Spirit, **you are not under the law**” (Galatians 5:18).

“The law was nailed to the cross!”

“God’s law is abolished!”

“The law has been done away.”

“The old law has been taken away.”

“The New Covenant makes *some* laws obsolete.”

“The New Covenant gives us freedom from human rules.”

“The law brought legalism.”

“Only the Ten Commandments are in force for the Christian today.”



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“Christians are no longer under the rule of the Mosaic law.”

“Christians are not required to follow the Old Testament rules about crimes and punishments, warfare, slavery, diet, circumcision, sacrifices, feast days, Sabbath observance, tithing, ritual cleanness.”

“Grace has replaced the law.”

“We live under grace.”

“The law is nullified by faith.”

“Faith in God and acceptance of grace is all you need.”

So, what is the problem with the law?

The Apostle Paul wrote more about the Law than any other apostle. His writings addressed all of the issues associated with the law of his time and there were many. The Jews were given the oracles of God—His teachings. They preserved the Law and the Prophets that we today refer to as the Old Testament. Along with the oracles of God, they also preserved their oral law, known today, as the Talmud.

Paul was once a strict Pharisee.

“The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to **the strictest sect of our religion, I have lived as a Pharisee**. And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me. Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?” (Acts 26:4-8)

Paul continued quoting Christ, “**I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles**. I am sending you to **open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light**, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive **forgiveness of sins** and a place among those who are **sanctified by faith in me**” (Acts 26:17-18).

Paul was sent to open the eyes of the Jews and the Gentiles. These Gentiles include the ‘lost sheep of Israel’ who later became known as the Christians. They came to believe in **the resurrection**—**“the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled.”**

Paul lived a disciplined lifestyle, keeping the Law of God as a strict Pharisee. Christ said that he would rescue Paul from the Jews—from their hundreds of additions that they legitimized as the Law of God and their judging condemnation for all who do not follow their rules and regulations. In addition, Christ said that he would send Paul to the Gentiles to correct and teach them about the Law of God and turn them away from their pagan practices.

Turning mankind from darkness to light, as we see through the pages of history has been a difficult task, **but not a task that will fail**. This writing will address matters of the law, by carefully reviewing the process of returning to the Law of God written in the letters by Paul.

WHAT ADVANTAGE IS THERE IN BEING A JEW? Paul understood the strict and disciplined practices held by the Jews over the Law of God. This quality prompted Paul to write “What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? **Much in every way!** First of all, they have been **entrusted with the very words of God**” (Romans 3:1). They preserved the oracles of God and God trusted them to do so. However, as it is characteristic with

the whole house of Israel, they either threw God's word out and rebelled, as did the 10 tribes of Israel or feverishly held onto it, adding to it as if they are experts above God, as did the 2 tribes of Israel. Both houses have been on the pendulum swinging to the far left or to the far right. Paul's task was to get these people off the pendulum and bring them back onto the narrow Way of Righteousness. The narrow way is not comprised of the many interpretations of scripture by Christians or the rules devised by the Jewish elders, known as the Talmud.

PAUL RE-TEACHES THE LAW.

The story of law goes back to Adam and Eve where they broke the Law of God and fell under the Law of Sin, which in turn led to the sentencing of their death under the Law of Sin and Death. "When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned" (Romans 5:12). Adam and Eve knew the Law of God, but they chose to sin, which spread to all of mankind, bringing us all under a different law—the Law of Sin.

THE LAW OF SIN

Daily, Christians fight against an inner desire to behave and react in ways that are not reflective of God's Law. People lash out, one against the other. In weakness, they lie rather than take the consequences for their mistake. They steal at multiple levels from simply taking something that does not belong to them to creating financial products that rob from people on a massive scale. The internal battles are many and ever present.

Paul addresses these battles. "But I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me **a prisoner of the law of sin** which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:23-24)

THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

The consequence of our sins is death. Under the Law of Sin and Death, the guilty will die a **second death**. Since God made us flesh and blood, all will die a natural FIRST death. However, now that ALL have sinned, all will die a SECOND death, which occurs after judgment and sentencing in the Royal Court of the Almighty God—our Creator.

The Christians understand that Christ paid the penalty for their sins and they are grateful for his most generous sacrifice. "For **the law of the Spirit of life** has set you free in Christ Jesus from **the law of sin and death**" (Romans 8:2).

Unlike the Jews, the Gentiles of the 10 tribes of Israel accepted Jesus immediately. They were waiting anxiously for him. "They said to the woman, 'We no longer believe just because of what you said, now we have heard for ourselves, and **WE KNOW THAT THIS MAN REALLY IS THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD**'" (John 4:42).

The Jews, too were waiting for their Savior. They saw the hundreds of miracles performed by Jesus. They recognized and marveled at his knowledge of the word of God, yet they still rejected him because they didn't like him denouncing their traditions.

Some Jews who acknowledged his teachings and his wisdom wanted to make him their king—then and now, so they could overthrow the Romans. They understood the prophecies of the Prophets who wrote of the re-unification of Israel. They also knew that the 10 tribes were numerous living relatively close by in Asia Minor. An army could easily be assembled and quickly. “Josephus (Ant., 11:133) states as a fact ‘the ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude and not to be estimated in numbers.’” <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-ten-lost-tribes>

With Jesus as their king, they would again, as in the ancient times have access to supernatural power to overthrow the Romans and be released from their oppression that was driving them into madness. But, the work of Jesus’ first coming did not involve the establishment of his kingdom. His kingdom is not of this world. His tasks were:

- **TO BE THE PERFECT SACRIFICE:** To present to God a perfect sacrifice, so that the sins of mankind could be forgiven.
- **TO BRING THE 10-TRIBED HOUSE OF ISRAEL BACK INTO THE COVENANT FAMILY:** To die and release the house of Israel from the Old Testament Marriage Covenant. This would allow the redemption of the 10-tribed house, who were divorced by God to be allowed back into the covenant family.
“He answered, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel’” (Matthew 15:24).
- **TO BRING THE GENTILES INTO THE CITIZENSHIP OF ISRAEL:**
“Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called ‘uncircumcised’ by those who call themselves ‘the circumcision’ (which is done in the body by human hands)—remember that **at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise**, without hope and without God in the world. But **now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ**” (Ephesians 2:11-13).
- **TO REMOVE THE ROGUE GODS:** To win the conquest over the remaining gods ruling the nations and give their authority “some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for works of ministry, to build up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12).
“He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that war against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, **nauling it to the cross**. And having **DISARMED THE POWERS AND AUTHORITIES, he made a PUBLIC SPECTACLE OF THEM** [the rogue sons of God], **TRIUMPHING OVER THEM BY THE CROSS**” (Colossians 2:13-15).
- **TO ESTABLISH HIS CHURCH—HIS BODY:** “Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’), and upon this rock (Christ. He could also be referring to where he was standing at the time, which was an area held by opposing spiritual forces.) I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it” (Matthew 16:18).

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

Most Christians do not argue the point that Christ died for our sins. Paul wrote in Colossians 2:13-15 that the Law of Sin and Death was nailed to the cross because God accepted Christ's sacrifice as payment for our sins. **We are no longer under the LAW OF SIN AND DEATH.**

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For **the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death**" (Romans 8:1-2).

Christ made it possible for us to return to the Law of God, which is spiritual and good. "**So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good.** The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin" (Romans 7:14).

Now, after repentance, God gives us His Holy Spirit, which gives us the desire to follow the Law of God willingly—from the heart. When we keep His law, He knows that we love Him. "If you love me, obey my commandments" (John 14:15).

"No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, **it is a change of heart produced by God's Spirit.** And **a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people**" (Romans 2:29).

"But the people of Israel (the Jews), **who tried so hard to get right with God by keeping the law, never succeeded**" (Romans 9:31).

The Jewish people were caught in a web. The people were oppressed by their religious leaders who at times were intensely intimidating, judging, and had power to sentence them if they deemed that the law was broken. Disputes and arguments arose from among them causing even greater disparity of truth. The oral traditions of the leaders, known today as the Talmud, added yet another fracturing element. Jewish sects arose teaching many rules and regulations that confused the Gentiles. Paul said, "No wonder the Scriptures say, 'The Gentiles blaspheme the name of God because of you'" (Romans 2:24). When you do not keep the Law of God as intended, you blaspheme the name of God. This is a problem today for the Christians. The simplicity of Christ is hidden by the traditions of men. The process of returning to the Law of God is not difficult to understand. It begins with repentance and the acceptance of Christ's sacrifice. We then come under the Law of the Spirit of Life, which is the receiving of God's Holy Spirit. **The Holy Spirit gives us the desire for truth—for God's way of life.**

THE LAW OF FAITH

At the time of Christ, the Jews were exceedingly self-righteous and arrogant. They relied on doing outward acts, with the intent to earn their way into salvation. They were very proud that they remained the only covenant people and they were determined to keep it that way. While their discipline is highly commendable; they were far from being humble and teachable. Many times, Jesus urged them to change, but they would not. Paul's task was to re-teach the Jews and the Gentiles about the Law of God, which is spiritual because it requires God's Holy Spirit in order to keep it as God intended. Now, Paul adds another element to returning to God's Law—the element of faith.

“Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? **The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith.** For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law” (Romans 3:27-28).

“And **it is impossible to please God without faith.** Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

Through God’s goodness, He has granted us grace. How difficult is it to understand that God’s grace is a gift that cannot be earned—for ALL have sinned. There is no room for boasting of any kind.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, **it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast**” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Now, the believer through God’s Holy Spirit receives truth and conforms to the word of God, hence a new man begins to form. From the core outward, the believer values the peace and happiness that comes from keeping the Law of God and develops an intimate relationship with the Creator, desiring to please Him and become at one with Him, striving to keeping the Law of Righteousness.

THE LAW OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

In keeping the Law of Righteousness, tangible behavior is visible. Paul struck down the wicked ways and urged the Ephesians, “So, I tell you this, and **insist on it in the Lord**, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do... They are darkened... because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts... **put off the old self... put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness...** speak truthfully, work doing something useful, build up others, do not grieve the Holy Spirit... get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **BE IMITATORS OF GOD**” (Ephesians 4:17-5:1).

James supported Paul’s teachings, “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also **faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead**” (James 2:14-16).

“So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. **Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God**” (I John 3:10).

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

THE LAW OF CHRIST

“When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But **I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ**” (I Corinthians 9:21)

The Jewish people have many laws that they added. Some included the washing of hands ceremonially before eating, the amount of grain that could be plucked on the Sabbath, whether people can be healed on the Sabbath, and the sitting with the Gentiles was forbidden. When Paul was with the Gentiles and when pork was served, he would not eat it, rather he would quietly fill his plate with other foods doing as Christ would, without condemnation. He would not judge the Gentiles for their lawlessness as his Jewish brothers would, for his intent was to bring them back into the fold and reteach them the Law of God.

Christ did not come to do away with the law or do away with some of the law. "Don't ever think that I came to set aside Moses' Teachings or the Prophets. I didn't come to set them aside but to make them come true" (Matthew 5:17).

Christ came to amplify the law. To merely refrain from adultery is obedience to the “letter of the Law,” but to obey both the spirit and letter of the Law, self-control must be exercised where even lusting becomes a violation of the spirit in keeping the Law of God.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who **looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart**” (Matthew 5:27-28).

THE LAW OF GOD

By the Law of God, sin is defined. “What shall we say, then? **Is the law sinful? Certainly not!** Nevertheless, **I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law.** For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet’” (Romans 7:7).

The Law of God is the opposite of the Law of Sin. God gave His Law to Adam and Eve, but they chose the Law of Sin, which led to death. Fortunately, Christ’s perfect sacrifice was accepted by God and now, we are no longer under the Law of Sin and Death.

The choice is yours. If you repent, get baptised and receive the Holy Spirit, then “If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law [the Law of Sin and Death]” (Galatians 5:18).

Jeremiah urged, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Stand at the crossroads and look; **ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls**’” (Jeremiah 6:16).

The Law of God is truth, perfect, and good. Paul delighted in God’s Law. “For in my inner being I delight in God's Law” (Romans 7:22).

“Therefore, anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but **whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven**” (Matthew 5:19).

It is ever so simple! The Old Covenant did not include the payment of our sins only the awareness of sin and the need for payment; nor did it give us God’s Holy Spirit, so that we can have the desire to obey God’s Law as He intended.

The lesson of history is that we cannot earn salvation by works; our righteousness is but filthy rags at best compared to God. Know the Almighty God and accept His generous gift of grace and love Him. The New Covenant makes it possible for us to return to the Law of God because we are no longer under the Law of Sin and Death. The payment has been accepted; the Holy Spirit is now available. Through faith, we believe and desire God, transforming ourselves into the ‘new man’ by living righteously as Christ did under the Law of God.

“In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” (Hebrews 8:13).

Absolutely, **the old covenant is ready to vanish away because the payment has been accepted;** we have God’s Holy Spirit. We are no longer under the Law of Sin and Death.

“God made you alive with Christ [no longer subject to the second death but through Christ resurrection to eternal life]. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations [the penalty from the Law of Sin has been cancelled, as long as we repent and accept Christ as our Savior, and receive God’s Holy Spirit, so that we desire to live under the Law of God], that was against us that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross [the Law of Sin and Death was nailed to the cross]” (Colossians 2:13-14).

The Apostle Paul re-taught the Jews and the Gentiles the way back to God by identifying the laws along the way. Rejoice that our Creator provided a plan for our salvation for—He loves us! He gave His only Son, His only Heir, so that whoever believes in him shall not die but have eternal life (John 3:16).

“Find out what pleases the LORD” (Ephesians 5:9). Know Him, love Him, serve Him.

Compiled by Janette Andrejowich. Thank you to 119 Ministries for their thorough research on the law.