

Gleanings from the Pentateuch

Excursus:
Theology of the Law (pt 8)

Theology of the Law

Q: "In what sense, if any, does the Law God gave through Moses apply to us as Christians under the New Covenant?"

Why is this question important?

Christians and the Law

Traditional View

- The Law is divided into three categories:
 - Moral
 - Ceremonial
 - Civil

Christians and the Law

Traditional View

- *Civil law* only applied to the nation of Israel
- *Ceremonial law* is made obsolete by Christ
- *Moral law* is universally binding in every age

The *Ten Commandments* are the unchanging expression of God's eternal moral law

Christians and the Law

Traditional View

- *Problems with this view*
 - Imposes artificial categories on the Law
 - Fails to recognize that every law somehow expresses universal principles
 - Fails to see that the entire law foreshadows the work and righteousness of Christ

Christians and the Law

Christocentric View

➤ *Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law in His life, teaching and work*

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17)

Christians and the Law

Christocentric View

➤ *Fulfillment by Jesus*

- Ethical commandments (Matthew 7:12)
- Laws pertaining to the tabernacle, priests and sacrifices (Hebrews 7-10)
- Laws pertaining to foods, festivals and Sabbath days (Colossians 2:16-17)
- The Law as that which divided the Jews from the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:15)

Christians and the Law

Christocentric View

➤ *The way in which each law is fulfilled in Christ determines the way it is observed now*

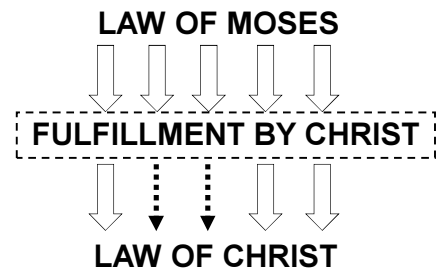
- We are not under the Law of Moses as a *direct* and *immediate* source of our conduct
- We are under the "*law of Christ*", which is the Law of Moses fulfilled in Christ

Christians and the Law

1 Corinthians 9:20-21

"...to those under the Law, as though under the Law, though *not being myself under the Law*, that I might win those under the Law;
to those without the Law, as without the Law, though *not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ...*" (cf. Galatians 6:2)

Christians and the Law



Christians and the Law

What composes the "Law of Christ"?

➤ The teaching and righteousness of Jesus

- the centrality of love
- the directing influence and enablement of the Holy Spirit

Christians and the Law

Conclusion

- #### ➤ For the Christian, keeping the Law in the deepest sense takes the form of replicating the character and grace of Christ

Keeping the law means following Christ