



Lesson 6

RG and the LAW

THE BIG PICTURE – THE Story

The GOSPEL, who JESUS is and what JESUS did, has a direct impact on how one is to view the LAW.

One of the tensions we have in considering this idea is what Law Paul references. There are three options.

1. There is **THE LAW**.
2. There is the law written in our hearts.
3. There are the laws established by governments.

The focus of this study is on **THE LAW**. And the question is, “What is our [NT Church] relationship to that Law [OT Israel]?”

From Lesson One we noted the difference between the ROYAL GIFT COVENANT and that of the VASSAL TREATY. Genesis 3:15 and 12:1-3 are the ROYAL GIFT. Exodus 20 and the Nation of Israel is the VASSAL TREATY. The Mosaic Code is the VASSAL TREATY. The ROYAL GIFT is unconditional and eternal. God does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Our salvation is the ROYAL GIFT. The VASSAL TREATY is conditional and temporary. Its blessings and curses are conditioned on obedience.

This LAW has certain qualities.

- 613 Commands [The “10” represent]
- We speak of the Law as having three categories. Often, it divides into three categories: CIVIL, CEREMONIAL, and MORAL. Yet, no Jew would speak of it in this manner. We do so in order to understand its magnitude. Thus, James can say, “He who keeps the

BASIC IDEAS:

1. The LAW can never provide. It can only point.
2. The LAW points to Christ.
3. The Christian is no longer under the mastery or authority of the Law, but under the mastery or authority of GRACE.
4. In Adam, all are under the LAW. Thus, people are LAW BREAKERS.
5. In Christ, all are under GRACE. Thus, Christians are COMMANDMENT KEEPERS.

entire Law yet breaks one has broken the whole" (James 2:10 [the boast of the rich young ruler, "I have kept the Law; Paul does the same "blameless"]).

Q1 - Which covenant are NT believers under; the ROYAL GIFT or the VASSAL TREATY?

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Why is this area vital in our understanding of our relationship with God? Let us consider three. **First**, we can make it the means in our fellowship with God. **Second**, we can make it a litmus test in our fellowship with others. **Finally**, we can make secondary matters primary.

Common misconceptions concerning the Law are two-fold. We either consider the LAW as bad. Or we look at the LAW as a burden. Neither are true.

We will look at the Law as it occurs in Paul's Letter to the Romans. In Romans the issue centered on the believer's relationship to the Law. The question was, "Should we or should we not keep the Law?" There were two "OPINIONS" at that time. They centered on the eating of meats and the marking of days. Paul does not tell them to throw the Law out. Neither does He tell them to keep the Law. In fact, Paul still kept the LAW even after accepting Jesus as the promised Messiah (Acts 18:12, 13; 20:16; 21:17-28). He simply says, "You are not obligated to keep it. But do not think that if you do, the Law is the basis of your relationship with God." He is telling them "**keeping the Law does not matter in determining if one is or is not accepted by God.**"

New Testament Jews kept the cultural aspects of the Law. They did not stop being Jewish simply because they accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

"If we can become used to seeing life through humble eyes, we will be able to see the law for what it is. It is not a laundry list of things we need to accomplish, it is a way we can communicate and see a clearer picture of Eden."¹

Q2 - Were Jews obligated to give up the Law when they accepted Jesus as Messiah?

Q3 - How were Jews to view the Law after believing Jesus as Messiah? Why would this be challenging?

INITIAL TRUTHS TO REMEMBER

It is clear in the Book of Acts that Paul continued keeping the Law as a way of life, but now he saw how the entire Law pointed to Christ and he believed Jesus was the fulfillment of the Law. The Law no longer stood as a means into God's Covenant Community or a means of maintaining good standing within the Covenant Community. All this and more are found solely in Jesus. It is clear the early church struggled with Law compliance for those who would believe (i.e. Acts 15).

“The centrality of this topic in Romans is evident from word statistics. From 195 instances of **nomos** in the New Testament, no less than 74 are found in Romans. This frequency is matched only by the shorter Letter to the Galatians, with 32 instances.”²

Let us note for a moment the placement of occurrences in the Book of Romans.

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Occurrences</u>
2	11x
3	6x
4	4x
5	2x
6	2x
7	16x
8	4x
9	2x
10	2x
13	2x

It becomes apparent the word itself falls primarily in chapters 2 and 7.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON

It is important to remember how the entire Old Testament is a shadow or type pointing to the substance or anti-type who is Jesus.

1. Jesus fulfills the LAW (Romans 3:27-31).
2. The Law protects the SEED, but the Law is not the SEED (Rom. 4:1ff).
3. The Law separated Israel *from* the Nations, so that they would become a blessing *to* the Nations.
4. Although we are no longer obligated to keep the LAW, this does not make the believer lawless (Rom. 6:15-23).
5. In Christ, the believer has died to the power/authority of the LAW (Rom. 7:1-6).
6. In Christ, the believer is no longer under the LAW and thus faces NO CONDEMNATION (Rom. 8:1-4).

If one were to place their hand print on a surface, the print of the palm is the TYPE. The hand that produced the print is the ANTITYPE. Christ is the REALITY that produces the shadow, the various types, the copies. The **Shadow** can only *point*, it cannot *provide*. **Everything** in the *Old Testament* is shadow pointing to Christ. “Christ is the goal the Law points to and when the goal is reached, the Law ends.”³

- ¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matt. 5:17).

- ²⁷ “Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. . . ⁴⁴ Now He said to them, ‘These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ ⁴⁵ Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27, 44, 45).
- “Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph’” (John 1:45).
- “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me” (John 5:39).

The entire *Story* points to Jesus, including the Law.

Q4 - Why would I “not” put myself under the Mosaic Code | VASSAL TREATY?

I. Jesus fulfills the LAW (Romans 3:27-31).

The LAW played a distinct role in the purpose of God. It had a beginning and an ending (Rom. 7:1-6; Gal. 4:1-7).

Jesus fulfilled the ROYAL GIFT as SEED PROMISE and also the VASSAL TREATY as the New Israel and the second Adam.

The LAW pointed to Jesus. God’s “substance” means of justifying sinners is in the person and work of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:21-31). The Law was not opposed to justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone (Rom. 3:31; Gal. 3:21, 23, 24). Does justification by faith nullify the Law? **NO!** On the contrary, **IT ESTABLISHES THE LAW!**

- “Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, **we establish the Law**” (Rom. 3:31).
- **“For Christ is the end of the law** for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Rom. 10:4).
- ⁸ “Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for **he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.**
¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; **therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law**” (Rom. 13:8, 10).
- **“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill”** (Matt. 5:17).

Jesus is the fulfillment of the SEED PROMISE in the ROYAL GIFT and the completion of the BLOOD PICTURE in the VASSAL TREATY.

Q5 - If Jesus fulfills the stipulations of the VASSAL TREATY, why would I place myself under it?

II. The Law protected the SEED, but the Law is not the SEED (Rom. 4:1ff; cf. Gal. 3:19-29 Why the Law?).

The Law fulfilled its role as a revealer of Christ's sufficiency / God's Provision and a revealer of Humanity's inability / Humanity's Problem. The Law led to Promise, but the Law was not the Promise.

Part of the dilemma was man's attempt to make the Law do something it was never intended to do. Anyone attempting to keep the Law by an act of works would fail. The Law could only be kept by faith (Rom. 9:31, 32).

The Law also shows us hope and redemption through the sacrificial system. The Law had at its center an atoning sacrifice to propitiate God's wrath against the sinner. The believer delighted in the Law [i.e. sacrificial system] for it was God's means of being right with Him.

III. Although we are no longer obligated to keep the LAW, this does not make the believer lawless (Rom. 6:15-23).

Notice Paul's reasoning in Romans 6:15-23.

The Question (v. 15a)

"Are we Lawless?"

The Answer (v. 15b)

"May it Never Be!"

The Principle (vv. 16-18)

"We are Slaves"

The Contrast (vv. 19-23)

"Death or Life"

Shall we sin because we are not under Law but under grace? Paul does not negate the idea that we are no longer under the Law. We are not. What Paul does is explain what living under grace looks like. The idea of being lawless **means without a master**. It does not mean **WITHOUT LAW**.

Verse one asks, "Should we sin that grace might abound?" Here the question is, "Can we sin since graces abounds?" Paul's response to each is emphatic. Freedom *from* sin is *not* a freedom *to* sin. Grace does what the Law demands.

The liberties of grace are not in the horizontal, but in the vertical. The freedoms of grace are first *felt* in the vertical, then in the horizontal. Gospel liberty is never sinful. Gospel freedom shows itself in undefined acts of service toward others.

The Law cannot empower what it commands. The flesh cannot attain what it desires. The accusatory power of the Law lies in it being transgressed.

“The Law commands that we love perfectly. The Gospel announces that we are perfectly loved.”⁴

“Perhaps it is enough to say that the Law reveals that we need to be forgiven; the Gospel announces we have been forgiven. Full stop.”⁵

FREE FROM SIN

- “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).
- “and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

Freedom from **sin’s tyranny and slavery** is not so much absence, but **ADVOCACY**. I still sin, but **JESUS** is my **ADVOCATE**. The struggle you and I have with our old nature is not won through force of will. The battle is won by remembering who did what.

The question is not whether one will have a master, but which master one will serve. Serving sin, Paul shows, leads to death; serving God leads to life.

Q6 - Is the Christian lawless?

IV. In Christ, the believer has died to the power/authority of the LAW (Rom. 7:1-6).

Death breaks the power of the “MARRIAGE” covenant. The paragraph does not say the Law died, but you died in Christ. The Law is still operative, but not for you. Notice the language of our text: Jurisdiction (v. 1), Bound by (v. 2a [“knit together”]), Released from (v. 2b [3:3, 31; 4:14; 6:6; 7:2, 6]), Joined to (v. 3 [“married”]), and Free from (v. 3b [“unrestrained”]).

The illustration of marriage, death, and remarriage **is not the issue**. Paul’s intent is not to give a word about marriage. What Paul says is true, but it is not all that Paul says concerning marriage. He states a principle that everyone recognizes. When your spouse dies, the covenant between the two of you has been broken and you are now at liberty to marry someone else. What He began in 5:12, He continues throughout. You are no longer under the headship of Adam, sin, bondage, and death. You are now under the headship of Christ, righteousness, freedom, and life. For us to think we can be under grace and under Law at the same time is

adulterous [improper / illicit / unlawful]. We cannot have two masters **AND** we are not moving between the two.

Our death, burial, and resurrection in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (Rom. 6:1-14) severs our relationship to the Mastery of the Law. Because of this we are no longer under the Law, but under grace. Based on what has been said, in Christ your “marriage” to the Law has been broken and you are now free to be married to Him.

V. In Christ, the believer is no longer under the LAW and thus faces NO CONDEMNATION (Rom. 8:1-4).

There is no condemnation for the justified because the Law has been fully met. There is a new law in operation. It is the law of the Holy Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (v. 2). The Law was weak to justify and to sanctify. Yet the inability of the Law did not lie in it, but in us. This new law changes our relationship to sin.

In a life governed by the Law, striving for victory and fear of defeat loom over every endeavor. In a life governed by the Gospel, *nothing that needs to be done hasn't already been done*. Or as Martin Luther so famously wrote in thesis 23 of the Heidelberg Disputation (1518), “the law says ‘do this’ and it is never done. Grace says, ‘believe in this’ and everything is already done.” We have nothing to lose or gain, on other words. The pressure to self-justify has been removed, whether we believe it or not, and it has been replaced with freedom: the freedom to die and yet to live, to fail and yet succeed. The freedom to play, to serve, to love, to wait, to laugh, to cry, to sit idle – even to get busy.

Yes, judgements against us will persist just as sin persists, but the Gospel pronounces that these judgments have lost their bite. The law has been defanged. The condemnation we feel is simply a feeling, no more binding than any other. So, we may judge others, and they may judge us; we may judge ourselves, but God has gotten out of the judgment game. Christ is the final word on that score. This is not just good news. It is the *best* news.⁶

God had to do what He did. Had not God taken the initiative, we would be lost forever. The Law could not free us from sin and death. Because of this, the Father sent His Son to condemn sin in the flesh. The weakness of the Law did not lie in the Law but in our flesh. Because of our sin God did for us what we could never do for ourselves. Let us never forget this singular idea. In the absence of a reigning grace, we could never have merited what was needed.

Q7 – Do believers stand condemned under the Law?

Q8 – What did you find helpful from this study?

Q9 – What questions do you have concerning your relationship to the Old Testament Law?

CONCLUSION

THE Law enables you to see yourself for what you are, a law breaker under the judgment of God needing a Savior. The Christian is not under the Law. Therefore, they will not be held accountable before the judge. Jesus will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He keeps the Law for us thus making us commandment keepers.

For further reading see *Quarrels About the Law* by Patrick Griffiths available at www.waukeshabile.org.

¹ Taylor Collins, email on 3/7/21

² *The Theology of Paul's Letter to the Romans*, Klaus Haacker, 68.

³ Unknown reference

⁴ A Mockingbird Publication, *Law and Gospel: A Theology for Sinners (and Saints)*, p. 58.

⁵ A Mockingbird Publication, *Law and Gospel: A Theology for Sinners (and Saints)*, p. 60.

⁶ *Law and Gospel*, 62-63.