

Read: Gal 5:13-6:2

The title of this sermon is the Christian and the Law of Moses *part 2*. If you are new, welcome. So glad you are here. We preach through books of the Bible. It is called expositional preaching. The point of the sermon comes from the point of the passage. And we have been working our way through the Book of Exodus since May and will be in it till around April. And we are about to enter Exodus 20 and the giving of the Law of Moses at Mount Sinai so I thought it be helpful to ask how we as new covenant Christians should approach it.

Last week was the Christian and the Law of Moses part 1. They very much need to go together. Last week was an incomplete sermon and this week is an incomplete sermon. So I need to do a little summary. Last week we talked about terminology. When the Bible uses the word Law it almost always means the Law of Moses also called the old covenant Law, or the Mosaic Law or the Sinai Covenant. Law means Law covenant given at Sinai. It was a particular body of commandments given to a particular people at a particular time in a particular culture within a particular covenant. Gal 3:17 says the Law came 430 years after Abraham. So when I say Law, I mean old covenant Law, the body of commands given at Sinai.

We showed the problem of us trying to keep it. It's a thorny theological issue. Even JE said it is one of the trickiest areas of theology. Many Christians try to make sense of it by dividing the law into three areas: moral, ceremonial, and civil, but we showed that that just won't work. Everywhere in the Bible and in Jewish tradition, the Law is a unit. It is a package. Roman Catholic Thomas Aquinas made up the three-fold division stuff.

Then we considered two ways to consider the Law: retired and retooled. The old covenant Law is retired as a covenant. It was impossible, impotent, and impermanent. No one could keep it. Gal 3:11-12: "Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for 'The righteous shall live by faith.' But the law is not of faith, rather 'The one who does them shall live by them'." Gal 3:21-22: "For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe." It was impossible.

It was impotent. The old covenant did not have batteries included. Rom 8:3: "For God has done what the law, *weakened by the flesh*, could not do." The Law couldn't get it done. Hymnist John Berridge (1716-1793) put it this way: "To run and work the law commands, Yet gives me neither feet nor hands; But better news the gospel brings: It bids me fly and gives me wings."¹ / **G** / It was impossible, impotent, and impermanent.

I tried to show from Scripture that we are not bound to it covenantally but also the vast majority of the laws are also impossible culturally. We don't live in the Middle East. One scholar put it this way: "The Sinaitic law code was very specifically designed by God to regulate the lives of the West Semitic

¹ Quoted in Jason C. Meyer, *The End of the Law*, NAC Studies in Bible and Theology (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009), 2.

inhabitants of the southern Levant. Nearly all the regulations of the corpus – over ninety-five percent – are so culturally specific, geographically limited, and so forth that they would be completely inapplicable, and in fact unfulfillable, to Christians living throughout the world today. This fact alone should suggest that the corpus is not legally binding upon Christians and that it cannot possibly represent the marching orders of the Church.”²

The old covenant Law was a parenthesis in God’s plan. It had a definite starting point – 430 years after Abraham and a definite end point – when Christ came (Gal 3:17-25). It was a guardian, a nanny until Christ came and established the new and better covenant. The Law is not binding on new covenant Christians. Eph 2:14-15: Jesus “has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility *by abolishing the law* of commandments expressed in ordinances.” Rom 6:14: we not under Law but under grace. Rom 10:4: Christ is the end of the Law. Heb 8:13: when Jeremiah the prophet promised a NC he made the old covenant obsolete.

But - we don’t toss it out. The apostles *retool* the Law as pointer and pull principles. The Law points forward. And we can still learn principles from the Law when we interpret it and apply it in light of Jesus Christ. We will be doing just that all Fall with the Ten Commandments. So, how does the Christian relate to the Law of Moses? Retired, retooled, and this morning:

III. Replaced – The Law of Moses is replaced by the Law of Christ and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. The new covenant promised a Savior-King and the gift of the Spirit. John 1:16-17: “Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (NIV). Rom 7:6: “But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.”

Listen to Hebrews 7:11-12:

“If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood—and indeed the law given to the people established that priesthood—why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also” (NIV). The priesthood has changed and the law has changed. How so?

The Law of Moses is replaced by the Law of Christ. **Gal 6:2**. What does that mean? I don’t think is a list of rules. Not like a legal code, but the pattern of Christ. **Gal 1:4, 2:20, 3:13, 4:19, 5:13-14**. The Law of Christ is the pattern of Christ and that pattern is self-giving love. Giving of self for the good of others. [Phil 2: mind of Christ].

1 Cor 7:19, 9:20-21. What does the law of Christ mean here? Well, it is giving up rights for the sake of the other. I am free but give up my freedom. I am not Jewish but I can live like Jew to win someone else. I am not weak but can become weak. **8:9, 9:4-6, 12, 15, 10:24, 32-11:1**.

² Dorsey, 329.

Most fundamentally, the Law of Christ is the law of love: giving of self for the good of another. And love is what the old covenant Law was trying to pull off but couldn't. "The whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Gal 5:14). The golden rule: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matt 7:12). The Golden Rule and the Great Commandment: "But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 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 first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."" (Matt 22:34-40).

Rom 13:8-10: "Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For 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." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."³ / Christians are never commanded to keep the Law or do the Law or obey the Law. Isn't that striking? Rather, as we love one another, the law is fulfilled.

The Law of Christ also includes the teaching of Christ as well as the teaching of the apostles. Don't misunderstand what I'm saying. This is not a free pass to avoid commandments. 613/2K. And the OT is still our authority, it just must be interpreted and applied in light of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is a new Moses. Hebrews 3:5-6: Moses was a faithful servant in God's house but Christ is a faithful son over God's house. Matthew lays this out for us clearly in his Gospel. Jesus is born ch. 1, flees to Egypt ch. 2, passes through the water ch. 3, tempted in the wilderness ch. 4, goes up on a mountain ch. 5:1 before he lays out his law: SOTM – Flip to: **Matt 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-4, 38-39, 43-44.**

While the old covenant Law was impotent, the new covenant is potent. Let me ask it this way? What is a key difference between the old covenant people of God and the new covenant people of God? The gift of the Holy Spirit.⁴ The new covenant is new in part because there is a new, fuller, fresh work of the Spirit. Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Joel describe the same concept as Jeremiah but attribute this internal work to the work the Spirit will do when He is poured out from on high (Isa 32:15, 44:3, 59:21, Ezek 36:25-27, Joel 2:28-29).⁵

The permanent indwelling of the Spirit within the believer is a new covenant reality. The Spirit was active in a host of ways before Pentecost, and did operate on old covenant believers, but indwelling

³ Believers are often commanded to walk in love. Striking absence of the very common Jewish terminology of "walking according to the Law." Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 85-88.

⁴ This section from A. Blake White, *What is a Baptist* (Greenville, SC: Courier, 2026), @#\$\$%

⁵ See James M. Hamilton, *God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006).

was not an old covenant reality. His old covenant activity was usually temporary, task-specific, and limited to appointed key leaders.

Jesus clearly teaches this *new* new covenant work of the Spirit in the Gospel of John. After mentioning the Old Testament's promise of the coming spirit, John writes this: "Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (7:39). The believers *were to* receive the Spirit – later at Pentecost.

In John 14:17, Jesus says of the Spirit, "he dwells with you and will be in you." At that time, the Spirit was with the disciples, much like he was with old covenant believers, but in the future he would go from being *with* them to being *in* them. This reality of indwelling was future tense for the disciples. It would happen at Pentecost.

In John 15:26, the Son says of the Spirit: "When the Helper comes, who I will send to you from the Father." *When*. Meaning: he has not yet come. Jesus will send him – future tense verb. In John 16:7, Jesus says, "If I go, I will send him to you." Once again, future tense. The permanent indwelling of the Spirit is a new covenant reality that launched at Pentecost.

The reason old covenant Israel could not obey was because they lacked the power of the Spirit. Israel was hard-hearted and stiff-necked. **Matt 19:3-9**. Under the old covenant, one could divorce for a number of reasons. That was because they had hard hearts. They didn't have the Spirit. But Jesus is the solution to the hardness of hearts. He sends the Spirit. / Turn to **2 Cor 3:3-6** 3K oc/Pentecost, **7-11**.

Gal 5:18: "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." The old covenant was impotent but the new covenant is potent because of the gift of the Spirit. You are able to obey from the heart. You have God's will internalized, like Jer 31 promised: the Law written on the heart. We have the Law of Christ and the gift of the Spirit – the empowering presence of God himself. How does the Christian relate to the Law of Moses? Retired as a covenant, retooled as a pointer and principles, replaced by the Law of Christ and the Spirit.

Way back in the Law - Deut 18:15 – Moses says, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen." There would be a new prophet. Listen to him. Fast forward: not Mount Sinai but another mountain: the mount of Transfiguration. There is Jesus. There is Elijah, representing the prophets. There is Moses, representing the Law. The Law and the Prophets. And the Father speaks and says this: "He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.' When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, 'Rise, and have no fear.' And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only" (Matt 17:5-8). The Law and the prophets give way to Jesus. Church, your prophet has come, the new Moses, the new Lawgiver: King Jesus. Look to Him and listen to Him.

Benediction: Heb 13.20-21