

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Law of God & Salvation, Pt 4

Acts 15:1-12

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PowerPoint Presentation included: none

SermonAudio Blurb: The sudden influx of many Gentile believers into the Church of Jesus Christ created a serious theological issue that needed to be resolved. Were the Gentiles under the Law of Moses? What was needed for one to be saved? These and other issues are brought to the leaders in Jerusalem to be resolved.

I. Introduction.

A. **Read Chapter 15:7-12.**

B. By way of reminder, here is a simple graph that might help.

1. What you will usually hear is a spectrum of thinking that I have put up on the screen.
2. **No Law in any way->law of love/->moral law->moral law & spiritualized law->All law.**

C. Covenant Theology.

1. This is a system that sees 2-3 covenants that are under-girding the entire biblical storyline.
2. CT creates a situation where they view everything in the bible through the 2-3 theological covenants. Some simple quotes to illustrate:
 - a. “Covenant theology, however, distinguishes the Reformed view of Scripture from other Protestant outlooks by emphasizing that divine covenants unify the teachings of the entire Bible.” -Richard Pratt, Jr. (<https://learn.ligonier.org/articles/reformed-theology-covenant-theology> viewed May 7, 2025)
 - b. “When Reformed theology speaks of baptism as covenantal, the sacrament is viewed in the context of the unity of the covenant of grace. The meaning of baptism is not found in the teachings of New Testament alone; it is also inferred from the manner in which baptism fulfills Old Testament patterns of faith. This reliance on the covenantal unity of the Old and New Testaments is stated in general terms when The Westminster Confession identifies the ordinances by which both the Old and New Testaments are

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administered.” -Richard Pratt, Jr.

(https://reformedperspectives.org/articles/ric_pratt/th.pratt.baptism.html viewed May 7, 2025)

- c. “Covenant theology is a way of reading the whole Bible that is derived from the Bible itself. Covenant theology notices the vital role that covenants play in the history of redemption revealed in the Old and New Testaments. It notices how the covenants help us see the unfolding of God’s saving work from the standpoint of both narrative and doctrine, history and theology, progress and unity. These divine covenants, in turn, provide a framework through which we view Scripture.” -Ligon Duncan

(<https://rts.edu/resources/covenant-theology-2/> viewed May 7, 2025)

- d. But in each of these quotes and in CT’s system, “covenant” almost never means the biblical ones.

- 3. All of this affects how they view the Church, the individual Christian and their relationship with the Law.

II. Reformed Approach to The Law of God.

- A. First, in their view, the Mosaic Covenant and the New Covenant are really just part of the Covenant of Grace, and this affects how they view the Law.
 - 1. However, I would tell you that the Law of Moses is part of the covenant God made with Israel.
 - 2. Israel is not the Church and it is currently still part of the Old Covenant, meaning the Mosaic Covenant.
 - 3. Initial conclusion: If you want to say that the New Covenant and the Old Covenant are really the same theological covenant, then you will land very differently from me.
- B. Second point from a Reformed view, because the Law was given under the Covenant of Grace it applies to the Church today. But not all of it.
 - 1. Usually this view will break the Law into three parts, Ceremonial, Civil and Moral.

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2. Usually only the Moral laws still apply. Often this becomes the 10 commandments but also other laws such as sexual sins.
3. But there is a very real problem with breaking biblical Law down into three categories.
 - a. Never does the bible treat them this way.
 - b. Never do you see some laws elevated over others. According to Jesus Christ loving God fully and loving your neighbor as yourself accomplishes all the law.
 - (1) And He said to him, “‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.’ “This is the great and foremost commandment. “And the second is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ “On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40)
 - (2) Paul says, “The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Romans 13:9).
 - (3) Finally, turn to Galatians 5:1-3.
 - (a) vs 1a Christ has done what for us?.
 - (b) vs 1b What must all Christians actively resist?
 - (c) vs 2:
 - (d) vs 3:
4. So, when you talk about the Law to those who hold to the CT position, you are often talking past each other.

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- C. Some key points to understand before we look at how to view the Law of God/Moses for the Christian.
 - 1. I will argue that the New Covenant brings an end to the Law of Moses. It is replaced by what is called the Law of Christ.
 - 2. I will also argue that the Law of Moses, like all of the Old Testament still serves as an example to consider and to learn.
 - 3. The Law points us to Jesus Christ, in Whom the whole of the Law is fulfilled. Jesus is the goal, the end point of the Law.

III. Conclusion.

- A. What shall we do?
 - 1. We must make decisions about the Law in the bible. The one thing we can't do is just do whatever comes to mind.
 - 2. But we bump up against different positions and views that can create a lot of confusion.
 - 3. For you who are older in faith, I hope I have pushed you a little bit further along the road to a sound and robust theology.
- B. But in all of this you can miss Jesus.
 - 1. The brothers and sisters who hold to CT are not heretics. They are not false teachers. They love the Lord and are saved by grace through faith in Jesus.
 - 2. One of the things I love about those who hold to CT is how they desire to see and glorify Jesus in everything. The whole story of the bible, as they understand it, is the story of God redeeming a people from sin into life.
 - 3. For those like myself, we too see Jesus as central. For He is our Savior but also our Law keeper.
 - a. He said that the Son makes you free, therefore you will be free indeed (John 8:36).
 - b. The salvation Jesus gives to us brings us true freedom. So Galatians 5:1 says that Christ set us free.
 - c. And this is what I want you to see and love. That there is freedom, true freedom in Jesus Christ.
- C. When I return, Lord willing, we will finally be able to look at how the New Testament explains to us the Law of God.

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Benediction

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord cause His face to shine upon you and give you peace. Amen.