

The Law and the Gospel

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Abstract

This thesis provides an analysis of the purpose and function of the Old Testament Law for New Covenant Christians. The Bible contains the inspired story of God which culminated in the person and work of Jesus Christ, from the covenant with Abraham to the administration of the Mosaic Law up to the coming of the Messiah. The promised Messiah inaugurated the New Covenant and a new administration of the Law under the two commands to love God and love one another, and this work is carried out in believers by the Holy Spirit. The Law is no longer binding to New Covenant Christians in a legal sense, but the entire Law, which was recorded and preserved for centuries, is applicable in a revelatory and pedagogical sense in that it reveals the holy nature of God and his divine purpose for all Christians.

The Law and the Gospel

Introduction

All people, including believers, are subject to a massive moral and ethical crisis because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).¹ The sin of mankind results in a lack of repentant action and faith in the Gospel portrayed in the salvation plan recorded in Scripture. God has provided his Holy Word to lead and guide his people in this morally corrupt and sinful world through the knowledge of and giving of himself. The Word is not a mere list of rules for believers to adhere to as many Christians may think; indeed, inspired Scripture records one historical plan of salvation for the people of God through the workings of the various covenants and Law administrations which culminated in the person and work of the prophesied Messiah. New Covenant Christians have a great disconnection from the Old Testament, particularly in the record of the administration of the Mosaic Law, which New Covenant believers find little purpose in reading today. This thesis argues that the entire Law, while no longer legally binding to the worldwide church as it was for the nation of Israel, is useful and relevant, containing much more than a simple list of commands. While administered for a different people of a different culture at a different time and fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Mosaic Law is a crucial piece in the story of God recorded in the account of Israel's story in the Old Testament and the continuing story of the New Covenant described in the New Testament as it reveals His purpose and glory for the nation of Israel and the coming church. There is great gain that comes from reading and meditating on these laws which reveal the holiness of God, His perfect plan for believers for all of time, and the ethical implications of the administration of the New Covenant which builds off of the entire Old Testament. Topics

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages employ the *Christian Standard Version* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017).

discussed here will include the purpose of the Mosaic Law in the Old Testament, the fulfillment of the Law in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and the purpose of the Mosaic Law for New Covenant Christians today.

The Original Purpose of the Law

Covenants

In the beginning of our universe, there was one Creator God, and the pinnacle of His creation was mankind. The covenantal arrangement of harmony between God and His people was disrupted by the rebellion of Adam and Eve recorded in Genesis 3, and sin and evil entered the world. God attempted to restore the unity of the world to Himself through the administration of covenants, which are agreements of a restored relationship between God and God's people. There are several types of covenants defined by the Hebrew word *bērît* in the Old Testament including international treaties, clan alliances, marriage, and more.² Covenants are typically oath-bound treaties that determine and define relationships between two parties. The first was with Noah, the second with Abraham, the third with Moses, the fourth with David, and the fifth with New Covenant believers, all of which were administered under different circumstances, ordinations, and programs.³

The New Covenant is the covenant by which Christians now abide from the time of Jesus' death around 2000 years ago and is based on a core verse in Jeremiah 31:31 which reads "look, the days are coming—this is the Lord's declaration—when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." This covenant is everlasting, a covenant of peace with a given new heart and new spirit to God's chosen ones by faith and repentance in

² Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *God's Kingdom through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 47–48.

³ *Ibid.*, 207.

Jesus Christ. It has been prophesied from the beginning of the Old Testament that the Lord would make a New Covenant with His people that would be worldwide, and it came to fruition with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ so that whoever believes in Him would participate in His defeat over sin and receive eternal life (John 3:16). This covenantal understanding by which the nation of Israel was brought into relationship with the Lord and the use of the Mosaic covenant as a demonstration of that salvation by grace is profitable for New Covenant Christians in many ways. As the Law was a reflection of God's holiness in the Old Covenant, it is still a reflection of God's holiness in the New Covenant. There are merely different circumstances that all partitions of the covenants were facing at different times with Israel as a nation and New Covenant Christians as a worldwide, unified body. In addition, while the Mosaic Law was indeed a legal notion for Israel as a nation for the purpose of her protection, it was mostly a spiritual law given to the Israelites so that they could love the Lord their God with all of their heart, soul, and strength (Deut. 6:5). Gentry and Wellum state:

Through Abraham, God would restore creation and humanity ruined by pride and rebellion by using Abraham and his family as a pilot project. The people of Israel would be a light to the world, an example of what it meant to be properly related to God and to treat each other properly according to the dignity of our humanity. They would be blessed for obedience, cursed for disobedience. We may call this the Mosaic covenant, set forth in Exodus and restated in Deuteronomy. But the people of Israel did not keep the Mosaic covenant. That is why the biblical story begins talking about a New Covenant. This time it would be possible to keep this covenant.⁴

God made a covenant with Abraham to restore the people from their sinful ways to himself, and Israel would be a light to the world according to their obedience to the laws set forth by the Mosaic covenant. Because Israel did not act in obedience to the Law, God provided a better way of ultimate fulfillment and salvation through the incarnation of Jesus Christ in the New Covenant, which would last forever. However, it is necessary to understand here that the

⁴ Gentry and Wellum, *God's Kingdom through God's Covenants*, 51.

Abrahamic covenant, which provided the promise of land, seed, and blessing by faith to the nation of Israel, was not in any way abolished or compromised by the giving of the Mosaic covenant and laws at Sinai; it was merely enhanced. The Law which was introduced 430 years later does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus does away with the promise (Gal. 3:17). For if the inheritance depends on the Law, then it no longer depends on a promise, but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise. The covenant God made with Abraham did not provide a different means of salvation than the covenant with Moses. The Law was given to Israel to be a means of response to the redeeming grace that the Lord had given to them through the Abrahamic covenant.

The Mosaic Covenant

Ultimately, Old Testament events should be understood in the context of God's action in history, which comes to fulfillment in Jesus Christ as the true goal of God's relationship with Israel.⁵ The Mosaic Law was given to the nation of Israel by Yahweh, who was the Lord the God of Israel, and was instituted by Moses on earth. The Law set forth the obedience requirements that the Lord held for the chosen nation of Israel under the stipulation that her obedience to the Law would lead to life and disobedience would lead to death. Upon the giving of the Law, Deuteronomy 30:16-20 reads:

For I am commanding you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, statutes, and ordinances, so that you may live and multiply, and the Lord your God may bless you in the land you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not listen and you are led astray to bow in worship to other gods and serve them, I tell you today that you will certainly perish and will not prolong your days in the land you are entering to possess across the Jordan. I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, love the Lord your God, obey Him, and remain faithful to Him. For He is your life, and He will prolong your days as you live in the land the Lord swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

⁵ David L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible* (Downers Grove IL, InterVarsity Press, 2010), 143.

Gane comments that “the authority who has given laws to the Israelites and holds them accountable for obeying is ‘the Lord your God.’ He is ‘your God,’ the Deity whom the Israelites are to love because they enjoy a special relationship with Him, and He has graciously given them the covenant promise of land that they are about to possess.”⁶ The promise of blessing and life as a holy nation separate from the rest of the world from the one true God was the ultimate purpose of the giving of and Israel’s obedience to the Law. Israel was not to bow to other gods as the surrounding pagan nations had done for their own good and to receive blessings from the Lord who gave these laws out of His own love for Israel. The stipulation was obedience and reciprocated love from Israel to their God, and it was intended for Israel alone, not any other nation (Lev. 26:46).

The Old Testament Purpose of the Law

We must now identify the purposes of the Law in order to determine the context behind which we read it as New Covenant believers. Why was the Mosaic Law established in the first place if it did not have the power to save and was only temporarily binding for Old Testament Christians? The first reason for the Mosaic Law was to define Israel’s relationship with God and to define her relationship with other people, the two essential and basic commands that the Lord gave to Israel. Looking at the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20, it is clear the regulations were put in place to keep God at the center of Israel’s worship and to provide righteous morals for how the people were to treat one another, as the first four of the Ten Commandments hang on the command to love God since they describe ways to show covenant

⁶ Roy Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 29.

loyalty directly to Him and the final six hang on the command to love neighbor as self.⁷ It identified the ways by which Israel was to truly worship their God. Schreiner explains that “it is an expression of God’s care. In the interest of teaching his children how they should relate to Him and how they should develop wholesome relations with one another, He detailed for them his expectations in laws, statutes, and ordinances.”⁸ A second purpose for the Law was to identify Israel as the nation that God chose to be holy and separate from the rest of the world by her possession of a different Law that was centered around Yahweh. Leviticus 20:7-8 reads, “Consecrate yourselves and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. Keep my statutes and do them; I am the Lord who sets you apart,” which is a clear request that Israel keep separate from the surrounding pagan nations. With this, another purpose was evangelism, intended for these surrounding nations to recognize that Israel was a different nation with different statutes and a true God. Additionally, it is also important to remember that the actual laws were intended for a specific Near Eastern world that had a completely different culture than the culture New Testament Christians encounter today. Israel was one nation in one location, given by God to lay a detailed groundwork for and regulate the various affairs of an actual politically and geographically defined nation,⁹ but the New Covenant church is worldwide. How would one corpus encode a detailed way of life for all Christians who would increasingly disperse throughout the nations with the coming New Covenant? It would not. Therefore, the Mosaic Law

⁷ Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus: And Exegetical and Theological Exposition of the Holy Scripture* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 396.

⁸ Willem A. VanGemenen, “The Law is the Perfection of Righteousness in Jesus Christ: A Reformed Perspective,” in *Five Views on Law and Gospel*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 1996), 19.

⁹ David A. Dorsey, “The Law of Moses and the Christian: A Compromise,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, no. 34 (1991): 321–334.

was never intended to preside over Christians forever in a legal sense, although the spirit behind the Mosaic Law is still very much alive and useful.

A final purpose of the giving of the Law was to reveal to Israel her transgressions. Moses tells the people upon receiving the Ten Commandments not to be afraid for God has come to test them so that the fear of God will be with them to keep them from sinning (Exod. 20:20). Paul contends that he would not have known sin except through the Law (Rom. 7:7). By disobeying the law that God himself gave the people of Israel, the Jews became aware that their sin was flagrant rebellion against God.¹⁰ Before the Law, there were no set regulations for Israel to abide by to allow her to love God and one another. The Law provided those rules, regulations, and examples for Israel to love her Lord. However, corrupt and sinful humanity could never follow and obey all 613 commands of the Mosaic Law perfectly, which is why the promise of a Messiah and a New Covenant was made necessary. Even if anyone could obey every command of the Law, they would still be condemned because *all* have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). Perfect obedience to the Law, or an attempt to perfection, eliminates the necessity of the work of Christ on the cross, who fulfilled the Law by his perfect obedience and His death on the cross. In this way, it is clear that the Law was never intended to lead to salvation through righteousness before the Lord. The only way of salvation is through participation in Christ, who atoned for sin by his death on a cross.¹¹ Therefore, it was instead intended as a means by which Israel would recognize her sin and turn her gaze to the Lord, who is the giver of grace and salvation for those who have faith until the Savior would come.

¹⁰ Douglas Moo, *Encountering the Book of Romans: A Theological Survey*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 108.

¹¹ Thomas Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of the Law*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 73.

Righteousness has always been credited by faith to the people whom God chose from even before creation. The Mosaic Law was not given to provide a new means of salvation; it was given to the nation of Israel as a means by which faith was enacted, and the separation of God's people from the rest of the world was made possible through the giving of the Law. The Law is not the ultimate giver of life through obedience; it is a means by which sin is defined as it points to the ultimate Savior and Messiah, Jesus Christ. It was an administration of grace in that the Lord dealt graciously with his people. This administration was a means of grace for the godly in Israel, as it helped them to focus on the Lord and to await his salvation, as it was never intended to be the focus or the end in itself.¹² The Law points to Jesus Christ, who is the only source of life, and encourages Israel to wait in patience for the Savior to come. In His coming, He would not bring a new means of salvation or a new law but would set in place a New Covenant built on the foundation and spirituality of the Old Covenant so that all might be saved through the Gospel by grace and faith alone.

Righteousness by Faith Alone

The structure of the Old Testament covenants features the grace of God,¹³ meaning that the Lord chose to have relationship with His people by grace as He still does for New Covenant Christians. Concerning salvation for the Israeli nation, Michael Bird comments:

God saves in, by, and for a community, and this community is called the church. However, this community is in historical and organic unity with the Israel who received the covenants, law, and prophetic promises. Outside of those covenants, laws, and promises it is impossible to attain salvation. Salvation came to Israel so that salvation would move through Israel to the world.¹⁴

¹² VanGemeren, "A Reformed Perspective", 18.

¹³ Thomas Schreiner, *40 Questions About Christians and Biblical Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 25.

¹⁴ Michael F. Bird, *Evangelical Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 725.

The Lord did not choose Israel because of her righteousness, but because of His love for her, as is demonstrated through the promise of the Abrahamic covenant found in Genesis 12:1-3 and the many accounts by which God remained faithful to Israel as she disobeyed and thereby failed to uphold her end of the covenant. This upholds the argument that all nations and people of all times are saved by grace through faith alone; there are no other means of salvation for the elect other than faith through the grace of God throughout both all salvation history. Christians in the Old Testament were provided salvation in the same way that Christians in the New Testament are, meaning that the Lord delivered them from harm or ruin by His own grace. In Genesis 15:6, Abram believed in the Lord, and it was credited to him as righteousness. God promised to bless Abraham because he listened to God. After David's sin with Bathsheba, he cried out to the Lord with joy, reading in Psalm 32:1 "how joyful is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!" Old Testament saints were credited with righteousness not because of their legalistic obedience to any sort of Law, as we see that David could do nothing to cover his own sin but was forgiven by the grace of God alone. Their righteous acts that may have followed David were merely a result and symbol of his faith and covenant partnership with the Lord.

As various Old Testament patriarchs were credited righteousness by faith alone, Israel as a nation of the Old Testament was also saved by grace alone through administrations of covenants, and her faith and love for God was merely expressed through obedience to the Law. This is clear in the comparison of the Hebrew word structure of Genesis 15:6 and Exodus 14:31, which describe Abraham's belief and Israel's belief in the same way.¹⁵ Again, Israel needed

¹⁵ Michael Smith, "The Law and Romans Seven" (PowerPoint lecture in BIBL 425 at Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, 2020).

direction on how they were to be God's people, both in their relationship to one another and to God, so that they would shed the culture of Egypt and not adopt the ways of the Canaanites whose land they were to possess.¹⁶ Deuteronomy 26:19 regards Israel as a holy nation saying that God will "elevate you to praise, fame, and glory above all the nations He has made, and that you will be a holy people to the Lord your God as He promised," a promise made with the giving of the Law. Israel will be brought into glory above all the nations, and the Law was an earthly supplement to that future glory to keep Israel from conforming to the rest of the world as a chosen nation. As modern readers, we must recognize that God did not make this covenant with all the nations (cf. Ps. 147:19–20),¹⁷ He made this covenant with the one nation of Israel among many other nations and then administered the Mosaic Law for the purpose of keeping Israel separate.

The Law and Its Fulfillment in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ

The grace of God has not been set aside, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died for nothing (Gal. 2:21). Timothy George builds off of this, stating "if we persist in building again the wall that Christ has torn down, if we try to climb up to heaven 'by some other way,' if we add works of the Law to the sacrifice of the cross, then indeed we make a mockery of Jesus' death just as the soldiers who spat upon Him, the thieves who hurled insults at Him, and the rabble who cross, then shouted, 'come down from the cross!'"¹⁸ God's plan of salvation has been intentional from the beginning. It was always known and prophesied that the

¹⁶ Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All its Worth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 163.

¹⁷ James M. Todd, III, *Sinai and the Saints: Reading Old Covenant Laws for the New Covenant Community* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 87.

¹⁸ Timothy George, *Galatians, An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1994), 171.

Messiah would come to earth to save mankind, as we could never fulfill the Law ourselves, and so the line of Jesus was preserved and testified about throughout the Old Testament. Jesus did come to earth as fully God and fully human, and ultimately, He fulfilled the prophecies and the Law through His death and resurrection to inaugurate a New Covenant with the people so that whoever believes in Him might be saved. Christians are now united and bound to Jesus Christ, and the Law is a tool by which Christians know their love for God and one another. The dark shadow of failure to keep the Law passes away when we participate in Christ's work and obey the Law not out of legalism but out of love, paying no mind to the category of the specific legal law but obeying it in its fulfilled state as a pedagogue. With regard to any type—whether it be sacrifice, feast, temple, or land—when the reality is introduced, the shadow passes away. And it does not pass away in order to be at some future restored; it passes away because in Jesus Christ it has been fulfilled!¹⁹

The Law's Fulfillment through the Gospel of Christ

The life of Jesus Christ is found in the witness of the Gospel recorded in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John of the New Testament. First, we find in Mark 1:40–45 a strong image of Jesus' perspective of the Mosaic Law and the Old Testament legal ordinances.

According to the culture and the Law of the Old Testament, anyone who touched a leper became unclean. Those with disabilities in general were to reside outside of the temple so that they would not infect others or the holy place with their uncleanness. Jesus' healing of the leper by His touch is strikingly profound, as the deed asserted Jesus' true understanding of the meaning and expression of the Law against the understanding of the rabbis. Lane comments "from the

¹⁹ Darrell L. Bock, *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 86.

perspective of Jesus' relationship to the cultic and ritual system, it indicated that He did not hesitate to act in violation of its regulations when the situation demanded: 'the ceremonial law gives place to the law of love when the two come into collision.' Jesus' touch and his sovereign pronouncement mean the same thing: 'I will, be clean.'"²⁰ Jesus demonstrated the true meaning and essence of the law of love by touching the unclean leper and remaining undefiled himself against the ordinations of the Old Testament Law. The leper became clean, and the practical understanding of the story suggests that Jesus is greater than the Old Testament including the Old Testament Law which points to Jesus and is fulfilled in Him.²¹

Born under the Law, Jesus lived a perfect life as the son of God, maintained a unique relationship with God the Father, lived out a three-year ministry with his disciples, and then was crucified and buried. He rose again from the dead, defeating sin, and the Law was fulfilled as the New Covenant was inaugurated. In Luke 2:21–40, we find a clear affirmation that Jesus was God's agent of redemption²² and an indication that Jesus' parents participated in this fulfillment of the Law. In this passage, the young Jesus undergoes ritual ceremonies as prescribed by the Mosaic Law, and we see Jesus as the fulfillment of the angel's words of prophecy recorded at the beginning of Luke as well as in the Old Testament. Joel B. Green explains:

Gabriel had instructed that the boy should be called "Jesus," that He would be holy, and that He would be called "Son of God" (1:31, 35). Luke accents the first by noting explicitly the angel's words at the annunciation to Mary. He accents the second in his reference to the Law in 2:23. This is not a direct quotation of any scriptural passage, but it draws together Exodus 13:2, 12, 15—to which Luke has added: "shall be designated as holy." In this way, He shows not only the fulfillment of the angel's words but also how obedience to the angel and to the Law has brought about that fulfillment.²³

²⁰ William A. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Company, 1974), 68.

²¹ Schreiner, *40 Questions*, 157.

²² Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 185.

²³ *Ibid.*, 186.

Jesus was God's chosen, authoritative agent of the fulfillment of the Old Testament and the inauguration of the New Covenant, as we see through the fulfilled prophecy. This concern with keeping the Law is of obvious importance, repeated as it is throughout the account. Here, the Law functions in concert with the Holy Spirit (2:25–27). Behind both Law and Spirit stands the design of Yahweh, who has choreographed this encounter.²⁴ Without the Law, this event would never have been necessary. With the Holy Spirit, the event is brought together and recognized as important. Mary and Joseph are obedient to the Lord, which they demonstrate by circumcising, naming, purifying, presenting, and consecrating Jesus to God. The focus is that Jesus, born under the Law, was presented to the Lord, that Jesus' parents were fulfilling the purpose of the plan of God, and that Mary and Joseph were on board with this divine plan. To fulfill the Law, Christ was required to keep the Law, and we see this in action in this passage as God recognizes and affirms Jesus as his vessel of redemption.

Another account testifying to Christ's fulfillment can be found in Matthew 4:17 and Mark 1:15, where the recently baptized Jesus who was then in Galilee proclaims the good news, saying that "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" One of the key themes of the Gospel is the coming of the new kingdom of God with the work of Jesus Christ. Schnabel comments:

The coming of the kingdom of God which is connected with Jesus' proclamation and with his identity and ministry requires a new orientation. Since the temple and the Law were central to Israel's life with God, this new orientation implied in the term "repent" entails a modification, here unspecified, with regard to these hitherto foundational realities: life lived in obedience to God's revelation now includes obedience to Jesus the Messiah. Repentance and faith are no longer exclusively bound up with Yahweh's presence in the temple and his revelation in the Mosaic Law. They are now tied to God's

²⁴ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 185.

present kingdom, which is bound up with Jesus' identity as the Messiah and as the unique Son of God, and thus with Jesus' proclamation and his ministry.²⁵

A New Covenant has been inaugurated with the death of Jesus Christ, and this covenant is different from any covenant made with Israel, including the Mosaic. The word "repent" in the verse above should be emphasized. Schnabel was correct in stating that the term "repent" entails a modification in the way of life, and in this case, the people are called to repent in preparation for the coming of Jesus and the kingdom that He is bringing with Him.²⁶ No longer was Israel bound to ordinances and ceremonies as the chosen nation of God, but *all* the nations were then and are now under a New Covenant with the fulfillment of the Law through the Messiah at hand. The kingdom has come and *all* are called to repent and change their ways towards the one true Lord. With this new coming kingdom also comes the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law and the movement from a legal system for a nation to the church age made for all nations to enter. This movement from a legal religious and political system to a summed law to love God and love one another in no way diminishes the value of the Mosaic Law. The commands of the New Covenant to love God and to love one another are commands which we already knew (1 John 2:7) because these new laws describe the essence of the Old Testament Laws minus the legal ordinance. Therefore, although the program is different, the law of the New Covenant is the same as the Law of the Old Testament.

Another notable passage is Matthew 5:17–18, which is a passage from the middle of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In this section of Matthew, Jesus has just finished explaining the

²⁵ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 52.

²⁶ Craig Blomberg, *Matthew: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 1992), 63.

notion that believers are to be the salt and light of the world; they are to shine before others so that others may see their good works and give glory to God in heaven. Regarding these good works, Jesus immediately goes into a discussion on the Mosaic Law, through which Jesus condemns the Pharisees for their legalistic works of the Law, clarifies his viewpoint about his own role as the fulfiller of the Law, and establishes the true heart behind the Law which is to love God and one another. First, the scribes and Pharisees were considered the most righteous of anyone by their works; it is clear however that no one is righteous, not even one (Rom. 3:10). It should be noted that the word ‘no one’ here elicits an idea of completion regarding the fact that truly no one in the world is capable of righteousness, the people are fully and completely evil.²⁷ The righteousness requirement that Jesus is initiating with the New Covenant inauguration is not the same works righteousness that the scribes and Pharisees mistakenly practiced. Fellowship with Jesus is now a requirement because He is the fulfillment of the Law as the only human who has ever lived a perfect life and conquered sin and death through His work on the cross. This eliminates a work-based righteousness and encourages the fact that the Law is based on the heart's intentions. Secondly, Jesus claims that He did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it, and that not even the smallest letter will pass away from the Law until all things are accomplished, further qualifying the importance of the Law but in a different way than the scribes and Pharisees assume. Blomberg comments:

(The Law) will endure for all time but with the important qualification “until everything is accomplished.” With the coming of Christ, many aspects of the Law are brought to complete fruition (e.g., the need for sacrifices, on which see Hebrews). In other instances certain requirements of the Law endure until Christ's coming again (e.g., classically, love of neighbor and God). In short, Christian application of the Old Testament must always take into account both the continuities and the discontinuities with the New Testament.²⁸

²⁷ Alva J. McClain, *Romans: The Gospel of God's Grace* (Winona Lake, IN: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1972), 91-92.

²⁸ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 91.

In this way, the legal ordinances of the Law may have been done away with as Christ has fulfilled the Law, but the holy lessons and the holiness of God revealed in the Law were certainly not done away with, since not one stroke of a letter will pass away from the Law until *all* things are accomplished in the work of Jesus Christ. The church age will exist until Christ returns to accomplish His final work, and until then only the legal stipulations of the Law have been removed while the ethical heart resolutions behind the Law still apply.

Further, Jesus continues his discussion on the true uses of the Law in His sermon by discussing the actual application of six requirements from the Old Testament Law. Matthew 5:19–48 provides an in-depth description of how Old Testament Law was not just outwardly applicable but inwardly applicable in the intentions of the heart. This is an important passage for understanding that the administration of the Law in the New Covenant is different from the administration and execution of the Mosaic Law in the Old Testament. Jesus contravenes the letter of several of the Old Testament Laws, not because He is abolishing them but because He is establishing the true use of the Law in that it is internalized in a way that prevents it from being fully encapsulated in a list of rules, precluding perfect obedience (cf. Heb 8:7–13).²⁹ For example, in verses 21–22, Jesus explains the internal basis of the Law that says, “Do not murder.” Believers are not only to refrain from literally taking the life of another human being, but Jesus explains that even being angry with one another is considered murder. In essence, the Mosaic Law is a reflection of the morals and holiness that God desires for his people to follow down to their heart intentions. Indeed, the Law has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ and it is no longer legally binding to believers with the inauguration of the New Covenant. However, the essence of the Law that encapsulates heart intentions described in *all* 613 laws and the holiness

²⁹ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 91.

and righteousness of God which is reflected in its perfection has been and still is binding to every believer.

As it is clear from the Bible from the very beginning of Jesus' life that He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament, it is also clear at the end of his ministry and life. Luke 22:1–38 records an account of the final Passover meal. Passover, the Old Testament Jewish sacrificial holiday, was a means of thanksgiving to God for the Exodus from the Egyptians, and the timing of the holiday played a very important role in the death and resurrection of Christ. As Jesus fulfilled the prophecy with His work on the cross, He also inaugurated a New Covenant with a new exodus from bondage to the Law and Israel. Following the custom, He celebrated Passover by sharing with his apostles a full 'Passover meal' as the festival day began. During the meal He offered bread and wine, symbolizing in them his own sacrifice, because when He went to the cross the next day, He understood—as did his disciples—that his life would be a sacrificial *Passover sacrifice* that would save them, as the Passover lamb had saved the Israelites.³⁰ Jesus *was* the ultimate Passover sacrifice. No longer was God only the God of the Israelite nation; with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God was made available to all nations, symbolized in the terms of the New Covenant Passover meal. Green comments that “notably, the celebration of Passover had a field of vision that encompasses past, present, and future, so that the feast anticipated eschatological deliverance, a second exodus, so to speak.”³¹ Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, and with His sacrifice all believers can receive salvation and a New Covenant to follow. It encompasses the entire eschatological realm of the present and future kingdom in that sin and death have already been conquered by Jesus' work on the cross, and believers can

³⁰ Gary M. Burge and Gene L. Green, *The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within Its Cultural Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 89.

³¹ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 6–10.

participate in that through faith in the one true God; this is the second exodus. The future kingdom is when sin and death will be defeated once and for all, however, and that is what believers look forward to in this broken world that is infused with sin.

The final passage to examine regarding Jesus' fulfillment of the Law is Luke 24:36–49. This passage records the account of Jesus appearing to his disciples after his resurrection, where He also tells them that everything that is written about Him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, He fulfilled the Law. Further, the second portion of the fulfillment is being carried out currently: repentance and forgiveness of sins are preached in Jesus' name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. This is the second portion of the present and future kingdom; while death has been defeated and the Law has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, believers are to continue to participate in that with continual repentance and faith with hope in a coming kingdom of the final defeat of sin and eternity with the one true King in paradise. With the Holy Spirit dwelling in the disciples and in believers, believers are to be witnesses of Jesus Christ throughout the nations so that all would repent and believe so that all might participate in this kingdom. The emphasis is on the fulfillment of Scripture, and, associated with this, the necessity of Jesus' death. Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection are all the fulfillment of Scripture (Luke 24:47). The church's worldwide mission and the Spirit's coming to empower them for that ministry is also the fulfillment of Scripture.³² Indeed, the Law has been fulfilled as the Spirit has also been poured out to equip believers to adhere to the new administration of the Law which is now written on our hearts. As saved believers with the indwelling Holy Spirit, we have been justified, and the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to us. This means that as we partake in Christ, we also partake in His work on

³² Robert A. Stein, *Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 667.

the cross, and thus the Law has been fulfilled in believers as well. This is lived out through the work of the Holy Spirit which was given to us as we bring this good news to all the nations. This is also lived out by loving God through obeying the Law given in the two New Covenant commands to love God and love one another.

The Purpose of the Law for New Testament Christians

The Civil, Ceremonial, and Moral Law

From the previous discussion, it can be concluded that no Christians are legally bound to the Mosaic Law because of the work of Jesus Christ, yet this Law is still important and useful for New Testament Christians to read, love, and uphold in a revelatory and pedagogical sense. Righteousness has always been credited by faith alone, as all mankind is condemned in every way, and with salvation comes the indwelling of the Spirit who allows us to uphold the New Covenant laws despite our sin. Here, it is important to identify the moral law in relation to the civil and ceremonial law. There is a man-made categorization of the Law into civil, ceremonial, and moral categories. The understanding is that this moral law which is condensed into the Ten Commandments, also called the Decalogue, holds a certain level of restraint over New Testament Christians. While the ceremonial and civil laws no longer bind Christians, the ethical essence behind the Mosaic Law does still bind Christians because it is the same law that reigns still in the New Covenant. The ethical essence of the Law is described by the term moral law. Reformed theologian Willem VanGemerer explains it in this way:

The moral law is summarized in the Ten Commandments and was supplemented by the ceremonial and judicial laws. The ceremonial laws applied the first four commandments to the context of Israel's existence as a nation. Regulations of sacrifices, laws of holiness and purity, and the priestly system protected the worship of God . . . The judicial laws applied the last six commandments to the context of Israel's existence as a nation. The regulations pertained to the judicial and political life of Israel as a nation. They have also been abrogated.³³

³³ VanGemerer, "A Reformed Perspective," 53.

VanGemenen recognizes that the ceremonial and civil laws are organized within the organization of the Decalogue here. While these regulations of the Law have been done away with, the ethical impact of the Law has certainly not been abrogated. The understanding here is that the moral law, or the spirit of the law which is summed up by the Ten Commandments and woven throughout the entire Mosaic Law, contains the will of God and was carried out by Israel through their obedience to the ceremonial and civil laws which allowed them to better understand how to love God and their neighbors as it defined Israel's transgression and helped her take value in human life. The work of Jesus Christ on the cross fulfilled the legal aspects of the Mosaic Law so that the ceremonial and civil laws were no longer binding over Christians as salvation moved from one condensed nation to all of the nations in the embodiment of the church. It is also important to remember that He also fulfilled the Law in this way: no man could ever keep the Law, and so through participation in Christ's work on the cross, all who believe are credited with that righteousness which Christ had through His obedience to the spirit of the Law executed in His obedience to the ceremonial and civil aspects before they were abrogated with His work on the cross to inaugurate the New Covenant.

The argument now presented is that if New Covenant believers are bound to the Law in any way, then they must be bound to the entire Law. The humanistic division of the Law into civil, ceremonial, and moral laws is indeed helpful in categorization for understanding, but there is no biblically mandated separation of the Law in this way. Therefore, it cannot be relied upon as a verifiable determinant of a specified legal or ethic binding code. The moral law interwoven into all of the laws is admittedly very ill-defined; there are no hard distinctions or mandates that determine one coherent moral law. Therefore, while these ethical applications throughout the entire Law certainly do reveal the will and holiness of God, they cannot still be binding to

Christians as a *defined, coherent* moral law because of the lack of specific recognition within the Mosaic Law. The entire spirit behind the Law is to be obeyed. Paul asserts that it is not those who hear the Law who are righteous but those who obey the Law (Rom. 2:13), contending for the necessary balance of grace by faith alone and obedience resulting from this faith. God insists on a heart response to Him and a life of obedience.³⁴ Therefore, although it seems contradictory, while it is true that we have been set free from the binding nature of the Law because of Christ's work, we are also still bound to it in that it reveals the holy nature of God and the ethical markers that He requires from His people in obedience to Him as a result of saving faith. Kruse comments that "while believers who live under the New Covenant of grace no longer live under the Mosaic Law as a regime, this does not mean that they are free to flout the ethical imperatives found in the Law, for these are the holy standards required of humankind by God himself."³⁵ The Law and the Ten Commandments are good, holy, and useful, as they are still practiced as pertaining to the inward and spiritual righteousness, with the idea that the commandments and prohibitions always contain more than is expressed in words.³⁶ Therefore, while it is true that the moral law cannot be wholly segregated itself into its own organized, specific law by which New Covenant believers adhere, the unspecified righteousness ethics contained within the entire Law are still binding in that the holiness that they reveal and require are unchanging for all believers throughout history. It was never necessary that the Israelites obey the Law out of legalism in that they executed legal regulations, but it was necessary that they obey the entire *spirit* of the Law, which clearly could never be done and necessitated the work of Christ. The moral law, or the

³⁴ Douglas J. Moo, *Encountering the Book of Romans: A Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 48.

³⁵ Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 231.

³⁶ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 2002), 55.

spirit of the law, is then crucial to the revelation of the ethical order that all Christians of all times are called to uphold as it reveals the holiness of God and the required holiness He held for His people in Israel through their obedience to this Mosaic Law as well as the believers under the New Covenant program.

The ethics and righteousness that Yahweh in the Old Testament implemented within the written code of the Mosaic Law are the same ethics that all believers of all times are required to uphold. The God of Israel is the same as the God of the church. Because of this fundamental doctrinal truth that God is unchanging, the ethics behind the Mosaic Law are the same ethics as those contained in the New Covenant that Jesus inaugurated. While the church is no longer legally bound to the 613 Mosaic Laws or the technical code of the Ten Commandments because of Christ, the church is certainly bound to the unwritten laws on our hearts defined by the ethics of the moral law and built on the foundation of the Old Testament in their summed state of the New Covenant commands to love God and love one another. VanGemerren explains this relationship between the natural or unwritten law and the moral law:

The natural law refers to the order in nature by virtue of God's creation. Calvin taught that natural law is "constant" in spite of human sin and rebellion, because it is God who graciously upholds creation. Second, natural law is that moral order that God has enabled human beings to deduce from creation." It is "constant" insofar as it is rooted in the will of God, but "variable" in that the human conscience is an imperfect guide. "Calvin did not mean that we could dispense with God's Law and substitute a natural law," writes Cochrane. "His point is that God's Law is in harmony with the true order of man's creatureliness which is itself known from God's Law . . . The moral law in its written form does not contradict or change the will of God. Rather, it makes explicit and amplifies that will as originally expressed in natural Law. Since the will of God does not change, the Law remains virtually the same throughout redemptive history."³⁷

In essence, the written Mosaic Law is the amplified and specified form of the unwritten law to which all Christians are subconsciously bound; it was the unwritten law written down and

³⁷ VanGemerren, "A Reformed Perspective," 13.

revealed to Israel. The natural law which lives in the consciousness of the human mindset is imperfect, and therefore God provided a written Mosaic Law which would move the mindset of the people towards ethical righteousness. This unwritten law that Israel had is the same unwritten law that New Covenant Christians have as well because we have the same unchanging God. In addition, the unwritten law was not meant to be separated from God's written Law, as the Law was created with the intent for clarification of the unwritten law and the definition of transgression. The Decalogue, therefore, was representative of God's love in that its injunctions, both negative and positive, led not to a restriction of life, but to fullness of life.³⁸ The purpose of the Mosaic Law was for Israel to have a written Law that revealed the nature of God and set standards for how Israel was to love Yahweh through obedience to the written Law. This same Law was condensed from 613 written laws to 10 laws in the Decalogue and then into two laws for New Testament Christians under the New Covenant. The written Mosaic Law contained in the Decalogue is no longer binding to New Testament Christians legally as it was only intended for Israel and has been fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ. However, the same unwritten law that both Old and New Covenant Christians have been given now lies in believers' hearts and consciences and is summarized in the two laws of the New Covenant, which are to love God and to love others. To more fully grasp and understand these two laws written on our hearts, New Covenant believers must both strive to understand the ethical boundaries that the Old Testament characterizes through the Mosaic Law and adhere to the Spirit's guidance in obedience.

How The Law Applies

It can be determined that Christians are not bound to the specifics or legal aspects of the Mosaic Law while they are indeed bound to the ethical and spiritual assumptions that lie behind

³⁸ Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 39.

it. This section will emphasize the revelatory and spiritual binding nature that lies behind *all* the 613 Mosaic Laws of the Old Testament in its ethical nature while the legal aspects of the Law no longer apply. The spiritual nature of the entire Law is binding to Christians of the New Covenant in the sense that it reveals who Yahweh is and the holiness that He requires from His people. *All* Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16–17), including the Old Testament Law even though it no longer presides over believers. The restraint of the Law that requires believers to follow the legal aspects has indeed been removed by the work of Christ. While transgression is serious, the requirement of perfect obedience is overlooked by abundant grace, as it always has been, and the entire spiritual nature of the Law is still necessary for New Covenant Christians to read and study because it reveals the ethics of the unchanging God who still reigns.

As a classic example of how the Mosaic Law would still apply to Christians today, Deuteronomy 22:8 reads Christians are to build a railing around their roof so that no one falls from it and brings bloodguilt upon the household. We must first remember that this Law was intended for Christians of a different time and program, and secondly, we must look at the cultural-historical ramifications behind why the Law was necessary before the ethical and spiritual use can be applied. In the times of Israel, it was common to use the roof of a house as a living space, and it was also therefore necessary to protect the people who might use the space by building a safety fence around the house. God's heart behind the Law is to protect the people from physical harm. In the same way, the other Mosaic Laws reveal the holy nature of God and also the love He requires His people to hold for Him and one another. In addition to obedience to the Law and striving for good works as a result of salvation and faith, it is important to

remember that it is not possible for any person to fully uphold the Law, whether legal or ethical, which proves the necessity for a Savior. Ultimately Christians cannot ever perform these laws perfectly, and there is a great need for constant repentance and reminders of the work that Christ already did in fulfillment of these laws.

David Dorsey presents a very interesting and convincing view of the Law that puts into simple words the purpose and binding nature of the Old Testament Laws for New Testament Christians. Simply stated, Dorsey's view holds that, legally, none of the 613 stipulations of the Sinaitic covenant are binding upon New Testament Christians, including the so-called moral laws, while in a revelatory and pedagogical sense all 613 are binding upon us, including the ceremonial and civic laws.³⁹ In other words, the Law is in no way separated into categories of ceremonial, civil, and moral laws with only the moral laws still applying to Christians now. Instead, the entire Law is applicable and binding, not in the way that Christians are to uphold them in a legal sense but in a revelatory manner. Dorsey states:

It is here that the point of profound applicability for the Christian is found. A law reflects the mind, the personality, the priorities, the values, the likes, and dislikes of the Lawgiver. Each law issued by God to ancient Israel reflects God's mind and ways and is therefore a theological treasure. Moreover the theological insights we gain from a particular OT Law will not only enhance our knowledge and understanding of God but will also have important practical implications for our own lives if we are patterning them after our heavenly Father and modifying our behavior and thinking in response to our knowledge of Him and his ways. It is in this sense that every one of the 613 laws of Moses is binding upon the NT Christian.⁴⁰

There is significant evidence in the New Testament that the Law has been fulfilled and is no longer binding (Eph. 2:15; Heb. 8:13) in a way that requires believers to obey the juridical Old

³⁹ Dorsey, *The Law of Moses and the Christian: A Compromise*, 321–334.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 321–334.

Testament Laws, but there is equally significant evidence that the Law is good and holy (Rom. 7:12, 1 Tim. 1:8). Dorsey truly captures the essence of the Law in his statement that the Law is a theological treasure in that each Law reflects the mind of God. Much of the Old Testament Law exemplifies absolute principles to guide human life.⁴¹ Israel's obedience to this Law kept her as a holy and separate nation; likewise, New Covenant Christians are to read and understand this Law within the historical context of Old Testament Israel and to utilize it as an understanding tool for morality but not apply it as a legal obligation to uphold. The Law is a righteous revelation of background context information for understanding the two New Covenant commands to love God and love one another as it first captured the essence of a holy and just God who wanted the same for His people. Truly, this one idea of knowing that the Law is a reflection of the holy nature of God and a picture of the ethical standard He wants for his people is reason enough in itself to find treasure in the Law.

The Love Mandate as a Reflection of the Old Testament Law

The New Testament is not an operating system that replaces the earlier Old Testament system. Rather, the New Testament is a continuation of the Old Testament story of redemption, in which earlier episodes provide crucial background for climactic later ones, bringing plotlines together toward the conclusion.⁴² This is the essence of the Gospel which is fundamentally a story about how salvation came through Jesus Christ. It is the story of the redemption and restoration of all creation groaning under the effects of sin through the prophesied Messiah, who as the Son of God and Son of David lived a perfect life as Lord of all to fulfill the Old Testament and defeat sin and death. Through faith in response to the call of the good news described in the

⁴¹ Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians*, 23.

⁴² Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians*, 3.

Bible, Christians are saved and encouraged to be sanctified disciples on earth until the second coming of Christ, when they will be restored to the new heavens and new earth for all of eternity. The various relationships between the Lord and His people through covenants build upon one another from Noah to Abraham to Moses to David and finally to the New Covenant of Jesus Christ. The program of the Mosaic Law did not provide a different salvation from the one of New Covenant Christians, as the spirit behind the Law is the same spirit by which New Covenant Christians abide and as they obey the same commands to love God and love one another rooted in the background of the Old Testament Law.

Matthew 22:34–40 provides an account of Jesus’ teaching to the Pharisees who have asked Him which command of the Law is the greatest. Jesus replies that there are two commands of equal importance, taken from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, and they are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself. There are no greater commands than these, as the entire Law is summed up in these two commands. To understand what it means to love God and to love one another—the commands of the New Covenant—Christians must first understand the righteous morals reflected in the Old Testament Law. The New Covenant commands are based on the Old Covenant commands, and while the administration of the commands is different, the essence, the salvation, and the God who created both sets of commands are still the same. Blomberg comments, “the relationship of all the Old Testament to the double love commandment shows that there is a hierarchy of law that above all requires heart attitude to be correct. If this is absent, obedience to commandments degenerates into legalism. Combining Jesus’ teaching here with his approach to the Law demonstrates that while the principle of love remains constant, applications vary for different circumstances.”⁴³ As

⁴³ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 286.

we saw in Matthew 5 with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, the New Covenant law is not merely consisting of legal laws or ordinances to obey. Jesus requires a complete heart change towards love for God and one another, not just outward obedience. The principle of love and morality remains a key theme throughout the Mosaic Law as it also does in the love mandate of the New Covenant within a Christian's heart.

Why New Covenant Christians Should Read the Old Testament Law

There is an ethical crisis in the naivete of evangelicals and the relationship between the Law and the Gospel, and this crisis is in great need of redemption. Most Christians today jump right into the letters of Paul and the Psalms to discover how they can live a better, more moral life. However, this is not the essence of the Gospel, and the very crucial element of election and salvation by grace and faith alone is completely missed. The Bible and the Mosaic Law were recorded in order to reveal a holy and loving Creator God. Through the hearing of this Gospel of grace and salvation, people are to have faith and believe, and through grace and knowledge of this holy, righteous, and just God comes naturally the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life who then allows believers to obey the spirit behind the Law which is now written on our hearts. The law points upward to the character of God the Holy One, as it also pointed outward to the people of Israel and provides for them a standard to which they are to conform.⁴⁴ Believers cannot become better or more moral Christians on their own strength; it is all a work of the Lord. Only after believing in the Gospel is repentance is necessary and requiring of believers to completely redirect their ways from worldly living to godly living. The moral and ethical crisis stems from a lack of understanding of the doctrine of salvation by grace and repentance which is

⁴⁴ Vern S. Poythress, *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*, (Phillipsburg NJ, P&R Publishing, 1991) 97.

defined by the ethics within the Law. Submission to God's Law may well create a deeper longing for God, develop a greater zeal for interpretation of God's Word, kindle the flame of a renewed commitment to personal and societal ethics, rebuild relationships, and reconstitute vibrant Christian communities.⁴⁵ While this life change is entirely a work of the Holy Spirit, there is a level of participation with the work of the Spirit that Christians must adhere to in order to live a godly life, and this repentance requires obedience to the New Covenant Law which is only understood when one also understands the Old Testament Law. For clarification, one's obedience to the Law is not the measure of salvation or godliness. Obedience to the love mandate is merely a reflection of our salvation and love for God, and Christians should obey in order to live a blessed life as the Lord desires for His people. Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers but whose delight is in the Law of the Lord, and who meditates on his Law day and night (Ps. 1). The Law is not to be obeyed in a legalistic manner; it does not make one godlier or better in any way. The Laws were a good thing that God graciously gave his people for their good and his glory, even though they were not sufficient for producing righteousness in the people's lives.⁴⁶ Instead, the Law is given so that Christians may live happy and joyful lives. Discipline in the Law is the instruction given by God for our own good so that we may live blessed lives on earth in obedience to Him, and the New Covenant Law is only more deeply understood with an understanding of the Old Testament Law amidst the entire story of redemption.

Conclusion

⁴⁵ VanGemenen, "A Reformed Perspective," 14.

⁴⁶ Todd, *Sinai and the Saints*, 44.

While the Old Testament Law recorded in the Pentateuch is long and contains many seemingly irrelevant cultural and ceremonial regulations, the entire Law is still of great theological value to every believer of every age. It can be concluded that the Mosaic Law no longer binds Christians of any nation in a legal sense, as it was fulfilled in Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and exaltation (Matt. 5:17). However, the Law is still incredibly useful in that it reveals the holy nature of God and his historical salvation plan which has culminated from the account of creation in the book of Genesis and will continue through eternity. There are moral mandates and reflections of the holiness which God expects from his people that are only captured by this Mosaic Law of the Old Testament. The Bible is not merely a set of rules and moral obligations for Christians to follow. Indeed, it is much more than that. The Bible is a story, the perfect story of God, which was fulfilled in his glorious Son. Believers participate in this story through repentance, faith, and the imputed righteousness of Christ. The New Testament builds on the Old Testament, and the sum of the Mosaic Law in the two New Testament commands to love God and to love one another. These commands are of no value or meaning without the understanding of the administration of the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament. Therefore, all of Scripture, including the entire Mosaic Law, is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16). The entire Law is still useful and relevant for New Covenant Christians today.

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