

# Jesus' Teaching (contd)

## Law

Hermeneutics Pt.7  
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HOMEWORK: 1000 extra credit points if you can determine the point of the quotation in Ephesians 4:8. The first step is to go to the Old Testament passage and discern the main point. Paul is quoting from Psalm 68:18. In Hebrew, the last line reads **He received gifts among men**. However, Paul says, “**He gave gifts to men.**”<sup>1</sup> There is good evidence that Paul had a version of the Old Testament that read that way.<sup>2</sup> There are various explanations for why Paul used that version,<sup>3</sup> but it is not a huge problem because the two translations are not as far apart in meaning as they sound at first. When a king collected the spoils of war, he would then often distribute those spoils to his people. Hence, he received gifts among men in order to give gifts to men. So the Psalm is referring to a time when God achieves this great victory, receives all kinds of treasures as the spoils of war, then gives those treasures as gifts to men.

<sup>1</sup> Eph. Ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἠγαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.  
Having ascended to the height He took captive captivity he gave gifts to men

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<sup>2</sup> That version is reflected in the Aramaic translation of the Old Testament - the Targum, as well as the syriac Peshitta. These come later than Paul, but it is very doubtful that they would have been influenced by Paul. They seem to go back to an early translation.

<sup>3</sup> We don't know if Paul quotes that because it is the accurate translation of the psalm or if he used it because it captures the same meaning as the psalm but is worded in such a way as to make his point.

The Hebrew idiom in the first part of the verse is “he led captivity captive.” It is a Hebraism that just simply means He took captives. It is part of the whole imagery of the spoils of war. The captives are part of the spoils of war. The point is simply that God won a final, great victory, and, like a victorious king, received all the spoils of war. Paul’s point is that the gifts the Lord gives the Church are the spoils of war. The Lord Jesus Christ won a great victory, and, as a result, received massive wealth. And it is on the basis of that wealth that He gives gifts to us.

The purpose of verse 9 – to prove Psalm 68:18 is Messianic. Paul asks the question, **What does "he ascended" mean?** When Psalm 68:18 says God ascended on high, the most natural interpretation would be that He ascended into heaven. The problem is: how could God, who is already on high, ascend on high? If He is already in heaven, how can He ascend to heaven? So Paul says, “What could that mean, **9 ...except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?** The only way He could rise up to heaven is if He first descended down to earth – which is what Jesus did.” Therefore, the purpose of verse 9 is to make an argument that Psalm 68:18 must be a messianic prophecy. It can’t refer to God the Father because the Father never ascended into heaven, so it has to refer to the Messiah.

Now that Paul has proved that Psalm 68:18 is messianic and has established that that is talking about Jesus, he shows us the purpose of the ascension.

**10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.**

Christ ascended in order that His abundance might be poured out to everyone and everything and be proliferated throughout the universe. How does He do that? In Ephesians 1, we learned He does it through the Church. This passage gets more specific. He fills all things through His ascension and His ascension was a victory ascension in which He was distributing the spoils of war. The goal of His ascension (the filling of the universe with His fullness), is accomplished by means of the distribution of those gifts.

**7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.**

We have each been given a grace; the reason we were each given our gift is to accomplish the purpose of Jesus’ ascension which is the filling of the universe with His fullness. I preached a sermon on this text titled: “How to Proliferate the Abundant Riches of Christ Throughout the Universe in One Easy Step.” The one easy step is to use your gift. The point of Ephesians 4:7-10 is this: through your unique, personal ministry, the abundance of all that Christ offers is proliferated throughout the universe.

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## Comparing the Gospels

Each passage about Jesus' life that you study, you must seek to determine the writer's purpose in relating the story. The main way to do this is to watch for clues in the context (repeated words, direct statements by the writer, the particular setting, interpretive remarks by Jesus, etc). Some insights can be gained by comparing the account with the other gospel versions of the same story. To do this, you must consult a harmony of the Gospels. The points of variation are sometimes clues as to the writer’s purpose. NOTE: The purpose for this comparison is not to fill in the details into your text from another gospel, it is to show more clearly the emphasis of the writer.

Example:

**Matthew 24:15 "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel-let the reader understand-**

**Mark 13:14** "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' **standing where he does not belong**-let the reader understand-then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Both writers add something, but what they add is different. Matthew's concern is to continually remind his Jewish readers (who were familiar with the Old Testament) of Old Testament images in order to point out the significance of the events of Jesus' life. So he adds the phrase which was spoken of through the prophet Daniel. Mark has a different purpose, and so he adds a different remark: **standing where it should not be**. Mark wants to make a point of the fact that the Antichrist will usurp a place that is not his. He wants to personify this abomination not just as an event, but as a person. Luke, on the other hand, who is writing to gentiles who may not be familiar with Daniel, interprets the comment for his readers. He just comes right out and says that the abomination of desolation is the time when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies.

**Luke 21:20** **When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near.**

If you were to combine the three accounts above, the emphasis of each writer would be lost. In fact, there are times when one writer makes a point, and another writer will present the same comment in a different context to make a completely different point. Example: Jesus' lament over Jerusalem. In Luke, it appears right after Jesus had been rejected by Jerusalem. The point: rejection will bring judgment, and that breaks the heart of Jesus. Matthew relates the same lament, but he places it in Chapter 23, where He rebukes the Pharisees for following their ancestors' example in killing prophets. Here the point is that Jesus is the ultimate prophet and His killers will undergo tremendous judgment. So Matthew and Luke take the exact same event and same comment to make two completely different points.

In Matthew's list of beatitudes, "**Blessed are the poor in spirit...**" he is speaking of humility. When it appears in Luke's list of beatitudes, however, it refers to actual monetary poverty.

HOMEWORK: read at least three good commentaries on your text.

## Parables

Many people teach that the purpose of parables was to make God's Word easier to understand. In fact I've heard people in the Seeker movement use that as an argument to justify the things they do to dumb-down the Gospel. They say, "That's what Jesus did when He spoke in parables. He wanted to be understood by everyone." That is the opposite of what the Bible says.

**Matthew 13:10-15** **The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" 11 He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. 12 Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 13 This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. 14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. 15 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'**

The purpose of parables was to simultaneously reveal and conceal truth. When people ignore God's Word, very often God will judge those people by putting His Word out of their reach from then on. That was the purpose of the parables. Jesus wanted to deliver certain truths in such a way as to only be

understood by the faithful. So by putting them in parable form, those who had limited interest wouldn't go to the trouble of figuring out what He meant, because a parable is not immediately understood.

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Understanding the concept of inaugurated eschatology will help you immensely when you study the parables. Some people read the parables and scratch their heads, because they seem to state the obvious. For example, the point of the parable of the soils is to point out that when the Gospel is preached, some will respond negatively, some positively but temporarily, and others will bear fruit. Isn't that obvious? No, because the readers of the Old Testament thought that as soon as Messiah comes, everyone will believe. So Jesus has to explain that there will be a period where unbelievers continue to exist right alongside the people in the Kingdom. The fact of that coexistence is the point of all those parables in Matthew 13.

## **How to Interpret a Parable**

There is always a temptation to turn parables into allegories – to make every detail represent something. Someone will be interpreting the Prodigal Son parable, and they say, “The robe represents righteousness, the pig slop represents this, the music that the older brother hears represents that, etc.” That approach just turns the parable into an allegory. And one reason we know the allegorical method is not a valid way to interpret Scripture is the fact that no two allegorical interpreters ever come up with the same interpretation. It is completely arbitrary. If one guy says the music represents the church worship service, and another guy says, “No, it represents the Holy Spirit,” who's to say who is right? That is the wrong approach, and so many modern scholars reacted to that by saying a parable only has one point. They say the details are provided to make the story a story, but not every detail has some significance in the interpretation. There is a lot of truth to that, but it goes too far. For example, the main point of the Prodigal Son parable is to show how the Pharisees who were standing there in Luke 15 were like the older brother. But that can't be all there is to the parable. Who could disagree with the fact that the father in the parable represents God, and teaches us something about God's forgiveness and love? Craig Blomberg has come up with some safe, middle ground between the two extremes of allegory on one side and only one meaning on the other. Generally, the parables have one, two, or three main characters. If you look at the story from the perspective of each character, you will tend to draw the correct interpretation. So the Prodigal story has three main characters – the father and the two brothers. And it makes three main points – condemning the attitude of the Pharisees, highlighting the forgiveness of God, and illustrating repentance in the Prodigal.

### ***Let Jesus point you to the main focus***

Sometimes a parable seems to be such a great vehicle to making a point that we would like to make, that we turn that into the focus of the parable. For example, take the parable of the workers in Matthew 20. The first group is hired to work all day for a denarius (one day's wages). Later in the day some others are hired, later some more, and finally at the eleventh hour some more are hired. At the end of the day they are paid, beginning with the eleventh-hour workers who only worked one hour. They get a full denarius, as does everyone else.

Many people make the eleventh-hour folks the main point of the parable – they get the full blessings of heaven even though they got saved on their deathbed. But Jesus doesn't give most of the attention to them. Look at how much space is devoted to the paying of the eleventh-hour guys – one verse (v.9). And there is no dialogue at all. Now look at how much attention Jesus gives to the first-hour workers. Jesus gets into a dialogue with them that goes from verse 10 all the way through the end of the parable in verse 16. Obviously they are the focus.

A good storyteller will save the climax until the end. If the climax were about the eleventh-hour workers, we would expect the payment to start with the first-hour workers, and then verse 10 would say, “And those who were hired last expected to get paid less. And when they got the full denarius they rejoiced at the generosity of the landowner.” But it is the other way around. The point isn't that they

expected to get paid less and were pleasantly surprised. It is that the ones who worked all day expected to get paid more and grumbled.

And then at the end Jesus gives some interpretive remarks, and they all have to do with the attitude of grumbling over God's generosity. In fact, that last statement of verse 15 (**or are you envious because I am generous**) really brings the point into focus when you read it in an interlinear. This is what it looks like:

|    |     |          |     |         |       |     |     |         |       |      |     |
|----|-----|----------|-----|---------|-------|-----|-----|---------|-------|------|-----|
| ἢ  | ὁ   | ὀφθαλμός | σου | πονηρός | ἐστίν | ὅτι | ἐγὼ | ἀγαθός  | εἰμι; |      |     |
| Or | the | eye      | of  | you     | evil  | is  | it  | because | I     | good | am? |

“Is your eye evil because I am good?”

“Evil eye” refers to looking at something negatively or with disapproval or envy. Envy is a disapproval of the kindness of God. It is when we look at something beautiful – God's love, and judge it to be evil.

### ***What sticks out?***

Usually, if there is a startling detail in the story – that is the key. In parables like the shrewd manager, the unjust judge, or the workers in the field, the reader is shocked when a crooked manager is praised, God is compared to an unjust judge, or all the workers get paid the same amount (which seems unfair). When there is a startling feature like that, generally the point being made revolves around that feature. Shrewdness is so important and such a good thing, that it is even praised in an unjust steward. Persistence in prayer is so important, even an unjust judge will respond to it (how much more a loving God?). God's grace is so great it intrudes on our ideas about fairness. In the Prodigal Son story, the father runs to meet the prodigal. In that culture, that is very startling. It was undignified. Jesus could have just said the Father rejoiced when the Prodigal repented, and that would have made the point about the Pharisees. But he adds that to show the effusive nature of God's forgiveness.

HOMEWORK: Pick three parables and identify main points

## **Law**

### **Key to Interpretation: Love it!**

If you want to know what the law is, what its significance is, and how it is to be interpreted – read Psalm 119. If I thought people would keep coming to this class indefinitely I would probably take a few weeks just to go through that psalm. But since we don't have time for that I'll just say this much – if you want to know the key to interpreting the Law, here it is: Love it. If you want to understand it and obey it, you must love it.

**Psalm 119:97-98 Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. 98 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies**

It will make you wise when you love it.

**127-128 Because I love your commands more than gold, more than pure gold, 128 and because I consider all your precepts right, I hate every wrong path.**

**119:167 I obey your statutes, for I love them greatly.**

If you ever hear someone speaking about legalism in such a way that disparages God's law, don't listen. Anyone who does not delight in God's law will not interpret and respond to it correctly.

## **Psalm 119:35 Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.**

Notice the word “for” – his delight is the basis for his asking to be led in the path of God’s commands.

### **Definition**

The term “law” can be used in a number of different ways. Technically, any command in the Bible is a law. Sometimes the word “law” is used as a synonym for God’s Word (as in Ps.119). Other times it is used to refer specifically to the entire Old Testament. (In 1 Co.14:21 Paul quotes Isa.28:11-12 and refers to it as “the Law.”) Other times the Old Testament is referred to as “The Law and the Prophets” Mt.7:12). In that case it refers to all of the Old Testament except for the prophets.

But when we talk about the Law as a type of literature in Scripture, the primary focus is on what we call “the Law of Moses” or “The Mosaic Law.” The first five books of the Bible were written by Moses. Genesis is about the formation and choosing of Israel. Then in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy God reveals the Law.

### **Stipulations of the Covenant**

We have a lot of information from the culture of the ancient near east – Israel as well as Israel’s neighbors. And when you study the writings from back then, one of the things that becomes clear is the form of what is known as a suzerain/vassal treaty, or covenant. “Suzerain” is just another word for king. “Vassals” are the people who are subject to that king – people under his rule. In those days, when a king came and conquered some people, if he was mean he would just enslave all the people. But if he was a kind king, instead of just enslaving the people or occupying, he would say – “You can just keep on living where you are and carry on with life. From now on, you are in my kingdom, so I’ll protect you, I’ll take care of you, I’ll provide but I require that you be loyal to me. And here are the terms of that loyalty...” Then he would go on to describe the terms. Those terms were the stipulations in the covenant. So it was a deal between the king and the people. The king said, “On my end, I’ll protect you and provide a government. On your end, I expect loyalty. And loyalty to me means following these stipulations...”

When a king back then did that, he would follow a certain standardized format. And the Mosaic Law follows that format. The significance of that is when God gave His law in the form of a suzerain/vassal covenant He was showing us that the one thing He was requiring of us is loyalty, and the acceptable way to show loyalty is to follow those stipulations. And if we fail to follow them we forfeit the benefits of the covenant.

And by the way – the word they used in those covenants for “loyalty” was the Hebrew word HESED, which is the normal Hebrew word for love. And when Moses gave the summary of the whole law he said “HESED the LORD your God with all your heart...” So when I talk about the law being expressions of loyalty to God, I mean loyalty in the sense of HESED – loyalty/love.

The point of the law was never to say, “Jump through all these religious hoops, and you can be right with God.” Nor was it to say, “Here’s an impossible standard you will never be able to meet. I’m just giving it to you so you will see how futile it is to try to be saved by the Law.” Some people think in Old Testament times people were saved by works. If you perform the works of the Law well enough, you deserve to go to heaven. Others go to the opposite error and say, “God never intended for us to strive to obey the Law. It’s just to show us how impossible righteousness is to attain.” Neither one of those is correct. You can read almost anywhere in the Old Testament and see that God intended the people to strive to obey the Law. And if they didn’t, they were judged.

Lawkeeping does not make you good enough to deserve the blessings God offers (such as salvation). Salvation is graciously given to anyone who loves God. And if you say, “What does loyalty to and love

for God look like? How is it expressed?” God answers that by saying, “Here, express it in these ways...” and gives us the Law.

## The Purposes of the Law

I can think of three major purposes:

1. To reveal God’s character
2. To set aside a people for Himself
3. To teach the people how to express loyalty to God.

### *1. To reveal God’s character*

God reveals Himself in different ways. In the gospels (the clearest picture) we see Him face-to-face, in the Epistles we learn the implications of Jesus life and teachings, in Bible stories we see Him in action, and in the law He reveals His character in detail.

One of the most prized truths of Christianity is that we worship a God who reveals Himself to us. You may take that for granted, but it is not a given. In most ancient religions, the gods did not reveal themselves. The people had to guess at what they wanted (the same is true today of polytheistic religions). The gods worshipped in those religions are really demons, and those demons are very demanding, but they don’t let the people know what they are supposed to do. If there is a famine, maybe the river god is angry and you need to stop fishing for a year.

Or maybe it’s the moon god, and he wants you to do the ritual where you stay up all night beating sticks on the ground. Or maybe it’s the god of the trees, and he wants you to sacrifice your firstborn son. It could be anything. So you just keep trying things until something seems to work. That is the kind of tyranny the rest of the people in the ancient world lived under.

And that is why the Psalmist marveled in Psalm 103, You *made known* your ways to Moses and your deeds to the people of Israel! The people of Israel were astonished that God was so gracious that He would actually condescend to communicate to us about what He is like and what His requirements are. That must have sounded strange to the pagans. For the pagans the whole point of religion was to try to figure out what the gods wanted.

A religion where the God just comes right out and tells you? That’s too good to be true. That is why the Jews so dearly loved the law.

### *2.To set aside a people for Himself*

**Deuteronomy 14:21 Do not eat anything you find already dead. You may give it to an alien living in any of your towns, and he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. But you are a people holy to the LORD your God.**

Some people want to make laws like that into health and hygiene tips. But if that is the case, it is hard to see why it would be OK for foreigners. Does God not care about the health of foreigners? I don’t want you to eat roadkill, because it might be rotten and you will get sick and die – so sell it to foreigners instead? The purpose isn’t health. The purpose is stated right in the same verse.

**Deuteronomy 14:21 Do not eat anything you find already dead. You may give it to an alien living in any of your towns, and he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. But you are a people holy to the LORD your God.**

The purpose was to set the Jews aside as separate from the world.

There are many parts of the law that had the purpose of distinguishing Israel from everyone else. God wanted a special, holy, set-apart people. God is holy and separate from the corruption of the world, and so He wants His people to be like that morally. And to illustrate that, He set laws in place that made them unique culturally. For example - circumcision. Or the dietary laws.

### ***3. To teach the people how to express loyalty to God.***

Sometimes we can get so caught up in looking for the underlying, over-arching, theological, philosophical, stereological, hermeneutical, purposes behind the law that we can forget the obvious: One purpose of the law is to govern our behavior. Is it too radical to say that God tells us to do things simply because He wants us to do them? The main reason God told the Jews to do all the things in the Law is because He wanted them to do all those things. There are a lot of people out there preaching against legalism.

## **How Does the Law Apply to Us?**

Does the Law apply to us? Well, do we have an interest in God's character? Yes. Is God our King? Yes. Does He still desire loyalty from His people? Yes. But ... has anything changed in the way that loyalty is expressed? Yes. People struggle and struggle trying to figure out what parts of the Law apply to us today. It's not really that hard.

Just look at each part of the Law as an expression of loyalty to God, and for each one ask yourself, "Did Jesus do anything that changed this particular expression of loyalty?" If not, then you must obey that law. If so, you express loyalty in the new way in that area. When the Law says, "Demonstrate your loyalty to God by having no other gods before Him," did Jesus do anything to change that? No. So we are still forbidden to have any other gods before the Lord. When the Law says "Demonstrate your loyalty to God by sacrificing a lamb as a sin offering," did Jesus do anything to change that particular expression of loyalty? Yes. Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice. So now instead of offering a lamb as a picture of what Jesus would someday do, we put our faith in what Jesus already did. God's people showed loyalty to Him under the old covenant primarily by following the law. We show our loyalty by becoming disciples and followers of Christ. How do we know what has changed?

Most people's method is to accept whatever sounds reasonable, and whatever sounds unreasonable they say no longer applies. That system comes perilously close to the time of the Judges, when every man was a law unto himself. Another approach is to reject everything in the Old Testament except the things repeated in the New Testament. But that is exactly the same as throwing out the Old Testament altogether. What do you need the Old Testament for if you only heed those things that are repeated in the New Testament? Besides, very often a New Testament writer will prove a point by quoting the Old Testament. So they regarded the Old Testament as still being authoritative. So neither of those methods is correct. So what is the right method for determining what has changed? To answer that we need to take a careful look at exactly what the New Testament says about the Old Testament. There isn't time for that right now, so for now I will just give you my conclusions from that study, and then next time we will go through the New Testament passages.

## **Three Aspects of the Law – Civil, Ceremonial, Moral**

Now, this class is about how to interpret the Bible so the issue at hand for us is when you are reading in the Old Testament, and you see a verse commanding something, how do you know if you are required to obey that command? And if not, then what is the application for you? To answer that question, it helps to understand there are basically three different kinds of law. One has direct application to us, and the other two have indirect application to us.

Some have argued against dividing the law into categories, but Paul does that.

### **1Corinthians 7:19 Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts.**

There he says you do not have to have the circumcision, but you do need to keep God's commands. Jesus also made a distinction. In Mark 7:19 He made all foods clean, meaning it is no longer necessary to



observe the kosher food laws. And yet He also taught that laws against adultery or stealing are still in force.

I think the best way to understand the types of law is as follows: 1. moral, 2. civil, 3. ceremonial. All three apply to us in that they are all useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. None of them were written to us, but they all (like the rest of Scripture) were written for us. All three reveal God's character.

**1. The moral law** is like a list of God's attributes. We are told to love, because God is love. We are told not to commit adultery, because God is faithful to His covenants. How did Christ fulfill that part of the Law? By living it out in a perfect way as an example for us. So what application does that part of the Law have for us? We should strive to follow in Jesus' steps and live it out.

**2. The civil law** is the legal codes for the nation of Israel designed to keep law and order. The United States and local governments have civil laws. For example, we have rules about stray dogs. That is exactly the kind of thing these civil codes were – what to do if a stray mule falls into your ditch, or if someone doesn't pay back a loan, etc.

How did Jesus Christ fulfill that part of the Law? Some day He will set up His earthly Kingdom, and He will govern directly. In the meantime, He has given the responsibility to keep law and order to the government of whatever country you live in. So if a neighbor's ox gores you, instead of the penalty spelled out in the Old Testament, the owner of that ox is under the penalty of the laws of the state of Colorado. The civil law is beneficial for us however, in that it reveals God's character. By observing what penalties were exacted for certain crimes, we can learn which things are most important to God. It makes sense, for example, since God required the death penalty for a rebellious child, but required cities of refuge for involuntary manslaughter, it follows that God sees rebellion as far worse than accidentally killing someone.

### *Case law is paradigmatic*

Much of the Mosaic law is case law – what to do in a specific circumstance. Those rules are paradigmatic - that is, they set a standard by example.

**Exodus 21:28 If a bull gores a man or a woman to death, the bull must be stoned to death, and its meat must not be eaten. But the owner of the bull will not be held responsible.**

There is no law in the Old Testament about a donkey trampling a woman to death – it's not needed. This law applies. So in the civil law, God gave Israel principles in how to punish crime. That is so much superior to our system of trying to write a specific code to cover every conceivable crime. That's impossible. Even with our huge code, there are countless loopholes, and all kinds of bad things people can do to you that the law doesn't cover.

How much better was God's system? He gave representative examples, and wise judges used those to determine each case. So the law was instructional rather than judicial.

**3. Ceremonial law** These are the worship laws that had to do with the Temple worship. These laws cannot be kept today, because there is no Temple. The purpose of this part of the Law was to serve as a picture of what the Lord Jesus Christ would do and Jesus fulfilled this part of the Law by His life and death and resurrection.

We don't need to offer sacrifices that illustrate what God would someday do, because now He has done it. So instead of illustrating Christ's death, we focus our attention on it directly. But those laws are still precious to us and they still teach us about God. For one thing, the earthly temple was an exact replica of heaven.

**Hebrews 8:4-5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven.**

This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." So we study this part of the law to learn

about heaven. We also study it to learn about God's holiness. The fact that the sacrifices for sin had to be bloody, violent sacrifices teaches us about the wrath of God. It also teaches us about the significance of the various aspects of Christ's redemption.

### ***What about the hard laws?***

There are some laws, known as the holiness codes that seem very odd.

**Deuteronomy 14:21 Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk.**

**Leviticus 19:19 Do not mate different kinds of animals. Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.**

What was the purpose of those laws?

Usually they are forbidding superstitious, pagan religious ceremonies. That's part of the moral law and applies to us in that we are not to engage in superstition. But those laws also served to set Israel apart from the surrounding nations, which illustrates the concept of holiness to us. Now that wall has been abolished and there is unity between Jews and Gentiles in the Church, but the truth those laws illustrated is still very important to us. We are to be holy and set apart from the world not ritually, but morally.

### ***The condemnation of the Law***

There is one more element of the law that has been canceled.

**Colossians 2:13-14 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.**

The word **written code** is a term that speaks of a document that was a record of debts. The Law was like a record of our debts to God. Jesus nailed that record to the cross and stamped it "*Tetelesti*" (paid in full). The Law is God's perfect standard, which is the measure by which we are condemned in our sinfulness. In the case of the Christian, who has full faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that part of the Law has been cancelled as well.

## **Striving to Obey God is Good**

The rest of the Law is still in place and keeping it is good. Some people think "law" is a dirty word – that it is somehow opposed to grace. Many Christians are anti-law and anti-commandments. Was Jesus anti-commandments?

**Matt 5:19 Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

Not only was Jesus pro-commandments, but He said your status in heaven for all eternity depends upon whether you were pro-commandments or not while on earth.

**1John 2:3-4 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar**

What about the Law? Is keeping the Law a bad thing or good thing?

**1 John 3:4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.**

Are we supposed to be making an effort to keep the Old Testament law today?

**Matthew 7:12 do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.**

Jesus commands us to love, and then tells us the reason is because that is the fulfillment of the Law.

At this point our more extreme dispensationalist friends will object and say, "Those passages are from Jesus and John, not Paul. Jesus and the Twelve taught law, but Paul taught grace." OK – if you need it from the mouth of Paul, how about this:

**Romans 13:8-10 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.**

So, are we bound to obey the Old Testament Law? Yes. What is the Old Testament Law? Love God and your neighbor. And we are required to do that today. Says who? Says Paul!

## **What Does the New Testament Say about the Old Testament?**

### **The Old is Abolished**

I told you last time that there are three kinds of law, and we apply them differently to our lives today because of the different ways Jesus fulfilled them. Tonight I want to show you how the New Testament teaches the principles I gave you last time.

At first glance the New Testament statements about the Old Testament seem contradictory. Some passages make it sound like the Old Testament is no longer valid at all.

**Hebrews 7:18,19 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless**

**Hebrews 8:7 For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another... 13 the first covenant was made obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.**

**Ephesians 2:15 Christ abolished in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations.**

**Colossians 2:13-14 Christ... 14 ...canceled the written code, with its regulations.**

So it sounds like the Old Testament has been **canceled, abolished** and **set aside**, and so it is now **weak, useless**, inadequate and **obsolete**.

## No Part of Scripture is Abolished

On the other hand, however, Jesus said "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.

**Matthew 5:17-18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.**

Jesus seems to be saying the Old Testament is not abolished, and those other passages make it sound like it is. Some say, **until everything is accomplished** means until Jesus is crucified and raised.

Problem: **v.18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law**

So how do we understand the relation between the testaments? What is the place of law in the context of gospel, and the relation of Matthew 5:17-18 to other New Testament passages that unambiguously affirm that certain parts of the law have been abrogated as obsolete? One thing is for sure: **EVERY WORD IN ALL 66 BOOKS IS GOD'S WORD, AND IT APPLIES TO YOU.** Jesus did not set aside the Old Testament. Jesus did not cancel God's Law. Jesus did not override the Prophets. The Bible, for you, is not Romans-Jude. It is Genesis to Revelation. All 66 books.

Then what are we to make of the passages we just looked at? There are some elements of the Old Testament that were temporary, but the meaning behind them is permanent. Noah's Ark was useful during the flood, but afterward it was abandoned.

In Genesis 6 there is a command to build an ark, but Abraham did not build one. Neither did Moses or blameless Job or any of the prophets. You and I are not required to build an ark. But does that mean Genesis 6 doesn't apply to us? No. It does apply. The need for the ark was temporary. But the principles taught in that chapter are eternal. That chapter teaches us about the wrath of God, about His attitude toward sin, about what happens to humanity when God doesn't preserve a remnant, etc. And all those principles are just as true for you and me today as they were for Noah in Genesis 6. In Genesis 7 God declared some animals unclean. In Mark 7:19 Jesus declared all foods clean. Does that mean Jesus trashed Genesis 7? No. The principles in Genesis 7 apply forever. But the specific diet requirements had a temporary purpose that has since been fulfilled.

**Matthew 5:17 ...I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**

How did Christ fulfill the law? How did He fulfill the Prophets? This does not mean Jesus, by His actions, carried out every Law. Some laws are only for women. He never carried out those.

"Maybe fulfilling the Law means He fulfilled the prophecies about the Messiah."

No. That did happen, but it is not what this passage is talking about. This isn't about Jesus deeds, it is about His coming. It is about His person. His coming to earth. His life, death and resurrection fulfilled the Law. One thing this tells us is that the Law was not an end in itself. God intended all along for it to go somewhere - to arrive at a conclusion.

Throughout history God's revelation has been moving forward – moving ahead toward a completion. The word, **fulfill** means "fill up." The Old Testament had a meaning when it was written, and Jesus came to fill it up with even more meaning. What a statement!

"I am going to fulfill the whole Old Testament."

People don't think Jesus made extraordinary claims. What if I said that? Put the claims of Christ into anyone else's mouth and that person becomes a lunatic. Such authority! Jesus says, "You are wondering about my relationship to the Law? How does My ministry fit in with Scripture? How do I measure up to the Law? That is not even the right question. The appropriate question is 'What is the Law's relationship to ME?' How does the Law stack up against ME?' And the answer is I fulfill it. What is the relationship between My ministry and the Bible? – The entire Bible points to ME, and I fulfill it all."

## **Matthew 11:13 all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John**

Everything in the whole Bible was pointing to Me right up until John, and then John the Baptist took over the job and he started pointing to Me. On the Road to Emmaus after Jesus' resurrection they were all upset because the tomb was empty on the third day.

**Luke 24:25-27 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself... Later to the Apostles: 44 ...Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.**

That was not just a study of the various predictions of Christ – it was a full-blown lesson on Biblical theology. I believe Jesus showed those men the correct interpretation of each part of the Old Testament, explained the original meaning and intent, and then explained how His death and resurrection filled all that up with meaning – brought it all to fruition – accomplished every purpose God had in mind in every chapter of the Old Testament.

"I didn't come to abrogate God's standard. I didn't come to set aside the Bible. Not one bit will pass away – every word will be fulfilled, and I WILL FULFILL IT."

God's progressive revelation has been progressing toward a completion, a fulfillment. It has been building to a climax, and that climax is Christ. That is why after the Apostles finished writing the Canon was closed. No more books of the Bible were written, because there remains nothing to be said.

How did Jesus fill up the Old Testament with meaning? Many, many ways. Everything the Old Testament intended to accomplish, Jesus accomplished. He didn't set it aside, He didn't empty it of significance. He filled it full of even more significance than it had to begin with.

God gave the Law to reveal His character, to set aside a unique people for Himself, and to reveal to His people how they are to live. Christ fulfilled all that. He accomplished all of those purposes in a far greater way. We get some idea of what God is like in His Law, much as we can *see* what God is like in Jesus Christ.

The possession of the Law made Israel the unique people of God, but those who have given their hearts to Jesus Christ in faith are the unique people of God in a much greater way. The Law describes godly behavior. Jesus lived a perfect life in our midst, and then gave us the Holy Spirit to enable us to follow in His steps.

So with all that in mind, let's talk about what has changed. All of God's purposes with Israel that are unique to that nation (civil codes, etc.) – everything God was seeking to accomplish with Israel is accomplished in Christ – either His first coming, His ministry through the Spirit in the church age, in the Millennial Kingdom, or in the eternal state. Some elements of the Law were in place only temporarily, but their significance continues. That is obvious from the passages I mentioned a minute ago that *seemed* to conflict with Jesus' comment. Now we see that they support it.

**Hebrews 7:18,19 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless 19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.**

This is talking about the sacrificial system. Jesus didn't set aside the entire Old Testament – He set aside the sacrificial system. The sacrifices were never intended to pay for sin. The book of Hebrews was written to some Jews who were thinking of bailing out of Christianity and returning to Judaism and the sacrifices, thinking that would pay for their sin. So the writer tells them that when it comes to paying for sin and saving the soul, the sacrifices are **weak and useless**. Verse 19 gives the reason – because they made nothing perfect.

**Romans 8:3-4 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.**

The Law was always powerless to handle man's problem – even in the Old Testament. What about the sins of the Old Testament saints? They were paid for by Jesus on the cross. Those people didn't know it, but that is the only reason they could be saved. Since they didn't know about Jesus, they needed some kind of picture to remind them that their sins were being paid for by someone else and the animal sacrifices were that picture. But that is all they were. They did not actually pay for sin.

**Hebrews 8:7 For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another...(the new covenant) 13 By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.**

The Mosaic Covenant was temporary and served its purpose. Christ came and set that Covenant aside and introduced an even better one – one that could take care of sin – and that included Gentiles in a much greater way. And many elements from the Old Covenant also carry over into the New Covenant. The only parts that were set aside were the temporary components.

But please notice it does not say “By calling this covenant "new," he has made the Old Testament Scriptures obsolete.” He didn't make any Scripture obsolete. He only made the covenant obsolete. The Scriptures He filled up with even more meaning. Now we can see the whole picture. Now we understand the purpose.

But the parts of the covenant that were temporary He did away with. What parts were temporary? Well, one part that was temporary was the division between Jew and Gentile.

**Ephesians 2:14-15 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations.**

This is talking about the elements of the Law that called for a division between Jew and Gentile. Those were temporary. They served their purpose. They teach us about holiness. But now we have a fuller understanding of holiness, and there is no longer a division between Jew and Gentile, and so that element has been done away with.

**Colossians 2:13-14 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.**

The word **written code** is a term that speaks of a document that was a record of debts. The Law was like a record of our debts to God. Jesus nailed that record to the cross and stamped it “*Tetelesti*” (paid in full). The Law is God's perfect standard, which is the measure by which we are condemned in our sinfulness. In the case of the Christian, who has full faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that part of the Law has been cancelled as well.

So there are practices, pictures, illustrations, etc. that had a limited, temporary purpose; they accomplished that purpose, and were then set aside. But that is not to say *Scripture* is set aside in any way. The principle behind every passage in the whole Bible applies to us today.

Every passage teaches you something you need to know. When God tells Noah to build the ark, it does not mean you should build an ark, but it does teach some important things. That account teaches us how bad sin on earth would get if God didn't preserve a chosen people. It teaches about God's wrath against sin. It teaches about God's grace in salvation. It teaches about judgment and redemption. It teaches a whole lot of things that are still in force just as much today as back then.

Not one letter of Scripture will ever be set aside.

“What about the verse that commands an animal sacrifice?”

That verse has not been set aside at all. God commanded that His people do that temporarily, and we don't continue to do that today, *but the principle being taught in that verse still applies to us today*. The principle is that God demands that the penalty for sin be paid, that it requires death, and that for us to be forgiven someone has to die in our place.

The issue is the intended meaning and the purpose of the passage. Jesus said **I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished (Mt.5:18)**. “Jot” is the Greek word “iota” – similar in shape to our comma. “Tittle” is a word that means “horn” and refers to a portion of a letter. This is a figure of speech where the letters are put for God's Word itself. (Disappear = be abolished.) He is not saying no letters can be erased from a copy of the Bible. It is not about the preservation of the manuscript. It is talking about the message. The principle behind every passage will remain in force until heaven and earth disappear. If the sun comes up, you can be sure your entire Bible is valid that day.

Note: It is interesting that Jesus connects the meaning of Scripture with the letters. Some people say, “I don't care about the Greek or Hebrew meanings, I don't care about the grammar of the sentence, just give me God's Word.”

Problem: The only way to know the meaning of a chapter is to understand the meaning of each paragraph – sentence – word – letters. If you say the individual letters are not important, and so you eliminate all the letters – guess what – your Bible is now blank. This is a powerful statement on the inspiration of Scripture. Liberals want to say that not every statement is correct – just the overall meaning.

Problem: How do you know when you have broad enough scope to where you have God's Word? If the individual sentence is not God's Word, what is? The chapter? Ten chapters? How big of a chunk do you have to take before you are dealing with God's Word?

Jesus says every piece of every letter is God's Word. He is not talking about ink on a page. He is saying you can reduce it to the smallest part, and that part is God's Word. Jesus rested His entire argument for the resurrection from the Pentateuch on a verb tense (“I *am* the God of Abe...”). Paul argues from a singular as opposed to a plural noun in Galatians.

## Applying the Law to Your Life

So, when you interpret some part of the Law, and you try to discern what the significance is for us today, ask yourself, “In what way did Christ fulfill this part of the law?”

### Moral Law

If it is part of the moral law, then He fulfilled it by perfectly living it out in our place and as an example for us. And the implications for your life are:

Trust in His perfect righteousness that is credited to your account by faith (rather than trusting in your own righteousness)

Strive to follow His example in obeying that moral law

Rejoice that the condemnation that was upon you due to your failure in that area has been born by Christ in your place.

### Ceremonial Law

If it is a ceremonial law then Christ fulfilled it on the cross when He carried out all that those ceremonies were given to illustrate. So the application for you is to learn from them about the nature of

the atonement and what was accomplished on the cross. And with regard to the holiness codes, learn about holiness and what it means to be set apart from the world.

## Civil Law

And if it is a civil law, learn from it about God's character, and what things are delightful or detestable to Him.

## What about the Passages that Pit Law against Grace?

What are we to make of passages like Romans 6:14 **you are not under law, but under grace**? Statements like that make it sound like law is opposed to grace. And some people have taught that if you make an effort to be obedient to God, you have crossed over into being under law, and you need to move back toward letting go and letting God (whatever that means). So what does it mean to be under law or under grace? Paul speaks of being under law in six places,<sup>4</sup> and it is very difficult to come up with a definition that fits all six. And so we have to allow for the possibility that the phrase could be used in different ways in different contexts. But if I had to try to give a definition that fit all the contexts, the closest I can come is this: Being under the law means being in a system dominated by trying to attain righteousness through lawkeeping. When you were an unbeliever, that was the system you were under. You were trying to make yourself righteous by adhering to whatever you regarded as the Law (your conscience, societal norms, the Ten Commandments, etc.).

But it was never a good thing to do that – not in Old Testament times and not now. Old Testament Jews should have all been like David and Abraham, who understood that we are saved by faith alone, and that it is impossible to generate your own righteousness. But the truth is, most of them were like most people in our day – they tried to generate their own righteousness through lawkeeping. So when the Bible says we are free from the Law, that is the basic idea of what it means. We are free from trying to generate our own righteousness through following rituals and ceremonies.

It is beyond the scope of this class to do a detailed study of each of those passages that talk about not being under the law. That would really require a verse-by-verse study of Galatians and Romans. I will say one thing about those passages, however. Whenever Paul condemns lawkeeping, and then gives examples, the examples are always in the realm of ceremonial laws. For example, the purpose of the book of Galatians is for Paul to strongly warn those people because they were in the process of embracing a

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<sup>4</sup> Gal.3:23-25 Before this faith came, we were held prisoners **under law**, locked up until faith should be revealed. 24 So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer **under the supervision** (of the law).

Gal 4:1-7 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2 He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. 4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born **under law**, 5 to redeem those **under law**, that we might receive the full rights of sons. 6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Gal.4:21-23 Tell me, you who want to be **under 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. 23 His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

Gal.5:16-18 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not **under law**.

1Co.9:19-23 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those **under law** I became like one **under law** (though I myself am not **under law**), so as to win those **under law**. 21 To those without law I became like one without law (though I am not without God's law but am in law to Christ), so as to win those without law. 22 To the weak I became weak...

Ro.6:14-15 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not **under law**, but under grace. 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not **under law** but under grace? By no means!



false gospel. And that false gospel involved being under the law. But look at the examples Paul gives. In 2:14 he rebukes Peter: **How is it that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? 15 "We...16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law.** In 4:9 he asks how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? (Then he gives examples.)

**Galatians 2:10 You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! 11 I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.**

He is afraid all his efforts are wasted and they are lost and doomed to hell, because they are observing special Jewish days and months and seasons and years. That is not to say it is necessarily sin to observe Jewish customs. In 1 Corinthians 9:20 Paul did that in an effort to win the Jews. It is only sin if you do it in an effort to attain righteousness. In chapter 5 he gives another example:

**Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.**

Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

**2 Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. 3 Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. 4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.**

Again, that is not to say everyone who is circumcised will go to hell. It is only those who are circumcised in order to be justified in God's sight.

So the passages that talk about being under the law, when they give examples, give examples that are from the ceremonial law. You never hear Paul say, "Those of you who are avoiding adultery and stealing and idol worship – why are you doing that? Don't you know you are free from the law?" Nowhere in Galatians do you hear Paul saying, "What? I hear you are loving the Lord your God with all your heart! How dare you follow that law!" In fact, look just a few verses later in chapter 5.

**13 ...serve one another in love.**

**14 The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."**

Now all of a sudden we are supposed to obey the law. The law says to love, and so we are to love. Then he goes on to say we are to avoid sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like (vv.19-21). The key is to avoid those things by subjecting yourself to the influence of the Holy Spirit, rather than by means of the ritualism and ceremonialism of the Law.

And that answers the question that we so often ask: What does it mean for me to live by the Spirit instead of by the law? The answer is not that you avoid trying to obey God. We should always strive to obey God in everything. The answer is in Romans 7:6 - **now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.**

If you want to be more righteous and more godly, that happens by subjecting yourself to the influence of the Holy Spirit. And the influence of the Holy Spirit comes through Scripture, prayer fellowship and worship. When Romans 8:3 says the **law was powerless...in that it was weakened by the flesh** we found that is talking about when the Law is used to do something it was never intended to be used for – making a person righteous. It doesn't work for that. It never has, because of the flesh – the Law has no power to change the flesh.

# What Does It Mean that We Are Not Under the Law?

Paul speaks of being under law in six places.<sup>5</sup> Being under law means simply having the requirement with no means of meeting it other than your own human ability. Being under grace means having both the requirement and the gift of righteousness. So being under law is being in the condition of trying to generate your own righteousness by means of law-keeping rather than by exposing yourself to the influence of the Spirit. This is the point Paul is making in Galatians 5.

**Galatians 5:1-22** It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. 2 Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised (that is, if you attempt to secure righteousness through ceremony or ritual), Christ will be of no value to you at all. 3 Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law (if that's going to be your method of gaining righteousness, it would have to be perfect and total).

**4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. 5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.**

(Righteousness is something graciously given through the Spirit.) Then verses 6-12 are a big parenthesis.

**13 For** (resumptive *gar* – picking back up with his argument from v.5) you, my brothers, were called to be free (free from trying to attain perfect righteousness through law keeping).

But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another in love.

**14 The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."** (In other words, keep the moral law! Paul distinguishes between the ceremonial and moral law.)

**16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.**

If you take the “expose yourself to the influence of the Spirit and let Him generate fruit in your heart that will result in righteous actions” approach, you are free from the “try to obtain righteousness by obeying all the commands” approach.

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is... Against such things there is no law.**

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<sup>5</sup> The most obscure (without indication of the meaning) is in Romans 6. Perhaps that's because by then Paul had made it clear what he meant by that often used phrase.