

LAW AND GRACE

by Ron Smith

Our spiritual fathers (the Puritans) all saw the continuity between the Old and the New covenants. Now days many Christians do not want the law. They say that the law passed away. Did Christ do away with the law? If so, is it all right to sin? If not, why? Is there a new law? How do law and grace relate?

Jesus said He did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill. He said that they who would teach men to break the law would be least in the kingdom, but whoever does and teaches them shall be great in the kingdom. Brother, keep it up and you will be great in the kingdom of heaven.. The kingdom came when Christ came. The kingdom is not later, in heaven. It is now.

MAT 5:17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

18 "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

19 "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

When they say we are not under law but under grace, they are quoting Paul.

ROM 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

ROM 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

ROM 3:29 Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? ROM 3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

What is grace? Is it license to break the law? Paul says that grace causes us to fulfill the law. The false prophets teach the grace is license.

Jude 1:4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness...

When God puts His law inside us He does it by grace. This causes us to love the law.

PSA 119:97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

PSA 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

JER 31:33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, says the LORD, I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

It is true that the law cannot save us. We are not under the law after we have found grace. Those who hate the law are still under it until they get it in their hearts by grace. The law is the teacher that shows us the need for Christ.

GAL 3:24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Those who say the law is bad do not agree with Paul.

The law is for sinners. You do not need to command an honest man not to steal. Examine the following passage. One who is under grace is not under law because he is not a thief.

1 Tim 1:8 But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully,

9 knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

10 for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,

11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

Those who have not received the grace to love God's law are afraid of it. They consider it barbarian and tyrannical. Those who have been crushed by it, have then received grace to love it. To murmur against Moses is to murmur against Christ. The redeemed of the Lord sing both the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb.

REV 15:3 And they sing **the song of Moses**, the servant of God, and the **song of the Lamb**, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!

True believers "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

REV 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints; **here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.**

Satan makes war with those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

REV 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, **who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**

When Jesus was transfigured on the mount, He appeared with Moses and Elijah (the representative of the law and the representative of the prophets), Then Moses and Elijah disappeared and Jesus only remained. This does not mean that we no longer listen to Moses and the prophets. It means that Jesus encompasses them. Otherwise, why would He be talking with them? He was not arguing with them.

The letter of the law was written for the Israelite nation. But the spirit of it is eternal. The law of Moses is the law of God. Much of its true meaning was veiled, but is now unveiled in Christ.

Christ fulfills all three parts of the law.

The moral part (ten commandments) is fulfilled by God putting it in our hearts. It is no longer on tablets on the outside telling us to keep a lot of rules. It is within. The spirit. Not the letter.

The civil law is fulfilled when governments make their laws in accord with the spirit of God's law.

The ceremonial law is fulfilled in such things as the church being the true temple, Christ being the true lamb, circumcision being that of the heart.

Those who say all we have to do to be saved is to say the sinners prayer, really are trusting in an outward ritual. Is that not trusting in the ceremonial law? To be saved, the law must first do its work in us. It brings us to the realization that God is right and we were wrong. It condemns us. Only after we have sunk all the way down under its condemnation can we possibly believe to receive grace.

As to capital punishment under the Noachic covenant, tell me where it says that covenant was ever abolished. It was not made with the Jews. It was made with Noah and his descendants.

In Hebrews it speaks of a change in the law.

HEB 7:12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.

But here again, it is talking about the ceremonial law. It is not talking about the Noachic covenant. The change in the law had to do with the change from the letter to the spirit.

COL 2:16 Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Someone asked, "What law are we under in the New Covenant?" There is really only one eternal covenant. The seven covenants are really the progressive revelation of the one eternal covenant.

HEB 13:20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

The law we are under is the *unveiled* law of God. The Old Covenant is unveiled by Christ. This is where the change (discontinuity) comes. In other words, the spirit of the letter. James calls it the **royal law** and the **law of liberty**. There is only one law. It is the law of Moses given to him by God. But it is the simplified law of love. It is not the Talmudic volumes of oral tradition that the Jews added to make the law of no effect.

JAM 2:8 If you really fulfill the **royal law** according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;

JAM 2:12 So speak and so do as those who will be judged by **the law of liberty**.

Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." John 14:15 The fulfillment of the law is love.

ROM 13:10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

MAR 12:29 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

30 'And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.

31 "And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

How then can the law be bad?

We are under the law of love. In other words the law is now in our hearts (if we are truly converted). Those who are truly converted will keep on being converted. There is only one standard. It is the royal law of liberty and love.

.Some people think that Old Testament people were saved by keeping the law. Some even teach that Jesus will come back, rule on earth for 1000 years in Jerusalem, and with a rebuilt temple, re-institute animal sacrifices. No. A thousand times no!

No one was ever saved by the works of the law at any time in history nor will ever be. The Old Testament saints were saved by grace through faith just like we are (apart from the deeds of the law). Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, and Elijah were saved by grace through faith in the pre-incarnated Word of God (Christ). The law never could save. But it has always been our

schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Furthermore, it was always the *spirit* of the law and not the *letter* that counted.

If someone were to ask Jesus how to be saved, how would He answer them? Would He lead them in the "sinners prayer?" Here is how He would do it in the following passage.

MAR 10:17 Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

18 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

19 "You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' "

20 And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth."

21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

22 But he was sad at this word, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions.

Some would say, "But oh. That is not for us. That was for the Jews." Listen, do you really believe that God has one way of salvation for some and another for others? Maybe Peter had been believing that idea when he received the great revelation that God is no respecter of persons.

ACT 10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.

35 "But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him."

Jews are sinners just like gentiles. No sinner can save himself. We must all be saved by grace through faith. Was Jesus saying to the rich young ruler that by keeping the law he could be saved? No. He was using the law to bring him to faith. Faith demands that we sell our lives and surrender to Christ unconditionally. It has always been that way and always will be.

If you were a preacher and a bunch of new liberals and fundamentalists came forward to accept your message, how would you treat them? Would you lead them in the sinners' prayer? Notice how John the Baptist handled it. He said in essence, "Who told you snakes to repent?"

MAT 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

8 "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,

9 "and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

10 "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Why was John so rude? He was testing them to see if they would split and run or repent. The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. If they are chosen, they will bow to the word and repent. If not, they will reject you. This is how God lets the wind separate the chaff from the wheat.

MAT 3:12 "His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Some people think Jesus was contradicting the law of Moses in Matthew 5:38,39 when He said,

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

"But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also."

He was not contradicting the law of Moses. He was contradicting the Talmud. The Talmud was their oral tradition. He said, "You have heard..." He was contradicting their interpretation of Moses. In each of the five examples of this in Matthew 5:21-43, He gives a more stringent interpretation than theirs. Their righteousness had to exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees.