

# The Purpose of Law and Grace

By Dr. Stephen E. Jones

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# The Purpose of Law and Grace

By Dr. Stephen E. Jones

The purpose of the divine law is to set the standard for right and wrong. In other words, the law defines sin. It was never meant to save or justify anyone except those who are sinless. Since “*all have sinned*” (Rom. 3:23), it is plain that the law cannot be used for purposes of salvation. Yet it still retains its usefulness in informing us of what God thinks sin is. “*By the law is the knowledge of sin,*” Paul says in Rom. 3:20.

When God gave the law to Moses and to the Israelites, He began with the Ten Commandments. These Commands were to be obeyed, and so they represented the test of obedience. That is, no Israelite could claim to be obedient to God if he worshipped other gods, dishonored his parent, stole from his neighbor, or committed adultery. These laws were the first written revelation of the character of God and what He expected from man.

## **Who Gave the Law to Moses?**

There are some who have claimed that the law was given to Moses by Satan. This is ludicrous and even blasphemous, and yet it serves us occasion to show the origin of the law. The lawgiver called Himself Yahweh at the burning bush. This was a new name not revealed to Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. Ex. 6:2, 3 says, literally,

**<sup>2</sup> And God spoke further to Moses and said to him, I am Yahweh; <sup>3</sup> and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as El Shaddai, but by My name Yahweh was I not known to them.**

This is the Lawgiver identified in Ex. 20:2 in the prologue of the law, where He says again, “*I am Yahweh your God.*” It is God’s practice to reveal Himself by different names for different purposes. Abraham knew Him as El Shaddai, as we read in Ex. 17:1,

<sup>1</sup> **And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, Yahweh appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am El Shaddai . . .**

Moses wrote these words many years later after the true God had revealed Himself by the name of Yahweh. So Moses tells us that Yahweh appeared to Abram but identified himself as El Shaddai. This tells us clearly that Yahweh and El Shaddai are the same God, even if they are identified by different names. The names were intended to reveal that God is both masculine and feminine and is complete within Himself. Yahweh is masculine; El Shaddai is feminine. When God created man in His own image, He created Adam both male and female within himself. Later, He took Eve out of Adam and made them into two individuals. Yet this shows that God is both male and female.

In the New Testament God became a Man in the person of Jesus Christ. His Hebrew name was Yashua (or, Joshua). Thus, Moses' successor, Joshua, was a type of Christ who leads us into the Kingdom. We learn from this that *the administration* of Moses ends with Joshua. Not that Joshua cast aside the law that Moses had given. Moses was barred from entering the Promised Land because he had rebelled against God (Deut. 32:48-52). It tells us that the Kingdom of God cannot be inherited on a corporate level until there is a change of administration from the imperfect to the perfect.

The problem was not with the law itself, but with Moses, who was unable to meet its demands of perfection.

King David wrote in Ps. 19:7, "*The law of Yahweh is perfect, converting the soul.*" He apparently had no thought that Yahweh might actually be Satan, as some have claimed. In fact, all of the prophets adhered to the law and spoke of Yahweh with reverence. If Yahweh were, in fact, Satan, then all of the Old Scriptures are invalid and were never valid at all. We then would have to suspect the New Testament as well, for Jesus gave credence to the law and prophets, saying in Matt. 5:17-19,

<sup>17</sup> **Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.** <sup>18</sup> **For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law**

**until all is accomplished.** <sup>19</sup> **Whosoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

Jesus had something to say about those who do not believe the testimony of Moses. In John 5 we read,

<sup>46</sup> **For if you had believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me.** <sup>47</sup> **But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?**

It is not possible to believe the words of Jesus if one does not also believe the writings of Moses. Everything that Moses wrote was prophetic of Jesus Christ. Even the law itself portrayed the character of Jesus Christ, for He was the Lawgiver. Ex. 15:2 says, literally,

<sup>2</sup> **Yahweh is my strength and my song, and He has become my Yashua; This is my God; and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will extol Him.**

Yahweh has become my Yashua! This is a prophecy of the incarnation of Christ, where the God of the Old Testament became a Man in the New Testament. This is repeated in Is. 12:2, 3,

<sup>2</sup> **Behold God is my Yashua, I will trust and not be afraid. For Yah Yahweh is my strength and song, and He has become my Yashua.** <sup>3</sup> **Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of Yashua.**

Once again we see the prophet Isaiah quoting Moses, saying that Yahweh-Yashua "*is my strength and song.*" Jesus Himself referred to this passage in John 7:37, 38, which says,

<sup>37</sup> **Now on the last day, the great day of the feast [of Tabernacles], Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.** <sup>38</sup> **He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.**

In other words, if any man is thirsty, they should "*draw water from the springs of Yashua.*" This is a clear statement showing that

even in the Old Testament, Jesus' Hebrew name, Yashua, was hidden in the text in the word "salvation."

Our conclusion from this is that Jesus is the God of the Old Testament as well as the New. Jesus is the incarnation of Yahweh, who was known earlier as El Shaddai. Jesus was the Word made flesh, the Logos that created all things, according to John 1:1-14,

**<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. . . <sup>14</sup> And the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

Jesus was the Creator, and He was the Lawgiver. He was the God of the Old Testament as well as the New.

This is also proven by the Hebrew language itself. The Hebrew language is both pictorial and phonetic. In Hebrew, every letter is a number, a word, and it has a phonetic sound. For example, the first letter is alef. It is the number one, and the word alef also means an ox and symbolizes strength. The second letter is beth. It is the number two, and the word beth means a house.

The Hebrew word for law is Torah. In Hebrew it is spelled tav-vav-resh-hey. Tav literally means "a mark or sign (of the cross). It was originally written as a cross, although the modern Hebrew letter is different, because it is actually Aramaic and was adopted from Babylon during the 70-year captivity.

The vav literally means "a nail or peg." The resh literally means "a head, or leader." The hey, when positioned at the end of a word, means "what comes from."

Hence, the Hebrew word, Torah, literally means "what comes from the Leader nailed to the Cross." In other words, the Lawgiver was Jesus Christ, the Leader who was nailed to the Cross.

When Jesus gave His so-called "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew 5-7, He was not overruling the law, nor was He destroying or replacing it. He was disputing the Pharisaical interpretation of the

law. "You have heard it was said," Jesus explained, "but I say unto you. . ." In other words, you have heard it was taught that the law means such-and-so, but I tell you that they have misunderstood the law. Here is what it really means.

Take it from the Lawgiver. He was the one who dictated it to Moses. Rabbinical interpretations of the law, based upon the Jewish Talmud, is not a revelation of the mind of God (Jesus Christ). One must study the law from Jesus' perspective, or, as some would put it, from a New Testament perspective. If the rabbis had understood the law, Jesus would never have had to correct them. In fact, Jesus said of them in Matt. 15:6-9,

**<sup>6</sup> . . . and thus you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. <sup>7</sup> You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, <sup>8</sup> This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. <sup>9</sup> But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.**

The law is good, if a man use it lawfully (1 Tim. 1:8). The traditions of the elders—their interpretations of the law—were based upon their carnal understanding of the law. Their traditions were not only wrong, they made void the law (Matt. 15:1-9). The same has occurred with Church traditions. Men's interpretations have caused men to cast aside the law and tell many that God now approves the violation of certain laws—such as charging interest on monetary loans or homosexual relations.

## **Love and Law**

The Apostle John holds the honor of giving to us a clear definition of sin. Everywhere else in the Bible, the definition is assumed. 1 John 3:4 says,

**<sup>4</sup> Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness [Greek: anomia].**

Lawlessness is an attitude of the heart. It is despising the law. It is setting aside the law, as if God no longer requires obedience. Or it is thinking that God has put away the "old law" in favor of another law. Usually, Christian lawlessness takes the form of teaching that Jesus

substituted a new law of “love” for the “old law,” as if the law of Moses were based upon hatred and vengeance.

This view is based upon a complete misunderstanding of the law. The law of Moses was based totally upon love. For example, to love one’s neighbor meant that one should not steal from him, or murder him, or covet any of his property. These laws define love in specific ways. Without those specific laws, men might justify their theft, murder, or covetousness. Without specific laws, men justify usury, when God calls it theft. They justify adultery in the name of love. They justify homosexual relations in the name of love. They justify the prison system in the name of “law and order.” Even ministers justify their covetous practices in stealing money from people by fraud and deceit in their fund-raising efforts. Many well-known healing evangelists charge money for people to go on stage and be prayed for their healing. They have outdone Balaam!

In the name of love, these lawless Christian leaders have plundered the unsuspecting believers of countless billions of dollars. They call this love, and they justify their actions by quoting Scripture and interpreting it by their own carnal minds, turning it into a tradition of men. God’s law gives us the meaning of true love.

It is true, however, that the law itself does not define the highest form of love called agape love. The law merely defines phileo love. These are Greek words found in the New Testament, both translated “love.” Phileo love means “brotherly love.” Agape love is divine love, for it is unconditional.

Phileo love is the type of love that is found between brothers. When children grow up together, they must learn to respect the rights of their brothers and sisters. Parents find themselves each day acting as referees to settle small legal disputes between siblings. This may become tiresome for the parents, but it is extremely important to the children as they come into maturity. Every time a dispute is settled, the parent is teaching the children the difference between right and wrong. The parent is teaching property rights. The parent is teaching the law.

Phileo love is thus a legal love. It teaches a fifty-fifty relationship between siblings. The law establishes the boundaries between each child’s side of the room. The law backs up each child’s rights to own

certain toys or clothing. The law disciplines each child that hurts another or steals from his brother or sister.

Parents may tire of such discipline, but without laws, a child will grow up to think that the whole world is his. If a child grows up with injustice continually perpetrated upon him, he will think that the world is a very unjust place, and he will respond in kind. His creed will be to “do unto others before they do unto you.”

He will think he has the natural right to do as he pleases, and no one else has any right to stop him from taking what he wants. In short, he grows up to be a criminal, because he believes that others have no respect for his rights, and so he has no respect for the rights of others either. This is why it is so vital that children be treated lovingly and judiciously when they are young. They must learn phileo love in order to prepare them to learn agape love.

Agape love is a mature, unconditional love. Those who are spiritually mature are able to love others regardless of how unlovable they may be. They are capable of loving even those who abuse them. They do not view others in terms of good and evil, but as people who are future neighbors in the kingdom of God, future believers in Christ. Therefore, they are able to do what they can to assist such people in whatever way possible to grow into spiritual maturity.

The law of Moses alone is insufficient in bringing a person into the maturity of agape love. The law defines your rights according to phileo love, so phileo love is obtained by learning the divine law. But the grace of agape love comes through knowing the Lawgiver, Jesus Christ. It comes by relationship, not by knowledge of what Jesus said. And yet, true agape love cannot be obtained apart from learning the basics of phileo love in the divine law.

### **The Consequences of Lawlessness**

1 John 3:4 says, “*sin is lawlessness.*” The Greek word that he uses is anomia. The Greek word for law is nomos. The “a” at the beginning of the word is a negative, so the word literally means “no law” or “lawlessness.” Strong’s Concordance says that it means “*illegality, i.e., violation of law, or (gen.) wickedness.*”

We ought also to make a distinction between God’s law and Jewish law. Jewish laws are the traditions of men found in the

Talmud, which are their uninspired interpretations of the divine law. They have volumes of minutiae on every subject, which put Jews into great bondage, which God never intended. In contrast to Jewish law is the divine law that Jesus (in the form of Yahweh) gave to Moses.

The Greek word, anomia, was used many times in the Septuagint translation. The Septuagint was the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures that was done two or three centuries before Christ. The importance of this translation is that it set the standard by which Hebrew thought was conveyed into the Greek language by the time of Christ. The New Testament writers often quote the Septuagint. When we look in the Septuagint, we see the word anomia used often enough to obtain a very clear idea of how the word was commonly used.

It is unfortunate that anomia is so often translated “iniquity,” because that word can so easily be set apart from the concept of the law. Word definitions are set by usage. The same is true of “sin.” That word, though accurate enough in itself, seems to be cut loose from the concept of the law. We need to understand that when God gave the law, He defined sin as the transgression of the law. The Apostle John carries this definition from the time of the Old Testament into the New in 1 John 3:4, quoted earlier.

Anomia is used in Gen. 19:15 in reference to the “iniquities” of Sodom and Gomorrah. It refers to the lawlessness of these cities. Anomia is also used in Ex. 34:7, when God proclaimed His very lengthy name to Moses, saying,

**<sup>6</sup> . . .The Lord God, pitiful and merciful, longsuffering, and very compassionate and true; <sup>7</sup> and keeping justice and mercy for thousands, taking away iniquity [anomia, “lawlessness”] and unrighteousness [adikias, “injustice”].**

Another example is found in Lev. 19:29, where the Septuagint reads,

**<sup>29</sup> Thou shalt not profane thy daughter to prostitute her; so the land shall not a whoring, and the land be filled with iniquity [anomia, “lawlessness”].**

The point of these examples is to show that anomia was a term used even the centuries before Christ to express the Hebrew concept of lawlessness—that is, an attitude of despising the law and having no

regard for it. The problem of anomia continued into the first century, where Jesus spoke against it. The problem apparently continued into the first century Church, and the apostles foresaw the problem becoming not better but worse over time.

In Matt. 7:15-20 Jesus told us how we may measure a prophet to see if he is of God or not. Verses 15 and 16 say,

**<sup>15</sup> Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. <sup>16</sup> You will know them by their fruits.**

Jesus then gives a dissertation about fruits, concluding with verse 20, where he says, “*So then, you will know them by their fruits.*”

But this is not the end of the section. Jesus then gives us the explanation of “fruits” and shows us how to discern whether a prophet is bearing good fruit or not, whether he is truly a “sheep” or a wolf in sheep’s clothing. He says in Matt. 7:21-23,

**<sup>21</sup> Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles? <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness [anomia].**

There are many people today who prophesy—and much of their prophecy is true. But they claim that God’s law has been put away and thereby justify lawless behavior whenever they disagree with the law. There are many people today who cast out demons and perform miracles—some of which may be bogus, but many are authentic as well. But they claim that God’s law has been put away and act accordingly with no twinge of conscience.

Their excuse is that if we were to return to the law, we would have to begin sacrificing animals again. That is not true. Jesus did not put away the law of sacrifice; He fulfilled it. In other words, we still have the law of sacrifice with us today. Jesus is our Sacrifice, our Lamb, our Goat, our Bullock, our Dove. He is all the sacrifices. No, we no longer need the lesser forms of sacrifice that they used in the

time of Moses. We have a better Sacrifice—but this did not put away the law. Only the manner of fulfillment changed.

The law said that the Passover Lamb had to be without blemish (Ex. 12:5). In the ultimate sense, there was only one Lamb that was without blemish, and that was Jesus Christ. Before Jesus came to earth, the people sacrificed the best that they had, but they were not truly fulfilling the law. Only in Christ is the law fulfilled. Only by the true Lamb of God is the law truly satisfied. There is no other way to fulfill (or be obedient to) the law.

The only things Jesus put away were the imperfect forms by which men were attempting to fulfill the law.

In the Old Testament there was a Levitical priesthood with a tabernacle—and later a temple—made of earthly materials. Neither of these were perfect, but God set them in place temporarily until the perfect had come. The perfect is through Jesus, the High Priest after the Order of Melchisedec, and His children, who are also priests under Him. They are called to minister in temples not made of wood and stone, but their own bodies, which are the temples of God.

Is it not strange, then, that some Bible teachers today put away whatever laws with which they disagree, and then they teach that Jesus Christ will soon rule the earth in a physical temple in Jerusalem with a re-established Levitical priesthood? Preachers have told me that in the Millennium Jesus will re-establish animal sacrifices! They base this belief on Ezekiel 44, taking it literally in an Old Testament sense. It makes no sense. These people will put away the laws on usury, for instance, because they see nothing wrong with charging interest on money—but then they will revert to Judaism in the matter of the temple, priesthood, and animal sacrifices.

Is this, perhaps, an example of lawlessness in one's teaching and manner of thinking?

Jesus again spoke of lawlessness in Matt. 13:41, saying,

**<sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks and those who commit lawlessness [anomia].**

Since this was Jesus' explanation of the parable of the tares in the wheat, it is plain that He was equating the tares with “those who

commit lawlessness,” or those who deliberately violate the divine law, thinking they are now privileged to do so under grace. The fact that this was a parable about the end of the age brings the problem of lawlessness to our own doorsteps of the Church today. In fact, in Matt. 24:12, Jesus said about the Church in our day,

**<sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.**

In Acts 2:23 Peter says in his pentecostal sermon that it was by the hands of lawless men that the Messiah was put to death. The word Peter uses is anomia.

The Apostle Paul quotes Ps. 32:1, 2 in his letter to the Romans, writing in Rom. 4:7,

**<sup>7</sup> Blessed are those whose lawless deeds [anomia] have been forgiven and whose sins have been covered.**

He says again in Rom. 6:19,

**<sup>19</sup> I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness [anomia], resulting in further lawlessness [anomia], so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.**

Paul was well aware of the problem of lawlessness and how it would affect the Church as time progressed. Moses knew the same thing would happen with Israel after his death (Deut. 31:29). So Paul warned the Church in 2 Thess. 2:7,

**<sup>7</sup> For the mystery of lawlessness [anomia] is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. <sup>8</sup> And then that lawless [anomos] one will be revealed [exposed] whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming.**

We see, then, that both Jesus and the Apostle Paul prophesied of great lawlessness at the end of the pentecostal age, and Paul said that this already—in his day—had begun to manifest. In my own early life in the Church, I was taught not to be lawless, but somehow that word

never focused upon the divine law that Jesus Christ had given to Moses. Rather, it was defined more in terms of what our Church was teaching in regard to right and wrong. How ironic that our Church would support America's prison system, instead of teaching the people that those who steal ought to pay restitution—and yet they never once thought of themselves as lawless. (See our book, God's Law on Restitution.)

Other churches see nothing wrong with homosexual behavior, as long it is done out of “love.” Such churches are also lawless, for Jesus Christ told Moses very clearly in Lev. 18:22,

**<sup>22</sup> You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.**

Remember what Jesus said about those who are lawless. Even if they have done many wonderful works in the name of Jesus, in the end He will say to them, “*Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness*” (Matt. 7:23).

This does not mean that the lawless ones will lose their salvation. It means simply that they will not inherit the first resurrection, but will have to await the general resurrection at the end of the thousand years. The first resurrection includes only believers who are called to rule and reign with Christ a thousand years (Rev. 20:4-6). One cannot rule if one cannot discern right from wrong and, as a judge, correct injustices. In other words, one must know the law and be led by the Spirit in order to correctly apply the law by the mind of Christ.

The second resurrection is a general one that includes all the unbelievers and the rest of the believers who did not qualify for the first resurrection. Rev. 20:7-15 says that this resurrection will occur a thousand years after the first one. Of this resurrection, Jesus said in John 5:28, 29,

**<sup>28</sup> Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, <sup>29</sup> and come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life; those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.**

Jesus was NOT describing the first resurrection, for that was a limited resurrection, where “*the rest of the dead did not come to life*

*until the thousand years were completed*” (Rev. 20:5). Jesus was talking of a resurrection where the tombs would be emptied, and ALL would be raised. Thus we see that Jesus spoke of the second resurrection, and at that time the believers would be given “life,” or immortality, while the unbelievers would be judged. Paul gives us a double witness of this in Acts 24:15.

For this reason we insist that lawless Christians will not lose their salvation. They will simply lose the blessing of the first resurrection. They will not qualify to rule and reign with Christ. They will not be among the manifested sons of God at the end of the pentecostal age. They will not inherit life in “The Age,” that is, the Messianic Age, commonly called The Millennium.

There is an Old Testament pattern for this as well. The Church in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) under Moses was also lawless, except for the overcomers like Caleb and Joshua. This Church died in the wilderness, not having received the promises. Did this mean that they had all lost their salvation? No, but they did lose the blessing of the Kingdom. Even so, all the lawless believers of past ages will have to wait until AFTER the Kingdom Age (Tabernacles Age) to receive their inheritance.

Those lawless believers who are alive when this new Kingdom administration begins will not be transfigured with a bodily change at the second coming of Christ. Only the overcomers will be changed. The rest of the believers will live on, but they will continue in their mortal bodies until the day of their death. They will receive their inheritance at the end of the thousand years.

When they are raised at the Great White Throne, they will be “saved, yet so as through fire” (1 Cor. 3:15). This does not mean they will “go to hell.” The fire of God is the “*fiery law*” (Deut. 33:2). The prophet Jeremiah was told, “*Is not My word like fire?*”

The judgments of the law are the fire. (See Creation's Jubilee, Ch. 2, 3). Jesus defined this “fire” in terms of many strokes and few strokes in his parable of Luke 12:42-49. In that parable, the faithful servants are the overcomers, who are being obedient at the time of His return. Jesus said that He would put them in charge over all of His possessions—that is, they would rule and reign with Him.

But the other servants who were oppressive and lawless, Jesus said, would be given their inheritance with the unbelievers. That is, they would be given immortality at the Great White Throne at the same time that the unbelievers are given their judgment. The lawless believers will also receive some judgment, pictured in terms of a flogging, some given few strokes, and others many strokes. (This is all according to Deut. 25:1-3). Then Jesus shows that these judgments of the law are the divine fire, saying in verse 49,

**49 I have come to cast FIRE upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled!**

Jesus was not longing for the day that people would be burned alive or cast into hell. He was longing for the day that the lawless Christians would be “*saved, yet so as though fire,*” so that they could be fully reconciled with Him and inherit the glories of the Kingdom.

And so these are the consequences of lawlessness among Christian believers. We pray that more Christians will come to see that being justified by faith is not the whole answer to life. Justification by faith in the blood of the Lamb of God is only the first step toward full salvation, even as Israel’s exit from Egypt at Passover was only the first step toward the Promised Land. There is still the process of Sanctification that comes through Pentecost, and this prepares the believer for the Feast of Tabernacles, where they may receive the glorification of the body and the fullness of the Spirit. (See our book, The Laws of the Second Coming.)

### **Under the Law and Under Grace**

One of the most misunderstood verses of all time is found in Rom. 6:14, 15, where Paul wrote,

**14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!**

This comes in the context of Paul’s dissertation about lawless Christians. There were some, apparently, who thought that not being under law meant that they now had a license to sin. Keep in mind that John says, “sin is lawlessness.” Paul himself had stated earlier in Rom. 3:20, “*through the law comes the knowledge of sin.*” And yet

many people take Rom. 6:14 and interpret it to contradict Jesus, Paul, and John, saying that this means the law was put away.

Paul did not mean this. He was using terminology that was familiar to people of his day, but which is largely unfamiliar today in the Western world. Let me explain.

If a man stole \$10,000 and was apprehended, the judge under biblical law was to make him repay his victim double. The thief, then, became a debtor because of his sin. If the man could pay this debt to the victim, then he was immediately released. But if not, his property was to be sold or used in payment of the debt. If all of his property was insufficient to pay the debt, then he himself would be sold as a bondservant in order to pay the debt.

As long as it took to pay the debt, this man was said to be “under the law.” That is, the law had jurisdiction over him, because the man’s sin empowered the law to keep him enslaved until the debt was paid. Then as soon as the debt was paid, the man was set free—no longer under the law, but under grace.

We know from Rom. 3:23 that “all have sinned.” Therefore, every man is a debtor in the eyes of the law. It is the law that has put us all into slavery because of our sin. But we have a Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who came and paid the full penalty for our sins. Once the debt has been paid, we have been set free from the slavery imposed upon us by the law. We are now under grace.

Does this mean, then, that we are now free to sin at will? Are we now free to “*sin that grace may abound?*” (Rom. 6:1) Of course not. Grace is not a license to sin. Sin is lawlessness. The law was not put away; the law was upheld. Jesus could have set us free by putting away His law, for this would have legalized sin. But He did not. He upheld the law and paid its full price.

Paul says in Rom. 3:31,

**31 Do we then nullify the law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the law.**

It is not right to pit Rom. 6:14 against Rom. 3:31. If they seem to be contradictory, it is because we do not understand Paul’s writing. It is our hope that this will give the reader a better understanding of

Paul's writings, so that we do not use him as an excuse to violate the law of Christ as given to Moses.

## **In Conclusion**

The law is the revelation of the character and mind of Jesus Christ as given to Moses. Anything Jesus says to do is a command and a law, whether it is found in the Scriptures or by hearing the voice of the Spirit.

Because all have sinned, and because of our inherent weakness inherited from Adam, it is not possible for any man to be justified by being perfect. Simply put, no man is perfect—and even if by some chance a man should come to be perfect in his later life, this would still not justify his past sins. Hence, one's obedience to the law cannot be used to justify any man. Learning obedience is the process of sanctification, not justification.

The process of sanctification, growing in Christ and in the knowledge of His word, has much to do with learning the will of God for each person's life. The basic will of God for all men is obedience to the law (Rom. 2:18). But without the active leading of the Spirit in one's life, one cannot hope to apply the law correctly and with the right spirit and attitude. This is why each man must proceed from the Passover experience of Justification to the Pentecostal experience of Sanctification. In Pentecost one learns to hear God's voice and to be led by the Spirit. Mere learning the law without the benefit of Pentecost can only create Pharisees, who think they are law-abiding, but instead abound in the traditions of men.

Jesus came as our Redeemer, so that we are redeemed from the slavery caused by sin. In paying the debt that the law demanded for sin, He sustained the law, bearing witness of its righteous standard. We who have been set free from the law are now free to be obedient to our Redeemer, as the law says in Lev. 25:53. Now that we have been set free from the taskmaster of sin (lawlessness), we have been set free to be bondservants of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Rom. 6:18 says,

<sup>18</sup> **and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.** <sup>22</sup> **But now having been freed from sin and**

**enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome eternal life.**

We were not saved to be lawless; we were saved to become slaves of righteousness and slaves of God through Jesus Christ. Those who understand this will no longer continue in sin, viewing the law as a religious artifact from a by-gone age. They will see the law as a revelation of God, full of life and possessing prophetic meaning that has yet to be fully understood.