

Paul and the Law

An adder is hated not for the euill it hath done but for the poyson that is in it (Pathway to the Scriptures).

We must first be euill ere we do euil, and good before we do good (Pathway to the Scriptures).

The deede is good because of the man and not the man because of his deede (Prologue to Genesis).¹

Introduction

The quotes above are from William Tyndale, the greatest of the reformers. Tyndale understood the purpose of the Mosaic Law, the nature of man, and Paul's doctrine of sin and righteousness. His statements revealed the Biblical truth:

WE ARE SINNERS NOT BECAUSE WE BREAK THE LAW;
WE BREAK THE LAW BECAUSE WE ARE SINNERS.

We sin because we have a nature that wants to sin, to rebel against God. The only way to overcome sin is with a new nature. This truth must sink into one's being if he is to understand God's revelation about sin, righteousness, and man's condition. Apart from such understanding, everything God has revealed in the Bible about sin will be misunderstood.

God gave Israel the Mosaic Law for one purpose: to reveal sin and condemn (Romans 3.19-20). Paul wrote Timothy:

⁸ *But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,* ⁹
realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers ¹⁰ *and immoral*

men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted (1 Timothy 1.8-11).

Christendom has never come to grips with this truth. Most believe God gave the Mosaic Law to make one better. Most churches teach the Church, the body of Christ, is under the Mosaic Law. Why? Part of the answer is that most churches spend most of their time in the gospels, which concerns the Jews who were under the Law.

No one who spends time with Paul will conclude the Church is under the Mosaic Law. The great apostle's teachings are completely contrary to such thought. Tragically, the vast majority of Christendom know little of Paul nor understand his teachings. When one reads acclaimed Pauline "experts" and "scholars" one finds they too have little comprehension of Paul's doctrines or knowledge of his revelations ([secrets](#)).

This article will examine Paul's teachings about the Law and the believer's relationship to it primarily through examining Paul's letter to the Galatians. The goal is to reveal the believer's freedom in Christ and how we are to live a godly life apart from the governance of the Mosaic Law.

Paul the Pharisee

Paul trained as a Pharisee and became a zealot of Judaism and the Mosaic Law. Paul thought he doing God's will and keeping the Law in arresting, torturing, and killing those who believed Jesus was the promised Messiah. How wrong he was!

In God's matchless grace, God saved Saul of Tarsus. God redirected Paul's zeal for His own purposes and commissioned him "the apostle of the Gentiles" (Romans 11.13) and the apostle of grace. No one ever experienced such a radical change in outlook and direction as Paul. As a Hebrew of the

Hebrews, God sent him to Gentiles. As a legalistic zealot, God revealed righteous living apart from the administration of the Mosaic Law. To effect this transformation, God gave Paul revelations, “secrets” ([μυστήριον](#)), God had kept hidden from the Law and prophets, and from the Twelve.

History of the Mosaic Law

God gave the Mosaic Law to Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20). The Mosaic Law was God’s moral, ceremonial, and civil law to govern a Jew’s daily life.² The Decalogue expressed God’s moral law. But the moral law existed long before Moses’ encounter with God on Mt. Sinai. The moral law reflects the nature and character of God and is eternal. God codified the moral law in the Mosaic Law and made Israel accountable to it. Before the Mosaic Law, morality was “written on the heart” (Romans 2.14-15) in man’s conscience.

The Mosaic Law contained the moral, ceremonial, and civil law but Jews did not regard it as being in three parts; they regarded it as a single tapestry. For the Jew, removal of any aspect of the Law was unthinkable because God had given ALL the Law.

Paul’s Teaching About the Law

What did Paul teach concerning the Law? Outlined below are four points of Paul’s doctrine of the Law:

1. Recipients:	God gave the Mosaic Law to Israel alone.	Exodus 20.1-17, 22; Romans 2.14-15, 3.19, 9.4; 1 Corinthians 9.20-21; Ephesians 2.11-12;
2. Nature:	The Law was good.	Romans 2.20, 7.12, 14, 16, 22; Galatians 3.21; Hebrews 10.1

3. Purpose:	The Law revealed and condemned sin.	Romans 3.19-20, 4.15, 5.13, 7.7; Galatians 3.10, 19; 2 Corinthians 3.7, 9; 1 Timothy 1.8-9
4. Effect:	The Law incited sin.	Romans 4.15, 5.20, 7.5, 8-9, 22-23; 1 Corinthians 15.56

Paul taught that Israel alone had received the Mosaic Law and was under its administration. Gentiles were excluded from the Law, as was the Church, the body of Christ (Ephesians 2.11-13; Romans 3.1-2, 6.14). However, Paul taught that when Gentiles or the Church come in contact with the Law, it has the same effect it had on Israel: it condemns (Romans 3.19).

Much of Christendom does not understand what place the Mosaic Law has with regard to the Church. Paul faced this problem with the Galatians and his primary purpose in writing them was to correct their misguided thinking and behavior of trying to live the Christian life under the Mosaic Law. He declared that believers of his gospel, the gospel of the grace of God (Act 20.24; 1 Corinthians 15.1-4), the glorious gospel (1 Timothy 1.11), were to live under the administration of grace, not Law (Romans 6.14). A brief review of Galatians should cure anyone of the notion that Christians are under the Mosaic Law.

The Epistle to the Galatians

Galatians 1

Paul wrote the Galatians to correct a problem created by Jews from Judea who were trying to bring his converts under the Mosaic Law. Paul had dealt with this issue at the Council of Jerusalem (c. 51 A.D.). Jews from Jerusalem had been going to Paul's converts and telling them they were not saved by believing Paul's gospel. They declared one must also be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law to be saved (Acts 15.1, 5). Paul argued against them and won the day when Peter recalled his experience (at least a dozen years earlier) at

the house of Cornelius (Acts 10). Peter's declaration (Acts 15.11) at the Jerusalem Council ended the validity of the gospel of the kingdom's which the Twelve and those associated with them preached. From that point, Paul's gospel became the *only* gospel.

Some, however, continued to cause trouble and mislead Paul's converts in Galatia. Paul reprimanded the Galatians for deserting his gospel for a "different" gospel, i.e., the gospel of the kingdom (Galatians 1.6-7) which required faith + works for salvation. Paul's gospel was faith + 0. Paul declared that anyone who proclaimed a gospel other than his was accursed ([ἀνάθεμα](#), Galatians 1.8-9). Paul could not have written this strong statement until *after* the decision of the Jerusalem Council. He reminded the Galatians how he had received his gospel: directly from the Lord Himself (Galatians 1.11-12), not from the Twelve or anyone else (Galatians 1.15-17).

Galatians 2

The first ten verses of Galatians chapter two recount Paul's experience at the Jerusalem Council. Even though Peter supported Paul that his gospel alone was valid (Acts 15.11), understanding and living according to this decision proved difficult. In Galatians 2.11-14, Paul wrote how he had to correct Peter when he came down to Antioch:

But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews (Galatians 2.14)?"

Peter's behavior in Antioch flew in the face of his words in Jerusalem. The Jews of the Jerusalem assembly wanted Gentiles to live like Jews under the Mosaic Law. Peter's dissimulation was a result of his fear of the "party of the circumcision,"

i.e., Jewish believers (Galatians 2.12). This is another indicator that reveals how much Peter's authority had deteriorated over the years. He, the leader of the Twelve, was now afraid of his fellow Jews. Others had assumed power and held sway. Even Barnabas, Paul's companion in his first missionary journey and companion at the Council in Jerusalem, folded (Galatians 2.13).

Paul explained the believer's relationship to the Law concisely:

¹⁹ For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. ²¹ I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly" (Galatians 2.19-21).

Paul declared he had "died to the Law" (Galatians 2.19; Romans 7.4, 6). How much power does law have over the dead? None. Paul's death was a result of identification with Christ in His death, "I have been crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2.20). Paul now lived a new life—a life based upon faith in Christ through the Holy Spirit—not the Law. It is through this life and this power that one is able to live a godly, holy life before God.

Galatians 3

In chapter 3, Paul began to apply his tonic to the foolish Galatians who were abandoning his teachings of grace for the teachings of Law of the Jerusalem assembly. Paul asked if they had received the Holy Spirit by keeping the Law or through faith (Galatians 3.1-2, 5). They knew the answer was the latter. Paul reminded them that Law-keeping was a work of the flesh (Galatians 3.3) and that those under the Law were under

a curse (Galatians 3.10) from which Christ had redeemed us (Galatians 3.13-14).

Paul used Abraham to illustrate (Galatians 3.6; Romans 4.3-5, cf. Genesis 15.4-6) that his salvation was a pattern for all who believed his gospel of grace, in which salvation is obtained by faith alone. The Scriptures declared Abraham was justified by faith alone (Genesis 15.6). Because of this, Paul stated that those who believed his gospel of faith + 0 were "sons of Abraham" (Galatians 3.7). This fulfilled Abraham's great blessing to Gentiles according to the Abrahamic Covenant (Galatians 3.8).³

Paul's argument in Galatians 3.15-18 has been misunderstood greatly and has resulted in much theological contention. The word "seed" (צֶמֶחַ, σπέρμα) in Hebrew, Greek, and English is a single as well as a collective noun. In Galatians 3.16, Paul appears to state that the promises made to Abraham's "seed" referred not to his multiple seed but to Christ alone. But when one examines the texts, one discovers they refer to the multiplied seed, not the single seed (Genesis 12.1-3, 13.14-16, 15.5, 17.6-8, 22.17-18, 26.4, 28.14; Deuteronomy 1.8, 10, 21; Isaiah 60.1-3; Jeremiah 23.3, 5-6; Zechariah 8.13, 23; Acts 3.25-26; Romans 11.15, 25-26). The texts also reveal that not *all* of Abraham's offspring were included. Isaac and Jacob were part of the "seed;" Ishmael and Esau were not (cf. Romans 9.6).

Paul's stated God's promise to Abraham took precedence over the Law which had come 430 years later (Galatians 3.17-18). God's program with Israel began with Abraham and the Abrahamic Covenant. According to this covenant, all Gentile blessing would come through Israel. How could Israel's generations bless Gentiles since their history was largely a history of unbelief? The Biblical record revealed that the nation would experience a glorious victory of faith only to sink into unbelief.

Israel's blessings were to come through the Messiah. If Israel rejected the Messiah, how could Gentiles be blessed? The prophetic program's answer was: they couldn't. God had revealed no means by which Gentiles could be blessed apart from Israel. But Christ is the source of blessing for Jew *and* Gentile. He was the "seed" who could secure blessings of both. Therefore, even though Israel rejected her Messiah, Gentiles were being blessed through Paul's gospel (Galatians 3.14). Paul became Israel's untimely representative (1 Corinthians 15.8) of Gentile blessing—even while the nation remained in unbelief. This was the truth Paul expressed in his use of the single "seed," Christ.

Why did God give the Law (Galatians 3.19)? Paul answered, "because of transgressions *until* the seed came to whom the promise was made." The Law revealed sin and was valid until Christ, the "seed" of promise came. Was the Law contrary to the promises of God? Paul answered with his familiar, strongest negative, μή γένοιτο, "NO!" But the Law could not give life. If it could have, men would have achieved righteousness by keeping it (Galatians 3.21). The Law did its intended job: it condemned.

Paul concluded the chapter stating:

²³ But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And

if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

This passage requires careful attention if we are to understand the place of the Mosaic Law in Jewish life. What did Paul mean by his statement, "before faith came?" The first thing to note is that the passage is poorly translated. It does not read "faith" but "the faith."

²³ *But before the faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.* ²⁴ *Therefore the Law has become our tutor to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.* ²⁵ *But now the faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.* ²⁶ *For you are all the children of God through the faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3.23-26).*

What did Paul mean by "the faith" in these verses? "The faith" was *Paul's gospel*—the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20.24; 1 Corinthians 15.1-4). It also included the other revelations Paul had received from Christ—*the secrets*. Put another way, "the faith" was that *body of truth Paul had received from the risen Lord*.

Faith, believing God, was always part of Jewish life and of salvation. Hebrew 11 makes this clear. But Paul is making the case that "the faith," his gospel, was unknown and new and that salvation was now based solely upon believing that gospel, i.e., by faith *alone*. The Jews in Jerusalem objected to Paul's message because it had never been revealed or taught that salvation was by faith *alone*. They did not deny Paul's converts faith. Their objection was that faith alone was insufficient for salvation; one must also be circumcised and keep the Law to be saved (Acts 15.1, 5). *That* was the point of contention.

Paul stated the Law acted as a “tutor” or “schoolmaster” [παιδαγωγός](#) (a guardian hired to train boys in right and wrong) to lead us to Christ. Thus, Paul wrote that the Law “has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith [alone].” And “now that faith [alone] has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” So the Law and the gospel of faith + keeping the Law was valid until Paul’s gospel of grace of faith + θ came. This was precisely what Peter stated at the Council of Jerusalem: “But we believe that we are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are” (Acts 15.11). From that point onward, Jews had to be saved like Paul’s Gentiles. In other words, from the time of the Jerusalem Council going forward, *only Paul’s gospel was valid* (cf. Galatians 1.6-9). The gospel of the kingdom (faith + works) was over. Prior to Peter’s declaration, such an idea was unthinkable.

As a result of Paul’s gospel, no difference exists between Jew and Gentile in Christ (Galatians 3.28). This was not true before Paul. Paul alone revealed and taught the Church, the body of Christ. As far as being “Abraham’s descendants,” Paul’s point was that since Abraham was justified by faith *alone* (Galatians 3.29; Genesis 15.6) those who believe Paul’s gospel of faith *alone* are Abraham’s heirs—not on the basis of Law but on the basis of promise (Galatians 3.29).

Galatians 4

From Paul’s language in Galatians 4, it is clear some of his converts were Jews and some Gentiles. In Galatians 4.1-7, Paul addressed Jews first, who had been under the Mosaic Law. In Galatians 4.8-11, he addressed Gentiles who had been idol worshipers. Paul’s Jewish converts were the easiest targets of the Jews who wished to keep them under the Law. Since the Law had been their lifestyle, it was difficult for them to conceive of life apart from it. God had spent 1,500 years teaching them that they were under the administration of the Law. Now, Paul taught them that the administration of the Law

was over. This was a challenge that only the Scriptures working through the agency of the Holy Spirit could overcome.

In Galatians 4.1-7, Paul continued the illustration of guardianship he had introduced in Galatians 3.24. Under the Law, a Jew was, according to Paul, a slave—even though he was an heir (Galatians 4.1-2; cf. Acts 15.10). But God has redeemed us from the Law—to be sons rather than slaves (Galatians 4.5-7).

Paul's Gentile converts had been idolaters, slaves to false gods (Galatians 4.8 cf. 1 Thessalonians 1.9). Believing Paul's gospel freed them from slavery. Paul asked why they wished to return to slavery—the slavery of the Mosaic Law (Galatians 4.9-11). The next verses, Galatians 4.12-20, reveal how tenderly Paul tried to woo the Galatians back to their previous happy relationship. He enjoined them to remember the freedom they had enjoyed and the kindness between them, "You received me as an angel of God, as Christ," and asked them, "Where then is that sense of blessing you had?"

Returning to Abraham, Paul presented another illustration from Genesis in the final section of the chapter, Galatians 4.21-31. This was primarily for the benefit of his Jewish believers since they were familiar with the story. Paul rejoined, "Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?"

Paul recounted the story of Abraham's first two sons. God promised Abraham He would make of him a great nation (Genesis 12.2). While God had made Abraham wealthy, he had no child, because his wife, Sarai was barren (Genesis 11.30, 15.2-4). In frustration, Sarai suggested he have a child by her handmaid, Hagar (Genesis 16.1-4). Abram agreed and had a son, Ishmael. Later, Abraham and Sarah had their own son, Isaac, when Abraham was 100 (Genesis 17.17; 21.5). Paul stated that Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman, Hagar, was a child of the flesh rather than a child of promise (Galatians 4.22-23).

These two sons represented two different approaches: flesh vs. faith, slavery vs. freedom (Galatians 4.24). The child of Hagar was of Mount Sinai, the Law, and earthly Jerusalem; the child of Sarah was of heavenly Jerusalem.

The Bible keeps heaven and earth distinct from Genesis to Revelation (Genesis 1.1; Revelation 21.1). Israel is God's earthly people. The promises Israel inherits are earthly. The Church, the body of Christ, is God's heavenly people. The blessings and inheritance of the Church are heavenly (Ephesians 1.3, 2.6; Philippians 3.20). In His earthly ministry, Jesus ministered to Jews under the Mosaic Law. In His heavenly ministry, Jesus commissioned Paul and gave him the ministry to Gentiles, who compose the vast majority in the Church, the body of Christ, who have a heavenly destiny, and are governed by grace. For this reason, Paul wrote, "But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother" (Galatians 4.26). Furthermore, Paul declared, "And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise." The Church, the body of Christ, is not under Law but under Promise, under Grace.

Paul concluded:

²⁹ But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. ³⁰ But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman." ³¹ So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

As Ishmael mocked Isaac (Genesis 21.9), those of the "flesh," those under the Law, persecute those born of the Spirit, of grace. Therefore, Paul declared "Cast out the bondwoman and her son." The text reads, ἔκβαλε τὴν παιδίσκην καὶ τὸν υἱὸν

αὐτῆς and the verb [ἐκβάλλω](#) “throw out,” “cast away” is an imperative, a command. Why? Because we are not children of the bondwoman, of the flesh, of the Law. We are children of the Spirit, of faith and are free. Therefore, *obedience* to Christ means the Mosaic Law has NO place in the administration of Christian living.

Galatians 5

Having commanded the Galatians to “throw out” the Mosaic Law, Paul commanded them (and us) to keep standing fast ([σιτήκετε](#), present active imperative) in the freedom of Christ and not be subject to the Mosaic Law (Galatians 5.1). One need comprehend only a little of Paul’s message to the Galatians to understand how great a tragedy exists in most of Christendom regarding living the Christian life. Most churches and denominations teach the opposite to what the great apostle taught, They reject the work of Christ which has set us free from the Law. Legalists and theonomists are the modern-day Judaizers who pervert Paul’s gospel of grace and disobey Christ (Galatians 5.11).

In verses 2-5, Paul revisited the issue of circumcision, which the Jewish believers of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15.1) had taught was required for salvation. Paul declared that if one is circumcised he is obligated to keep the entire Law (Galatians 5.3). This does not mean just the Decalogue; it means all the Law—the 613 commandments of the Law identified by Maimonides. The Mosaic Law was a “package.” One could not pick and choose from it. If one accepted the moral law, one also accepted the civil and ceremonial law. Thus, James wrote that to break one point of the Law was to break it all (James 2.10). Furthermore, Paul declared that those who place themselves under the Mosaic Law have been severed from Christ ([καταργέω](#)) and have fallen ([ἐκπίπτω](#)) from grace (Galatians 5.4). Does this mean that those who teach that Christians are under the Mosaic Law have lost their salvation? No. It means those who place themselves under the Law have turned away from

God's revealed way to live the Christian life: by faith, love, and the Holy Spirit.

Having taught them the freedom of Christ apart from the Law, Paul questioned what had happened to them:

⁷ You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸ This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. ⁹ A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. ¹⁰ I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is. ¹¹ But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished. ¹² I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate ([ἀποκόπτω](#)) themselves.

These are strong words. Notice Paul declared that the teaching that Christians are under the Law is "not from Him who calls you." Those who teach that Christians are under the Law have rejected God's revelation and have poisoned the body of Christ.

If the believer is not under the Mosaic Law, how is he to live the Christian life? Paul had begun his answer in Galatians 5.6, which reads, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love."

Paul elaborated:

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your

neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. ¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. ¹⁹ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

The Christian is to fulfill the moral law of God, just as Israel which was under the Law. But Christians are to fulfill the moral law apart from the *administration* of the Mosaic Law. Christians are not to be under the administration of the Mosaic Law because we have a far better overseer: the Holy Spirit. Believers of Paul's gospel were identified with Christ in His death which crucified the Law (Romans 6.3-5, 7.4, 6; Galatians 2.20; Ephesians 2.15; Colossians 2.14). His work provided a wholly new means of keeping the moral law. Instead

of operating under the Mosaic Law, the believer operates under the administration of the Holy Spirit who engenders love. Will the Holy Spirit lead one to sin? Will love lead one to sin? Thus, Paul wrote, "if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law" (verse 18 cf. Romans 6.14).

Again, quoting and commenting on Tyndale, C. S. Lewis captured the essence of Paul's thought concerning the Law:

The transition comes by the gift of faith which immediately and almost by definition passes into love. We are confronted with the redemption which God performed 'to winne his enemye, to ouercomme him with loue, that he might see Loue and loue again'. The essence of the change is that we now have power 'to loue that which before we could not but hate'. The 'fretting' voice of the law is now the will of the Beloved, already in principle (if not at every moment) our own will, and man can 'be glad and laugh from the low bottome of his hart' (Pathway). ⁴

Galatians 6

In verses 1-10, Paul encouraged those who were spiritual to restore a believer who sinned with a spirit of gentleness, recognizing that we all have weaknesses. Though the Christian is not under the administration of the Law, he is not to sin: God will not be mocked and what a man sows he will reap. In other words, sin has consequences. One cannot escape them.

He closed the letter, verses 11-18, stating that those who wanted to put the Galatians under the Mosaic Law did not keep the Law and that their behavior was "so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ." The "cross of Christ" (1 Corinthians 1.17; cf. Philippians 3.17-19) was Paul's gospel. Those who advocated that believers were to be under the administration of the Law were enemies of the "cross of Christ" (Galatians 6.14).

Paul used “circumcision” as a metonymy for the Law and stated, “For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation” (Galatians 6.15). This is the heart of the matter. The believer of Paul’s gospel has been crucified with Christ, i.e., identified in His death, burial, and resurrection. He has become a new creation. The old creation, being “in Adam,” could not keep the Law no matter how hard he tried. Only as a new creation, “in Christ,” controlled by the faith, love, and the Holy Spirit can one keep the Law.

As his final exhortation, Paul declared, “And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God” (Galatians 6.16). With this statement, Paul declared “peace and mercy” to those who followed his gospel. The “them” were believers of Paul’s gospel and the “Israel of God” were the believing Jews of the Jerusalem assembly (the Judaizers).⁵

Through numerous passages, Paul made it clear that Christians are under grace, not subject to the Mosaic Law:

1. New Administration:	Christians are under grace, not Law, but fulfill the Law.	Romans 3.28; 6.14-15, 7.1-4, 6, 8.2-4; 13.8, 10; 1 Corinthians 9.20-21; Galatians 3.13, 17-18, 23-24, 4.4-5, 5.14, 18, 6.2; Ephesians 2.15
2. Salvation:	Christians are saved apart from the Law.	Romans 4.13-14, 16; Galatians 2.16, 21, 3.11; Philippians 3.9
3. Sanctification:	Christians are sanctified by grace, apart from the Law.	Romans 3.31, 7.22-25; Galatians 2.19, 3.2, 5, 5.3-4; Colossians 2.6-7

Paul’s dogmatic teaching was that Christians are not under the administration of the Mosaic Law. This does not mean a

believer is not under the moral law of God or free to sin. The moral law existed long before the Mosaic Law. Christ freed us from the Law, not to give license to sin, but so we can live holy lives and do good. True freedom is the ability and power to do what is right. The one who believes Paul's gospel is under new management, the administration of the Holy Spirit. Baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12.13; Titus 3.5-7), the Holy Spirit works through the Scriptures and the believer's new nature by faith and love to fulfill the moral law. Thus, Paul exclaimed, "For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man" (Romans 7.22). A good tree produces good fruit and the new nature produces good works. Paul taught this new administration was glorious (2 Corinthians 3.8) and that its glory far exceeded the glory of the Mosaic Law (2 Corinthians 3.7, 9, 11).

Paul and the Decalogue

While Christ has freed us from the Mosaic Law, Paul referenced the moral law evidenced in the Decalogue throughout his writings (see chart below). The one exception was the Sabbath. Christians do not keep the "sabbath." The sabbath is the seventh day, the day God rested from His work of creation (Genesis 2.2-3). God gave Israel, not the Church, the covenant of the Sabbath (Exodus 31:12-18). Christians celebrate the first day of the week because that was the day Christ arose from the dead. But, in reality, for Christians all days are equal. Put another way, every day for the believer is resurrection day—the day of hope and future glory.

Paul's Reprise of the Decalogue	
The Decalogue (Exodus 20. 1-17)	Paul's Writings
1 ³ "You shall have no other gods before Me."	Acts 17.24-25; Galatians 4.8; 1 Thessalonians 1.9

2	⁴ "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. ⁵ "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."	1 Corinthians 5.11, 6.9-10, 10.7, 14; 2 Corinthians 6.16; Galatians 5.19-20; Ephesians 5.5; Colossians 3.5; 1 Thessalonians 1.9
3	⁷ "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain."	Ephesians 4.31; Colossians 3.8; 1 Timothy 1.20; 2 Timothy 3.1,2
4	⁸ "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. ¹¹ "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy."	Colossians 2.16-17 cf. Romans 14.5-6. Every commandment is repeated except the Sabbath. Paul taught believers are not under Sabbath requirements. The Sabbath was the 7 th day of the week and applied only to Jews under the Law. The idea Sunday is the new "Sabbath" is non-Scriptural.
5	¹² "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you."	Ephesians 6.1-3; Colossians 3.20; 2 Timothy 3.1-2
6	¹³ "You shall not murder."	Romans 13.9; 1 Timothy 1.9
7	¹⁴ "You shall not commit adultery."	Romans 13.9; 1 Corinthians 5.11, 6.9-10, 18, 10.8; Galatians 5.19; Ephesians 5.5; 1 Timothy 1.9,10; Hebrews 13.4
8	¹⁵ "You shall not steal."	Romans 13.9; 1 Corinthians 6.10; Ephesians 4.28
9	¹⁶ "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."	Romans 13.9; Galatians 1.19; Ephesians 4.25; Colossians 3.9; 1 Timothy 1.9,10, 4.1-2; 2 Timothy 3.1,3; Titus 1.2; Hebrews 6.18
10	¹⁷ "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."	Romans 1.29, 7.7, 13.9; 1 Corinthians 5.11, 6.10, 10.6; Galatians 5.16; Ephesians 5.5; Colossians 3.5; 1 Thessalonians 2.5; Hebrews 13.5

Conclusion

God gave the Mosaic Law to Israel, not to Gentiles, and not to the Church. The Law did but one thing: condemn. It could not make one right with God. For the Jews, the Law provided the Levitical sacrifices whereby sins were "covered" (□□□□□□). The animal sacrifices were a "patch." Christ's death on the cross and resurrection solved the problem of sin and death. When one believes Paul's gospel, God seals the believer and baptizes him into the body of Christ (Ephesians 1.13; 1 Corinthians

12.13; Titus 3.5-7). God gives him a new nature and places him under the management of the Holy Spirit. The new nature can obey God for it has not been corrupted by Adam's sin. It loves God and desires to please him. The Christian life can only be lived by faith. Faith is obedience and engenders love. Thus, the great apostle wrote, "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf (2 Corinthians 5.14-15).

¹ C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*, p. 187-188. Lewis' comment on William Tyndale is the finest succinct explanation of the difference between law and grace ever written. Lewis wrote, "In reality Tyndale is trying to express an obstinate fact which meets us long before we venture into the realm of theology; the fact that morality or duty (what he calls the 'the Law') never yet made a man happy in himself or dear to others. It is shocking, but it is undeniable. We do not wish either to be, or to live among, people who are clean or honest or kind as a matter of duty: we want to be, and to associate with, people who like being clean and honest and kind. The mere suspicion that what seemed an act of spontaneous friendliness or generosity was really done as a duty subtly poisons it." Lewis continued, "Of freedom in the true sense—of spontaneity and disinterestedness—Nature knows nothing. And yet by a terrible paradox, such disinterestedness is precisely what the moral law demands. The law requires not only that we should do thus and thus but that we should do it with 'a free, a willing, a loving, a lusty and a louing hart.' Its beginning and end is that we should love God and our neighbors. It demands of us not only acts but new motives."

² Maimonides concluded the Torah contained 613 commandments. See [613 Commandments](#).

³ Paul did not state Jews were saved by faith *alone*. Abraham

was an exception. We have no indication in the Old Testament that Jews were saved by faith alone apart from works. On the contrary, the Biblical evidence is Jews were saved by faith and works. Before Paul, *sola fide* was unknown. See the author's article, [Faith and Works in James: Resolving the Problem](#).

⁴ Lewis, op. cit., p. 188.

⁵ This verse is analyzed in the author's article, "[Israel" as a Technical Term.](#)"

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