

Christians and the Law of Moses

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Since the 'law' is based upon the Mosaic Covenant, it is important to understand the relationship between the different covenants of the Old Testament and their application to Israel and to believers who are 'sons of Abraham' by faith (Ga 3:7).

1. The Old (Mosaic) covenant was conditional and was broken by Israel. (Jer 31:32).
2. The New Covenant was made with the same people (Israel) as the Mosaic Covenant (Jer 31:32-33).
3. The Old Covenant is obsolete and vanishing (Heb 8:13). People of faith are no longer under it (Ga 3:25; Ga 5:18).
4. Salvation is by faith based on participation in the Abrahamic Covenant--which preceded the Mosaic Covenant and was not annulled by it (Ga 3:7-18). Gentiles participate in the blessing of Abraham (Ge 12:3) via faith in Christ (Ga 3:8, Ga 3:14) who fulfilled the law (Mt 5:17). The Abrahamic Covenant is not abolished by the passing away of the Mosaic Covenant (Ga 3:17).
5. Gentiles were strangers from the covenants (plural), having no hope and without God. Christ abolished in His flesh the law of commandments (the Mosaic Covenant, which separated Jews from Gentiles) creating one new man--the church (Eph 2:12-15).
6. The covenants given to Israel which remain in effect include the Abrahamic Covenant (Ge 12:1-3; Ge 15:1-21) and the three covenants which spring forth from it: the Land Covenant (Ex 6:4; De 29:1-12), the Davidic Covenant (2Sa 7:8-17; 1Ch 17:9-16; Ps 89:19-51; Ps 132:10; Lu 1:32-33), and the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-40; Mt 26:28; Mr 14:24; Lu 22:14-20; Ro 11:26-27).
7. The law was meant to expose our sin (Ro 3:19; Ro 5:20; Ro 7:7), guide us, and point us to Christ (Ga 3:19-25).
8. The law is an all-or-nothing proposition. Those who would seek to be justified by the law have become estranged from Christ (Ga 3:10; Ga 5:3-4; Jas 2:10).
9. No one is justified (declared righteous) by the law (Ga 3:11). Justification has always been by faith in God based on the work of Christ (Ge 15:6; Ga 3:6).
10. Believers are now subject to the law of Christ, the law of the Spirit (Ro 8:2; 1Co 9:21; Ga 6:2; Jas 1:25; Jas 2:12).

An Antidote for Christian Legalism

Our pride and our flesh cry out for the bondage of legalism! We are constantly looking back over our shoulders to Egypt, allowing subtle but dangerous aspects of legalism and works-based thinking to erode our freedom in Christ. In a way reminiscent of how Christ nailed the law to the cross (Col. 2:14) believers should nail (!) these

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passages from God's Word to their refrigerator:²

- ◆ Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; "and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Ac 13:38-39)
- ◆ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin. (Ro 3:20)
- ◆ But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, (Ro 4:5)
- ◆ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Ro 6:14)
- ◆ Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another--to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. (Ro 7:4)
- ◆ But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not [in] the oldness of the letter. (Ro 7:6)
- ◆ For Christ [is] the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Ro 10:4)
- ◆ For if what is passing away [was] glorious, what remains [is] much more glorious. (2Co 3:11)
- ◆ knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. (Ga 2:16)
- ◆ "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness [comes] through the law, then Christ died in vain." (Ga 2:21)
- ◆ [Is] the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. (Ga 3:21)
- ◆ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. (Ga 3:25)
- ◆ You have become estranged from Christ, you who [attempt to] be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. (Ga 5:4)
- ◆ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, [that is], the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man [from] the two, [thus] making peace, (Eph 2:15)
- ◆ having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Col 2:14)
- ◆ For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, (Heb 7:18)
- ◆ In that He says, "A new [covenant]," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. (Heb 8:13)
- ◆ For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, [and] not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. (Heb 10:1)

² New King James Bible. TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982.