

## Law vs Grace in the New Covenant

Some Messianic Jews think teaching adherence to the *oral laws* (reputedly given to Moses and later recorded by rabbis in the Mishnah and the Talmud), is what Paul argued against in Galatians and elsewhere as Judaizing. Some say, he was also trying to make the distinction that one should be obedient to Torah law, due to faith in Messiah, rather than attempted self righteousness. For them, the coming of Messiah was **not** the end of the Law, he was **only** the end of the Law as a means of righteousness, for those who had faith in his atoning sacrifice.

Some inventive use of the evidence found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, has recently been used to bolster their arguments and get around texts damaging to their view. For instance:

*GALATIANS 4:10 You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, that I might have wasted my labor for you.*

They try to argue that Gal. 4:10 and Col. 2:16 must refer to the calendar of the Essenes (based on the Dead Sea Scroll 4Q327). These texts are fatal to their position so they must be explained away somehow. However, this pattern (days, months, years) is used many times in the Bible to refer to the Sabbath and Holy Days given to Israel in the Torah. (1 Chron 23:31, 2 Chron 2:4, 2 Chron 8:13, Neh 10:33, Isa 1:13-14, Eze 45:17, Eze 46:1-9, Hsa 2:11, Gal. 4:10, Col. 2:16)

That means, the **weekly** Sabbath (fourth commandment) is included in Paul's criticism, along with the other Sabbaths and Holy Days, since the pattern is **always** used to indicate the **whole system**.

Paul affirmed that uncircumcised Gentiles (who do not keep the Torah) fulfilled the **law of Christ**, therefore the **law of Christ** is not the same as the the Torah or Mosaic law.

Christianity has also had it's share of controversies regarding this topic. New Covenant theology (NCT) has stepped in to solve many of the inadequacies of previous methodologies. *Dispensationalism cannot get Israel and the church together in any sense whatsoever, and Covenant Theology cannot get them apart* (Reisinger, 19). NCT is still evolving and changing as a result of *in house* debate but it's main tenets are somewhat settled. Personally, I find it to be a much more useful and Biblical view (than the alternatives), for interpreting redemptive history.

Dispensational (discontinuity) and Covenant (continuity) theologians, argue fiercely over the very important issue of salvation by grace, in relationship to the law. For

example, Covenant theologians divide the law into three divisions, the civil, ceremonial, and moral law of God. Dispensational theologians tend to lump them all together (Mosaic laws), especially in terms of ending them.

Here are some creeds of Christendom that recognize the difference between the ceremonial and the moral laws:

- The second Helvetic Confession (1566) (Reformed church of Zurich)
- Thirty nine articles of religion of the church of England (1571)
- The American revision of 39 articles by the protestant Episcopal Church (1801)
- The Irish articles of religion (1615)
- The Westminster Confession of faith (1647)
- The Savoy declaration of the congregational Churches (1658)
- Baptist confession of 1688
- Methodist articles of Religion (1784)

According to many covenant theologians (and Messianic Jews), if we consider the word law, to mean all laws, all of the time, then there are a whole series of contradictory statements generated. In different verses the law is described as *the law of sin and death* (Romans 7:23; 8:2), *law of faith* (Romans 3:27), *the ministry of death* (2 Corinthians 3:7), *the law of Christ* (Gal. 6: 2).

Those who argue for continuity say one law (moral law), points out what sin is and was written by God, with his own finger in stone (symbolizing permanence) and kept in the ark. The other law offered a sacrifice for sin (offerings and oblations) which pointed forward to Christ. It was written in a book, by Moses (handwriting of ordinances) and kept in the side of the ark (not permanent). The civil law was also part of that temporary code.

Dispensational theologians are quick to point out that the moral law (Decalogue) was also written twice in the *book of the law* (*handwriting of ordinances that was against us*). The Bible uses the terms *law of Moses* and *law of God* interchangeably (Num. 31:21; Josh. 23:6; 2 Chron. 31:3). Even Jesus in the sermon on the mount (Matt. 5), mixed laws from different categories and treated them as one unit. Just one of the Ten Commandments is styled *the law* in Rom. 7:8: *The law...said, Thou shalt not covet*. The preceding verses in Rom. 7:1-7, stress how *the law* has been done away by Christ's

death; *the law* therefore includes the Ten Commandments. Paul calls the Decalogue (which some want to carry over into the New Covenant), a **Ministry of death** that was being **brought to an end**.

2 Corinthians 3:7 *Now if the **ministry of death**, carved in **letters on stone**, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being **brought to an end**, will not the **ministry of the Spirit** have even more glory?*

If we were to take the following verse, which categories of law would each of the offenses fall into? How many are part of the Decalogue? Which are ceremonial or civil? Does it really matter?

Ga 5:19 *...adultery, sexual immorality, uncleanness, lustfulness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousies, outbursts of anger, rivalries, divisions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Dispensationalists throw out all Mosaic laws but replace them with the the moral laws they feel apply to the new dispensation. Covenant theologians throw away only the civil and ceremonial laws and try to drag the Decalogue into the New Covenant - in a modified form. This aspect of the debate is a **tempest in a teapot**. In the end, they arrive at essentially the same outcome, though the approaches are radically different.

Both systems have some merits, since it's true that the law (Mosaic) has faded away but it's also true that God hasn't changed his mind about moral issues. However, both approaches are fatally flawed, in that under the New Covenant, the *law of love* (conscience), is what is written into the hearts of believers in Christ (Hebrews 8:10, 2 Corinthians 3:3)

All theologians end up with a New Testament law, the **law of Christ**, but it is not viewed quite the same by all groups. *And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* (Lk. 6: 46). Also, *If ye love me, keep my commandments* (Jn. 14: 15; cf. I Jn. 5: 3), *the law of Christ* (Gal. 6: 2).

There is a certain amount of continuity in Scripture, since God inspired both the Old and New Testaments. It is his Spirit who now dwells in us and calls us to be in harmony with what is written, but only through the terms of the New Covenant – faith working through love (Ga 5:6).

RO 13:10 *Love doesn't harm his neighbor. Love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.*

GA 5:14 *For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this: "You shall love your*

*neighbor as yourself”*

We should expect that the moral laws given in the Old Testament (which were repeated and expanded upon in the New Testament), would still be normative for Christian conduct but not in a legalistic sense. The Holy Spirit acting on your conscience, will not motivate you to lie, steal or murder for instance, but that doesn't mean we are still under the *law of Moses*.

Those who want to drag the Decalogue into the New Covenant have a real problem, since the Sabbath was ceremonial, not moral, by definition. It was the sign or seal of the Old Covenant and also had a prophetic significance for us in the New Covenant. We enter into the **true rest**, from all our works – by resting in Jesus (Hebrews 4:9-11). Some try to change the Sabbath to Sunday without Scriptural support and make it part of a new, modified Decalogue. While Sunday is significant and foreshadowed in the Old Testament, it is **not** the Sabbath.

In (Lev. 23:21, 35, 36)(Num. 29:35)(2 Chron. 7:9)(Neh. 8:18) the eighth day, or first day of the week, stood out in great prominence as an assembly or holy convocation. **Resurrection Sunday and the Sunday of Pentecost, were prefigured in the Old Testament.** The feast of Pentecost (Shavuot) is a wonderful example of type meeting anti-type and the continuity of Scripture between the Testaments.

On Passover, the Jews were delivered from slavery in Egypt; at the resurrection, Christ the passover lamb - delivered us from slavery to sin. He also represented the firstfruits (Bikkurim). *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept* (1 Cor.15:20). On Shavout, the Children of Israel received the Torah; on Pentecost, Christians received the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Christians were **not** instructed to keep the first (eighth) day (Sunday) as a Sabbath, or as a commandment. It was not a time of rest but a festival of joyous celebration. Jews celebrated their freedom from bondage in Egypt and the birth of the Old Covenant. We celebrate our freedom from bondage to sin and the birth of the New Covenant. Shavuot was a **yearly** not a **weekly** festival and it's counterpoint in Christianity is the 50 days of the Easter Season.

There is some evidence in the Bible that the early Christians **did** meet on Sundays and there **is** support for this in early Church history - not as a commandment but as a custom (until 321 AD when it became a law). Christians **also** met on the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday), even in Gentile cities. (ACTS 16:12-15, ACTS 18:1-11, Acts 17:2, etc.). There **is** plenty of historical evidence to support the keeping of this day as well, especially in the Eastern Churches.

*For although almost all churches throughout The World celebrated the sacred mysteries (the Lord's Supper) on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, refuse to do this." The footnote which accompanies the foregoing quotation explains the use of the word "Sabbath." It says: "That is, upon the Saturday. It should be observed, that Sunday is never called "the Sabbath' by the ancient Fathers and historians. Socrates, "Ecclesiastical History," Book 5, chap. 22, p. 289.*

It's easy for proponents of Sunday to build a case that Sabbath keepers are Judaizers and for Sabbath keepers to build a case that Sunday came from Rome and pagan influences (Mithraism). All of this is irrelevant and the controversy is just another *tempest in a teapot*.

We can meet, worship, or keep the “Lord's Supper” on any day and it is good for us to meet together.

Hebrews 10:25 *Not forsaking the **assembling** of ourselves, as the manner of some is*

Acts 2:46 *Every day they continued to **meet together** in the **temple** courts. They **broke bread** in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts*

Romans 14:5 *One doth judge **one day above another**, and another doth judge **every day alike**; let each in his own mind (conscience) be fully assured.*

It is perfectly acceptable to worship and celebrate on Saturday, Sunday, or any other day, as long as we understand that **it's not the Sabbath** - which met it's fulfillment in Christ - our **eternal rest** from the law.

The Sabbath had a prophetic function. It pointed forward to the gospel rest enjoyed by all who are in Christ, both now and forever. (See Hebrews 3, 4).

Col. 2:16 *Therefore, let no one judge you in matters of food and drink or with respect to a festival, a new moon, or **Sabbath** days. These are a **shadow** of the things to come, but the **reality** belongs to the **Messiah**.*

The **Promised Land** of the Israelites is called **God's rest** (Hebrews 3:11, 18) “For if Joshua had given them **rest**, God would not have spoken later about another **day** (Hebrews 4:8). The **today** spoken by David, the **today** of belief - Hebrews 4:7)

Hebrews 4:1 *Therefore, since the **promise** of entering **his rest** still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it*

Were there no Jews resting on the Sabbath according to the commandment back then? Did they not enter the promised land? These were shadows, now we have the substance - the eternal rest in Christ! Though they entered the **literal** promised land and kept the **literal** day scrupulously - they had **yet** to enter the **true** rest.

Hebrews 4:3 *For we which have **believed** (in the Messiah) do **enter into rest**... 9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters **God's rest** also rests from his **own work**, just as God did from his.*

Under the new covenant, everyday (today) is the Sabbath since we **daily** and **forever** rest from our works - in Jesus. If you keep the **literal** day Saturday or Sunday (**as a commandment**), you have placed yourself back under the **law** and Christ's sacrifice for you was in vain.

Galatians 5:4 *Those of you who are trying to be justified by **the law** have been **cut off** from the Messiah. You have **fallen away from grace**.*

The Sabbath was a type which has met its anti-type in Christ, just as circumcision of the flesh has met its fulfillment with circumcision of the heart.

Genesis 17:8,13 *Canaan is an "everlasting" possession and circumcision is an "everlasting" covenant.*

Those who live life in the Spirit through faith in Christ, have circumcised hearts and enter the eternal rest – the land of promise (Canaan) – we dwell with Christ and rest from our works.

Romans 7:6 *But now, by dying to what once **bound us**, we have been **released from the law** (the Old Covenant) so that we serve in the **new way of the Spirit**, and not in the **old way of the written code** (Mosaic law).*

The New Covenant is not about rituals, the keeping of days, or ceremonies, in any kind of legalistic way (Gal. 4:10 and Col. 2:16). As soon as you try to force Sabbatarianism (Sunday or Saturday) on people (as a commandment), you have left the Gospel behind.

When Lord De La Warr became governor of Virginia in 1610, he established strict Sabbatarianism in the colony. *All were required to attend divine service, preaching, and catechizing on Sunday, and were forbidden to "violate or break the Sabbath by any gaming, public or private abroad or at home." Transgressors suffered the loss of provisions for a whole week. Second offenders lost their allowance and were whipped. Death was the penalty for third time offenders.* (Parker, 115)

*The Pope, in his Apostolic Letter, Dies Domini, was quoted as saying that a violator (of Sunday) should be "punished as a heretic" (Detroit News, July 7, 1998).*

All of the law was kept perfectly by Christ for us and his record stands in place of ours - if we are in a justifying relationship with him. He not only fulfilled the law, he took the curse of the law upon himself, so that we could be under grace. Also, believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who works on their conscience, motivating them to live rightly - in a process of sanctification. There is no law against the fruits of the Spirit and if we stumble in our spiritual walk - we have the imparted and imputed righteousness of Christ in place of our own.

Ga 5:18 *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

There is freedom from the law which results in obedience to God, not lawlessness. The Spirit brings transformation and regeneration, not a list of rules and regulations.

2 Corinthians 3:15 *Even to this day when Moses (the law) is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

The Bible is very clear that the law of Moses has been done away. What remains, is the ministry of the Spirit working through our conscience.

2 Corinthians 3:3 *...but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart"... 6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life... 7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious...11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. (Also Jeremiah 31:33, Hebrews 8:10)*

Some understand that the Mosaic law has passed away, yet try to **replace it** with a new written code. They take every instruction in the New Testament (by Christ and his Disciples) as some vaguely defined set of laws. All of these moral instructions are useful, valid and normative for Christian conduct, as are many Old Testament principles, but none of these things should be construed as the *law* of the New Covenant - in any type of legalistic sense.

2 Timothy 3 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

The law is part of Scripture and **the law is good** but **only** if you know *its purpose*, it was *not made for the righteous but for sinners* (1 Timothy 1:5).

Galatians 3:19, *What, then, was the **purpose of the law**? It was **added** because of transgressions (sin) **until** the Seed (Christ) to whom the **promise** referred had come. 25 Now that faith has come, we are **no longer under the supervision of the law** 29 And if ye are Christ's, **then** are ye Abraham's seed, **heirs** according to **promise**.*

Heirs to what promise? (Genesis 17:8,13) Eternal rest in Canaan, the **promised** land - which prefigured our eternal rest in Christ. Moses (who represented the law) could lead **literal** Israel there, but could not enter, he could only see it from afar. Spiritual Israel must leave Moses behind (the law - which has died) and with circumcised **hearts** (Romans 2:29), enter the spiritual promised land (Christ). See Hebrews chapters 3 and 4. It is not for nothing, that the Old Testament is called a *book of shadows*. Many literal events had prophetic significance and were fulfilled spiritually in the New Testament.

Ephesians 3:4 *the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to human beings in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are **heirs** together with Israel, members together of **one body**, and sharers together in the **promise** in Christ Jesus.*

Galatians 4:21-31 *Tell me, **you who want to be under the law**, are you not aware of what the law says? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. ...the women represent **two covenants**. One covenant is from **Mount Sinai** (the law) and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. 28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of **promise**. 30 But what does the Scripture say? "**Get rid of the slave woman and her son**, for the slave woman's son (slave to the law) will never share in the **inheritance** with the free woman's son (free in Christ)."* 31 *Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman (law of Moses), but of the free woman (free in Christ).*

Believers are not legally bound to a written code or by ceremonial rituals, since *God in us* has become our moral compass. Do we have need of something more, since the Holy Spirit himself guides our conscience?

*Christianity does not lead the believer away from the law into nothingness. It leads him to Jesus Christ, who, in the person of the Holy Spirit, comes to dwell within him and furnishes him with the new nature that alone is capable of doing what God desires. The change is internal. So it is from within rather than without that the Holy Spirit produces the fruit that is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (5:22-23). Life in the Spirit is free from and above the kind of religion*

*that would result in either legalism or license. It is true freedom — a freedom to serve God fully, unencumbered by the shackles of sin or regulations. (Expositor's Bible Commentary [Zondervan, 1976], vol. 10, 411)*

The Holy Spirit is our (new) moral compass not the law (which has passed away). This is brought out most forcibly by Paul in Romans 2, where we see even the Gentiles having the law (Spirit led conscience - not the 613 laws of the Torah or even the 10 of the Decalogue) written in their hearts.

*Romans 2: 12 All who sin **apart from the law** will also **perish apart from the law**, and all who **sin under the law** will be **judged by the law**. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles, **who do not have the law**, do by **nature** things required by the law, they are **a law for themselves**, even though **they do not have the law**, since they show that the requirements of the law are **written on their hearts**, their **consciences** also bearing witness, and **their thoughts** now **accusing**, now even **defending** them.)*

So salvation by grace, is not a license to sin, since the Holy Spirit writes God's requirements in our hearts such that Paul could say that whether a Jew (with the law) or a Gentile (without the law), we are still **convicted** by the Holy Spirit when we **sin**. All will perish who do not develop the fruits of the Spirit and are **without excuse** since what God requires is now written in our hearts (conscience).

*John 16:8 When he (Holy Spirit) comes, **he** (not the law) will **convict** the world of **guilt** in regard to **sin** and righteousness and judgment*

The Holy Spirit convicts us of our trespasses, we repent and turn to Jesus for forgiveness. The Jews looked forward to him coming, we look backward, but in the end - it is righteousness by faith in Christ and the merits of his sacrificial death, which is the basis of salvation **for all**.

We freely receive grace through our new high priest (Heb. 9:11-15) but the Jews (under the Old Covenant) had to obtain it through the Levitical priestly system which pointed forward to him. They were burdened with the letter of the law, with all the rules and regulations of the Levitical system – they even had other laws that they added to the 613.

*Hebrews 7:11 If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it **the law** was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a **change of the law**.*

Hebrews 9:15 *For this reason **Christ** is the mediator of a **new covenant**, that those who are called may receive the **promised eternal inheritance**—now that he has died as a ransom to **set them free** from the sins committed under the **first covenant**.*

We have the Holy Spirit in our hearts and our consciences convict and excuse us in all situations. In some ways this is even **more** stringent than the written law, since as Christ pointed out, by simply looking at a woman lustfully you are committing adultery (under the Spirit not letter of the law).

That is one reason why Paul was able to write in Romans 3:31 *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

The law was never intended to justify, it only pointed out what sin was.

Romans 3:20 *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall **no flesh be justified** in his sight: for by the law is the **knowledge of sin**. (Also, 1 John 3:4)*

It was our schoolmaster (guardian) to bring us to Christ – who is our redeemer from sin. Once the Holy Spirit quickens your conscience - you have no need of a schoolmaster.

Galatians 3:24 *Wherefore the **law** was our **schoolmaster** to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are **no longer** under a schoolmaster.*

We no longer go by a written code - sin is the violation of our conscience, which is quickened and strengthened by the Spirit. That is true for all who believe - whether Jew or Greek, male or female - all are one under the New Covenant. If you know something is right (in your heart) but don't do it, it is sin. If you know something is wrong (in your heart) and do it, then it is sin. It doesn't matter if you memorize all 613 laws of the Torah (and add the Mishnah and the Talmud), or are totally ignorant of them – all are without excuse since **no one can escape their own conscience**.

RO 2:14 *For when the Gentiles **without the law** have a **natural desire** to do the things in the law, they are **a law to themselves***

In fact, one must sometimes break the written law in order to fulfill Christ's **law of love**. Those familiar with situational ethics can readily give examples. In Nazi Germany, was it acting in **love** to tell the the Germans the **truth** about where the Jews were hiding, or was it acting in **love** to be **deceitful** - in order to save the Jews from a horrible fate? Would you have **lied**, **swindled** and **stolen** from the Nazi's - if it was the **only way** to keep brutally victimized children from starving to death or dying from disease? Perhaps you should see Schindler's List (a 1993 biographical film directed by Steven Spielberg), if you can not see past blind legalism.

Let's take a practical example of how life in the Spirit effects our relationship to the old law. Jesus repeats and expands upon the sixth commandment (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17), in the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 5:21 *You have heard that it was said to them of old time, 'You shall not murder;' and 'Whoever shall murder shall be in danger of the judgment.' But I tell you, that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be in danger of the council; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be in danger of the fire of Gehenna.*

Most Christians are quick to point out, that through the Spirit, we go **beyond** the letter of the law, so in fact, we **establish the law** as Paul said in Romans 3:31. That is true but not in a legalistic sense.

At Masada, the Jews chose to kill their own children rather than let them suffer under the Romans. *Let our wives die before they are abused, and our children before they have tasted of slavery...* Elazar ben Yair (cf. Flavius Josephus). They **broke the law** (of Moses), by giving **mercy** to those they **loved** - how do you think God will judge them?

To take it further, how would the commandment be applied to a Father who kills his own child - to end their terrible suffering from the ravages of a rare, brutal form, of terminal cancer? What if his heart of love was broken - from seeing his son writhe and scream in agony, day after day, week after week, as he begged for his Father to mercifully end his life? What if the Father knew and was told - by the many doctors he consulted, that it was medically hopeless (his son was going to die eventually). What if the Father had prayed for healing unceasingly - as had everyone he knew, because he implored them to pray for his son. If he acts in **love** and **mercy**, with a clear conscience toward God (in his own mind), should he be punished for breaking the law? Governmental legislatures struggle with such issues!

Is there no place for personal conscience in these types of situations? Some say yes, some say no, others can't decide. Euthanasia is a highly politicized and controversial issue in many parts of the world - but accepted elsewhere. Some people of conscience, try not to make an insect suffer if they can avoid it. They will go to great lengths indeed, to rescue an animal from suffering. If they had the power, they would *move heaven and earth* to prevent a child from suffering - it doesn't have to be their own child for them to feel love, empathy or sympathy.

Of course, then there are those who claim to represent God on earth, yet invent Church laws and policies, as well as manipulate civil laws, in order to cover up their **sex crimes** and **brutal abuse of children**. Institutional power and money are used as a shield for vice. The Pope and his prelates, hide behind diplomatic immunity laws, gag orders

silence the outraged, politicians and bureaucrats are bought and sold, hush money is paid out and the centuries old system of corruption carries on. Jesus said ***you will know them by their fruits***. Cannon laws and Church policies are not the ***law of Christ*** and the Holy Spirit does not motivate people to abuse children or cover up crimes against them. On judgment day, there will be no diplomatic immunity, no secret societies to manipulate the system and no fall guys to take the blame. False contrition and hollow apologies will fool no one, intimidation tactics will be useless and all the money in the world will not bribe the judge.

*From the birth of Popery in 606 to the present time, it is estimated by careful and credible historians, that more than fifty millions of the human family, have been slaughtered for the crime of heresy by popish persecutors, an average of more than forty thousand religious murders for every year of the existence of popery. "History of Romanism," pp. 541, 542. New York: 1871.*

(Links on the Vatican's **modern** cover-up of their sins and crimes against humanity)

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The key to understanding the New Covenant, is that the indwelling Holy Spirit is our moral compass (not the law) and he is our helper in overcoming sin. All Scripture is useful for instruction (2 Timothy 3), including the Scriptures containing the law (in the proper context). The *law is good*, as Paul taught, but ***only if you understand it's purpose*** (I Timothy 1:5). It was *added* to the covenant with Abraham ***until the promised seed*** (Christ) came, now we are *no longer under the law* (Gal. 3:19-29).

Now the one who inspired the Scriptures and gave the law - ***lives within us***. Only the indwelling Spirit can truly convict us of sin and empower us to overcome it - that is what so many miss. What came before was only the shadow, what we have now is the substance. Type has met anti-type, the Messiah has come and ***life under the law*** has been replaced by ***life in the Spirit*** (Rom 7:26).

Luke 17:21 *...because the kingdom of God is within you.*

Ephesians 4:30 *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

For those in Christ, the Spirit (not the law) defines what sin is – personally, through our conscience. A black and white (one size fit's all) law, just doesn't apply well to all the

circumstances we may find ourselves in. What is sin for me, may not be considered sin by you (in disputable matters) - depending on the complex ethics of our circumstances, our backgrounds and the level of knowledge or maturity we have obtained.

Romans 14: 5,22 ...*Let each be fully persuaded in his own mind ... Happy is he who doesn't judge himself in that which he approves. But he who doubts is condemned*

I John 3:23 *Beloved, **if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God***

### Conclusion

Many people in Messianic Judaism and Christian circles have fallen into legalism. Presuming on God's grace is just as deadly and some fall prey to this error as well. Legalism and Antinomianism are two sides of a counterfeit coin, since adherents to each have missed the Gospel. Whether you run to the law or run from the law, is a moot point. It is the Spirit (not the law) who **convicts of sin** and empowers us to repent and be transformed (John 16:8). Our righteousness is in Christ, who not only justifies us freely but also sanctifies us - through life in the Spirit. When the one who **gave the law lives in you**, you do not become lawless, you become **a law unto yourself** (cf. Romans 2:14).

In Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin (who were highly trained in the law) he said:

Acts 7:51 *You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always **resist the Holy Spirit!***

They laid their coats at the feet of Saul (the zealous, persecuting Pharisee) and stoned Stephen to death in accordance with their laws - but Saul later came to understand the truth that Stephen had proclaimed. He became Paul, a great champion of the Gospel and Apostle to the Gentiles and Jews alike.

I Timothy 1 *But **the end of the charge is love, out of a pure heart and a good conscience and unfeigned faith**; from which things some, having missed the mark, have turned aside to vain talking; **desiring to be teachers of the law**, though they understand neither what they say, nor about what they strongly affirm...*

The law (of Moses) fulfilled its divine purpose. It showed us our need of a Savior and the **utter futility** of attempted self-righteousness. Now (under the New Covenant) we must have faith in the righteousness of Christ (in place of our own) and accept his grace in forgiving us of our shortcomings. We must also **submit** to spiritual rebirth, not by

striving to keep laws, but by allowing the Spirit to mold and change us from within. *The Spirit wars against the flesh and the flesh against the Spirit* (Galatians 5:17) and we **all stumble in many ways** (James 3:2). Thankfully, Christ has invited us to his wedding and provided each of us with a clean white robe, knit with his own righteousness - to **replace** our filthy rags. (Matthew 22:12, Isaiah 64:6, Zechariah 3:4).

1 John 5:1 *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is **born of God**...* (Romans 8:15-16, Galatians 3:26-28, I John 3:1-3) *For it is God which worketh **in you** both to will and to do of his good pleasure* (Philippians 2:13-15).

Hebrews 12:7 *Endure hardship as discipline; **God is treating you as sons**. For what son is not **disciplined** by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not **true sons**. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. **How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!***

We must leave the law behind (like leaving Moses at Mount Nebo) and press forward into Canaan, the promised land. Through faith in Christ, we find the **true rest** that Joshua could not give us and that the Sabbath foreshadowed (Hebrews 4:8). Yes, there are giants in the land (we wrestle not against flesh and blood - Ephesians 6:12) but we must overcome our fear and have faith that the battle is already won in Christ. After all, who taught David how to slay giants and trained his hand for warfare in the physical realm? He started him off with bears and lions and made him **ready** for giants. He can do the same for you in the spiritual realm. He is the Captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10) and **proven** worthy to lead us.

Draw close to God spiritually, through the freedom of the New Covenant, which **necessitates** forsaking the law of the Old Covenant. *Cast out the bondwoman and her son* (the covenant of Moses which is the law - Galatians 4:21-31) and become a **heir** of the **promise** through **Christ**. Invite the Holy Spirit to change you from within and stop trying to change yourself from without.

God is pouring his **Spirit** out on **all** flesh, male and female, young and old (Joel 2:28). Do not harden your heart and rely on intellectualism, dead religion and worthless ceremonies. To the religious leaders of his day Christ said - *tax collectors and prostitutes will get into God's kingdom ahead of you* (Matthew 21:31). Why were the vilest of sinners being saved, while the religious leaders were being lost - because they didn't turn to laws, creeds, dogmas, ceremonies and dead religion, they turned to **him** (Jesus). God is **real**, just believe (like a little child) and let him into your heart. He wants to have a **relationship** with you, not a **religion** with you.

Some teach that the only difference between covenants, is you must now keep the *law of*

*Moses* out of love or faith, instead of attempted self righteousness. They have *missed the Gospel*. Under the new covenant, the *law of Moses* is **gone** and the one who *gave the law* to Moses - *lives in you*. Moses met him on a hill, but we meet him in our hearts. Why settle for the **law** of Moses when you can know the **God** of Moses – intimately, personally, in a loving relationship.

Those born again, come under the **law of Christ** (not the law of Moses). There is conviction of sin through conscience and **natural** morality - because your (born again) nature **desires** to be moral. You **love** because love **lives in you** and is part of you. Fatherly discipline (tempered with love and forgiveness) corrects your failings (not the law) and at all times - the perfect righteousness of Christ stands in place of your own (even when you stumble). Accept the white robe he gives you and stop trying to make your filthy garments appear clean. Live in the Spirit and sin will **naturally** diminish - as you are slowly transformed from **within** and brought to maturity.

What Father among us, doesn't expect their child to make mistakes? What Father among us, doesn't discipline but also love and forgive their child - through all the ups and downs of the growth process which brings them to maturity? God is our Father (Matt. 23:9), who **loves us** beyond measure (John 3:16). Christ is our **Brother** (*Hebrews 2:11*) and he is far better than any earthly **big brother** we may have grown up with. He took the worst beating imaginable - in order to rescue us from the bully (Satan) on the playground. He did it, even though **we** put ourselves on Satan's turf (we **chose** sin). Christ died for us, not because he had to, but because he **loves** us (Rom. 5:8). How can we *neglect so great a salvation*? Turn your heart toward home - loving arms are waiting to embrace you.

John 5:39 *You examine the Scriptures carefully because you **suppose** that **in them** you have eternal life. Yet they testify about **me** (Jesus Christ). But you are not willing to come to **me** to have life.*

Matthew 11:28 *Come unto **me**, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and **I** will give you rest. Take **my** yoke upon you, and learn of **me**; for **I** am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For **my** yoke is easy, and **my** burden is light.*

Ken Rich