

# The Law Done Away

by Lewis Sperry Chafer

---

*The law is done away with through the death of Christ, and believers are now under the rule of Christ and the principle of faith.*

**Scripture:** Romans 4:13, Romans 6:14, Galatians 3:19, Galatians 3:22, Ephesians 2:15

**Topics:** "Law And Grace", "Christian Liberty"

---

## Description

Lewis Sperry Chafer preaches about the fundamental differences between the reign of law and the reign of grace, emphasizing that they are opposed to each other and cannot coexist. He explains that the Scriptures of the New Testament clearly teach that the law, in all its forms, is done away with in the present age under the economy of grace. Chafer delves into the threefold larger conception of the law, including the teachings of Moses, the law covenant of works, and the principle of dependence on the flesh, all of which are now set aside in the era of grace. He highlights the importance of understanding that the law has ceased, even in its widest meaning, and that believers are now under the reign of grace, not the law.

---

## Transcript

Since law and grace are opposed to each other at every point, it is impossible for them to coexist, either as the ground of acceptance before God or as the rule of life. Of necessity, therefore, the Scriptures of the New Testament which present the facts and scope of grace, both assume and directly teach that the law is done away. Consequently, it is not in force in the present age in any sense whatsoever. This present nullification of the law applies not only to the legal code of the Mosaic system and the law of the kingdom, but to every possible application of the principle of law.

The larger conception of the law, as before defined, is threefold:

- (1) The actual written instructions of both the teachings of Moses and the teachings of the kingdom;
- (2) The law covenant of works in all of its applications, which conditions blessing and acceptance with God on the ground of personal merit; and,
- (3) The law principle of dependence on the energy of the flesh, in place of the faith principle of a dependence on the power of the indwelling Spirit. It will also be seen that
- (4) Judaism is done away.

That the law, in the widest threefold meaning of the term, is now set aside is revealed as a fundamental fact in the divine economy of grace. That the law has now ceased, even in its widest meaning, should be considered with unprejudiced attention.

## I. The Actual Written Instructions of Both the Teachings of the Law of Moses and the Kingdom Are Done Away

These actual written commandments, either of Moses or the kingdom, are not the rule of the believer's life under grace, any more than these systems are the basis of his salvation. The complete withdrawal of the authority of these two systems of law will now be considered:

### A. The Passing of the Law of Moses Is the Explicit Teaching of the New Testament Scriptures

An important and determining feature of this truth is found in the difference which is revealed between the abiding, eternal character of the Abrahamic covenant and the temporal, limited character of the law covenant of Sinai.

The Abrahamic covenant anticipated both the earthly seed through Israel, and the spiritual seed that would stand related to God on the principle of faith. This covenant, being without human condition, simply declares the unchanging purpose of Jehovah. It will be achieved in pure grace, apart from every human factor, and its accomplishments are eternal.

On the one hand, the covenant of the Mosaic law was a temporary, ad interim, dealing with God, which was deliberately chosen by the nation Israel, and which applied to them only. It was plainly designed to govern that people in their land, and for such time as might intervene between their acceptance of that covenant, and the coming of the promised Seed. The Seed is Christ. The coming of Christ into the world was the realization of the hope contained in the Abrahamic covenant, and, of necessity, the termination of the ad interim reign of the law.

We read:

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise [the Abrahamic covenant] made of none effect: because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression [though there is sin]. Therefore it [the promise through Abraham] is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law [believing Israelites], but to that also which is of the faith [even believing Gentiles] of Abraham; who is the father [on a faith principle] of us all.... And therefore it [the faith] was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. 4:13-24).

Thus it is demonstrated that the law has no place in the divine dealings under grace.

We read again:

The law "was added... till the seed should come" (Gal. 3:19); but when the Seed did come, the authority of the Mosaic law was no longer required, or even possible, as a principle of divine rule. It was the purpose of God to close every door of access to Himself but one.

This fact is next stated in the argument from the Scriptures:

"But the scripture hath concluded all [both Jew and Gentile] under sin" (Gal. 3:22).

This, it has been seen, is more than a declaration that people are sinners by nature and by practice, and therefore subject to divine displeasure; it is a universal, judicial decree which places the whole race absolutely without merit before God. From that position there is no escape other than through the exercise of pure grace on the part of God. The divine motive in the universal sentence of the race under sin is declared to be, according to that which follows in the text:

"That the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal. 3:22).

Thus the ad interim reign of the law is completely annulled, and the divine blessing is now centered in Christ as the sole object of faith, being promised to them that believe. The law principle is not retained as a possible optional relationship to God: "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

It is important to observe, however, that while God has completely terminated the reign of law by the death of Christ, so far as His relation to humanity is concerned, one is free to reject or distort the truth of God, and to impose the law obligation upon himself. In such a case, it does not follow that God accepts, or even recognizes, any self-imposed legalism. He could not do so. It does follow, however, that the self-constituted legalist, to be consistent with his own choice should any part of the law be accepted as binding, must observe the whole of the law to do it. The law was a unit. He that offends in one point is guilty of all; whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, and he is a debtor to do the whole law. Since the law is done away, these statements can only apply to the one who, without divine sanction or recognition, has assumed the obligation of the law.

The following Scriptures disclose the fact that the law was never given to any people other than Israel:

"Hear, O Israel" (Deut. 5:1);

"Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law" (Rom. 9:4);

"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature [practice] the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves" (Rom. 2:14);

"Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law" (John 18:31);

"Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters" (Acts 18:14-15).

The chief captain of the Roman army wrote of Paul, "Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law" (Acts 23:29). Paul answered for himself: "Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all" (Acts 25:8); "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their [not your] law" (John 15:25).

There is no record of any assumption of the law on the part of Gentiles before the death of Christ. At the Cross, it will be seen, the divine application of the law ceased even for the Jews, and all--Jew and

Gentile--were shut up to grace alone; but the Jews, because of unbelief, still persist in the observance of the law which was given to them from God by the hand of Moses; while Gentiles, because of failure to recognize the meaning of the death of Christ and the essential character of pure grace, are assuming the law obligation.

This many are doing, some as a means to justification before God, and some who are saved by faith in Christ, as a rule of life. These two errors--that of the Jew and that of the Gentile--are clearly set forth in Scripture.

Of Israel it is said: "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart." But in the case of an individual Jew receiving Christ it is said: "Nevertheless when it [the heart of a Jew] shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away" (2 Cor. 3:15-16).

Turning to the Gentiles, there are two aspects of their assumption of the law:

(1) With reference to the certainty of divine judgments on the Gentiles before the Cross, or during the period in which the law was divinely imposed on Israel, it is said: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." Then it is added concerning Israel, "And as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (Rom. 2:12). It is impossible that this Scripture offers an optional choice between justification by the law, and justification which is by faith alone; for the word is final relative to God's dealing in this age: "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom. 3:20). Reference here is, without question, to conditions which did obtain when the law was in force.

(2) Regarding assumption of the law by Gentiles it is said: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature [practice] the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. 2:14-15).

Thus the anticipation of assumption of the law by Gentiles is revealed, and the precise effect of the law upon them. The conscience is molded and they stand before a self-imposed condemnation. To such there is no blessing. All that the legal conscience can do is to accuse or excuse for failure. Let it never be supposed that, because of self-imposed legality and misguided conscience, there is any divine recognition of Gentiles as being under the law.

God must be true to His eternal purpose as revealed in His Word, and people stand, or fall, before Him now on the sole basis of their attitude toward His saving grace in Christ. Those who are now lost may honestly suppose that they do the will of God in perpetuating the principle of the law with its blasting curse; but they are lost notwithstanding, apart from Christ. It is the people of a past age who will be judged by the law. The Gentiles who now practice the things contained in the law are not said to be subject to divine judgment because of broken law: they are, by that self-imposed law, either self-accused, or self-excused, according as each has created a conscience in regard to the law. The law produces the effect only of discomfort, misdirection, confusion, and limitation of their own consciences.

Before turning to the positive teaching of the Scripture relative to the passing of the law, it may be important to restate the three major aspects of the law, which are yet to be considered in this connection more at length:

1. Both the commandments and requirements of the Mosaic system, and the commandments and requirements of the kingdom, are wholly legal in their character, and, together, comprise the written statement of the law; which law, it will be seen, is set aside during the present reign of grace.

2. Every human work, be it even the impossible, heaven-high beseeching of grace, which is wrought with a view to meriting acceptance with God, is of the nature of a legal covenant of works, and, therefore, belongs only to the law. Through the finished work of Christ, acceptance with God is perfectly secured; but that acceptance can be experienced only through a faith which turns from dependence on merit, and rests in Christ as the sufficient Savior. In like manner, it will be seen, the whole proposition of legal, meritorious acceptance with God has passed during the reign of grace.

3. Again, any manner of life or service which is lived in dependence on the flesh rather than in dependence on the Spirit, is legal in character and has passed during the present period in which grace reigns. It is written: "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Gal. 5:18). The law made its appeal only to the flesh, and therefore, to turn to the flesh, is to turn to the sphere of the law.

The law, though wholly superseded by grace, may now be self-imposed. This may be done by turning for a rule of life to the written legal code of Moses, or of the kingdom; it may be done by turning to self-works as the basis of acceptance with God; or it may be done by depending on the energy of the flesh for power to live well-pleasing to God. Self-imposed law, of whatever kind, is not acceptable to God; but it, like all human sin, may be chosen by the free will of man, and may be practiced in opposition to the revealed will of God.

In view of the positive Biblical statements relative to the passing of the law, question may be raised as to the meaning of certain passages:

Galatians 3:23. "But before faith came we were kept under the law." This is in no sense the present experience of the unsaved before they accept Christ. The apostle is here speaking as a Jew, and of those circumstances which could have existed only for the Jew of the early church who had lived under both the dispensation of Moses, and the dispensation of grace. Nevertheless, in the wider meaning of the law before stated, all humanity was delivered by the death of Christ from the obligation of meritorious works, and from the necessity of depending on the flesh. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"; "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law"; "God sending his own Son... condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us" (Gal. 3:10,13; Rom. 8:3-4).

1 Corinthians 9:20. The apostle said that he became "to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law." This is plainly a consideration of the whole class of people who have imposed the law upon themselves in any aspect of the law whatsoever (Note Gal. 4:21).

Romans 4:14. "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect." This is equally true of all humanity when the larger aspects of the law are in view; but, it should also be pointed out that the age-long designation of the Jews as being "of the law," in contrast to Gentiles to whom no law was ever given, still obtained in the early church (Cf. Rom. 2:23; 4:16).

Romans 2:13. "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." This is to state an inherent principle of the law. It was an absolute covenant of works. No one is

now to be justified by the law (Cf. Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:11). Again, "As it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision" (Rom. 2:24-25). This, likewise, is a principle which belonged to the law. Failure to keep the law was a discredit to God, and an insult to His righteousness (Cf. Isa. 52:5). The same principle is a warning to all who attempt, or even contemplate, the keeping of the law (See also James 2:10).

Romans 3:31. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." The law has never been kept by those who tried to keep it. It is kept, however, by those who humbly acknowledge their helplessness to do anything well-pleasing to God, and who turn and find shelter in Christ who has met every demand of the law for them. Such, and only such, have ever vindicated the holy law of God. The people who attempt to keep the law have always outraged the law.

Romans 7:16. "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good." The use of the word "law" throughout this whole context (Romans 7:15-8:13) is clearly of the wider sphere of the whole will of God, rather than the limited commandments of Moses. Not once is Moses mentioned; but "the law of God" is three times referred to (Romans 7:22, 25; 8:7).

The complete passing, through the death of Christ, of the reign of the Mosaic law, even for Israel, is the extended testimony of Scripture.

A few important passages which declare the fact of the passing of the law here given:

John 1:16-17. "And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for [added to] grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." According to this passage, the whole Mosaic system was fulfilled, superseded, and terminated in the First Advent of Christ.

Galatians 3:19-25. "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made... that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we [Jews] were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [child-conductor] to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we [Jews] are no longer under a schoolmaster [the law]."

Comment is unnecessary concerning this unconditional declaration as to the passing of the Mosaic system.

Romans 6:14. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." While the direct message of this passage is of the enablement that is provided for the life under grace, which was never provided under the law, the positive statement is made, "Ye are not under the law."

Romans 7:2-6. "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that

we should serve in newness of spirit [Spirit], and not in the oldness of the letter."

Several important revelations are given in this passage.

The relation of one who had been under the law (which was true of the apostle Paul) to the teachings of grace was that of a wife to her second husband. The law, or obligation, of the wife to her husband ceases with his death. Should she be married to a second husband, she is then under an entirely new obligation.

The sacrificial death of Christ was the ending of the reign of the law, which law is likened to the first husband. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead." Nothing could be clearer than this. The Christian is now under obligation to Christ. He is "inlawed" to Christ. He has only to fulfill "the law of Christ."

Certainly it is most unreasonable to propose that a woman should try to be obligated to two husbands at the same time: yet this is the divine illustration of the error of commingling the teachings of law and the teachings of grace. Spiritual polyandry is offensive to God.

In the new union which is formed with Christ, there is to be the bringing forth of fruit unto God. This is a reference to the fact that the Christian's life and service is to be enabled by the power of God and therefore is superhuman. The Christian, it is clearly stated, is not only "dead to the law," but is "delivered from the law," and every aspect of the law, that he should serve in "the newness of the Spirit"; for the teachings of grace are particularly characterized by the fact that they are to be wrought by the enabling power of the Spirit.

The Christian is not to live and serve in "the oldness of the letter," which is the law. It is by vital union in the body of Christ as a living member that the believer is both absolved from every other relationship, and is made to be centered only in that which belongs to the living Head. Thus positively is it indicated that the opposing principles of law and grace cannot coexist as rules of conduct.

II Corinthians 3: 7-13. "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit [Spirit] be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished".

It is the law as crystallized in the Ten Commandments which is in view; for that law alone was "written and engraven in stones."

In the midst of the strongest possible contrasts between the reign of the teachings of the law and the teachings of grace, it is declared that these commandments were "done away," and "abolished." It should be recognized that the old was abolished to make place for the new, which far excels in glory. The passing of the law is not, therefore, a loss; it is rather an inestimable gain.

The striking contrasts which are presented in this whole context are here arranged in parallels:

## The Teachings of the Law The Teachings of Grace

1. Written with ink 1. Written with the Spirit of the living God
2. In tables of stone 2. In fleshy tables of the heart
3. The letter kills 3. The Spirit gives life
4. The ministration of death 4. The ministration of the Spirit
5. Was glorious 5. Is rather glorious
6. Done away 6. Remains
7. Abolished 7. We have such hope

Galatians 5:18. "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." There is no place left for the law, and hence no occasion for its recognition. To be led of the Spirit is to realize a manner of life which surpasses and more than fulfills every ideal of the law.

Ephesians 2:15. "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances."

Colossians 2:14. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

John 15:25. "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law." This one and only reference in the Upper Room Discourse to the law of Moses is most significant. As has been shown, Christ, in this discourse, has taken His followers beyond the Cross and is unfolding to them the very foundations of the new teachings of grace. These men were Jews; but in this teaching Christ does not speak to them as though the law of Moses was binding on them. He says "their law"; not "your law," thus indicating that these Jews who had come under grace were no longer under the reign of the law of Moses.

By this Scripture not only is the whole law system definitely declared to be done away during the dispensation of grace, but it is noticeable that the law, as law, is never once applied to the believer as the regulating principle of his life under grace. This is not an accidental omission; it is the expression of the mind and will of God.

Thus it may be concluded that the written law of Moses is not intended to be the rule of the believer's life under grace. Yet, on the other hand, the abiding principles of the law which are adaptable to grace are carried forward and restated under the teachings of grace, not as law, but reformed to the mold of infinite grace.

This great fact is aptly illustrated by the experience of an American citizen who was in Germany at the breaking out of World War I. Fleeing through Holland, he reached England with his pockets filled with German gold coin. This coin, bearing the German stamp, was of no value as currency in England; but, when melted and restamped in the mints of England, it bore all the value of coin of that realm. Thus the intrinsic value of the gold of the law is preserved and reappears bearing the stamp of the new teachings of grace.

In applying the teachings of grace it is legitimate to point out that a similar principle obtained under the law of Moses, thus to demonstrate that the precept in question represents the unchangeable character of God; but it is both unscriptural and unreasonable to apply the teachings of the Mosaic system directly to the children of grace. Since both the law of Moses and the teachings of grace are complete in themselves, neither one requires the addition of the other, and to combine them is to sacrifice all that is vital in each. Great importance should be given therefore to the positive, unvarying message to the believer which is stated in the words, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace."

## B. The Error of Commingling the Law of the Kingdom with the Teachings of Grace

If it be accepted that the Messianic, earthly kingdom, with Israel restored to her land in the full realization of all her covenants under the reign of Christ sitting on the throne of David, has not been established, and there is now no semblance in the light of present world conditions of that kingdom on earth, then it follows that the laws and principles which are to govern in the kingdom, and which could apply only to conditions within that kingdom, are not yet applied by God to the affairs of human beings in the earth.

It is not a question, as in the case of the law of Moses, of discontinuing that which has once been in force under the sanction of God; it is rather a question as to whether the kingdom laws, which have their application of necessity in the future earthly kingdom of Messiah, should be imposed now on the children of God under grace.

Definite proofs are needed to establish the fact that there are kingdom laws presented in the Scriptures. These proofs have already been offered. Having granted that the kingdom laws are found in the Scriptures, should they be considered as any part of the divine instruction now governing the daily life of the Christian? Certainly it is no more difficult to believe that Scripture reveals a rule of life which is not yet in force because belonging to a yet future age than it is to believe that Scripture reveals a rule of life which is not now in force because belonging to an age which is wholly past.

In considering the question as to whether the laws of the kingdom are to be applied to the Christian in this age, the fact that there is a complete system of kingdom ruling, and that this ruling is strictly legal in its character, is assumed on the basis of proofs already given. Certain vital issues, though already mentioned, should not be forgotten at this point:

### 1. The two systems cannot coexist

The laws of the kingdom, being legal in their character, introduce those principles of relationships to God which can never coexist with the relationships which obtain under grace. By such commingling of opposing principles, all that is vital in each system is sacrificed.

On the one hand, the sharp edge of the law which constitutes its sole effectiveness is dulled by an admixture of supposed divine leniency; on the other hand, the truth concerning the absolute graciousness of God is corrupted by being commercialized, conditioned on the merit of human beings, and made subject to human persuasion. The principle of pure grace demands that God shall in no wise recognize human merit, and that He invariably shall be graciously disposed toward humanity, and therefore needing at no time to be persuaded by humanity.

God is never reluctant in the exercise of grace: instead, He seeks, draws, and entreats man.

The principles of law and grace are mutually destructive, and doctrinal confusion follows the intrusion of any legal principle into the reign of grace. When law is thus intruded, not only is the clear responsibility of the believer under grace obscured, but the priceless attitude of God in grace, which He purchased at the infinite cost of the death of His Son, is wholly misrepresented.

Since the kingdom rule is purely legal, and since the believer is not under law, it follows that he is not under the injunctions of the kingdom.

2. It is not necessary to combine them

The laws of the kingdom are not required to be combined with the teachings of grace, since every item within those laws which could have any present application is exactly and amply stated in the teachings of grace. It is not necessary, then, for the believer to assume any law obligation whatsoever.

When it is shown by Scriptural exposition that the laws of the kingdom are not applicable to the Christian under grace, opposition is sometime aroused which is based on wrong personal training, habits of misinterpretation, and prejudice. The cost of unteachableness should be weighed with much care, for the sacrifice of the liberty and blessing which belongs to uncomplicated grace is a loss too great for computation. By the right division of the Scriptures, the truth will be dearly seen that grace reigns uncomplicated and undiminished by law.

The kingdom law is a complete and indivisible system in itself. It is therefore unscriptural, illogical, and unreasonable to appropriate convenient and pleasing portions of this law, and to neglect the remainder. It should be considered that, as in the Mosaic system, to adopt some portions of the law is to be committed logically to all its teachings.

"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them";

"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them";

"And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them" (Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:10, 12. Cf. Lev. 18:5);

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law" (Rom. 3:19);

"For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law" (Gal. 5:3).

Not only are some aspects of the kingdom law never attempted by Christians (Cf. Matt. 5:42), but its whole character, being legal, is opposed to grace.

The law of Moses is interrelated and wholly dependent on the sacrifices and ritual provided for Israel in the land. The laws of the kingdom are only related to the yet future kingdom conditions which shall be in the earth under the power and presence of the King when Satan is bound, creation delivered, and all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest. All harmony of truth is shattered when there is the slightest commingling of the principles of law and grace. Grace alone now reigns through Christ to the glory of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

II. The Law Covenant of Works, in All of Its Application, Which Conditions Blessing and Acceptance with God on Personal Merit, Is Done Away

Under this conception of law, its scope is extended beyond the actual writings of the Mosaic system and the law of the kingdom, and includes, as well, any human action, whether in conformity to a precept of Scripture or not, which is attempted with a view to securing favor with God.

The law formula is, "If you will do good, I will bless you." It matters nothing what is undertaken as an obligation. It may be the highest ideal of heavenly conduct belonging to the teachings of grace, or it may be the simplest choice of moral action in daily life; but if it is attempted with a view to securing favor with God, such relationship to God is self-imposed, since it ignores His attitude of grace, and such attempt is purely legal in character and result.

Let it be restated that the basic principle of grace is the fact that all blessings originate with God, and are offered to people graciously. The formula of grace is, "I have blessed you, therefore be good." Thus it is revealed that the motive for right conduct under grace is not to secure the favor of God, which already exists toward saved and unsaved to an infinite degree through Christ; it is rather a matter of consistent action in view of such divine grace.

The unsaved are not urged to secure salvation by meritorious conduct, or even to influence God in their behalf by asking for salvation. Since God is revealed as standing with outstretched hands, offering His greatest possible blessings in grace, and is moved to do so by His unchanging, infinite love, it ill becomes a sinner to fall before Him in an attitude of coaxing and beseeching, as though he were hoping to move God to be merciful and good. The message of grace is: "But as many as received him, to them gave he the power [right] to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). The eternal saving grace of God is offered to all who will believe.

Moreover, the saved do not return to divine fellowship after a relapse into sin because they plead for divine forgiveness; their restoration is conditional on confession. They do not abide in divine fellowship because they seek, or merit, the light; they are instructed to "walk in the light" which is all theirs through riches of grace. In no case are divine blessings to be secured by human merit, or by pleading; they await the faith that will appropriate them. Every gift of divine love is provided and bestowed in pure grace, and not of necessity, nor as a payment, nor a recognition of human merit. Such lavishings of grace create a superhuman obligation for that manner of life which is consistent with the heavenly blessing and position which grace bestows; but the heavenly blessing and position is never earned by even a superhuman manner of life.

The determining character of pure law is seen in the fact that it is a covenant of works wherein the divine blessing is conditioned on human merit. No semblance of this principle is to be found under grace, except that rewards are to be bestowed for faithful service upon those who have already entered into every present position and possession provided in grace. It therefore follows that not only the written rules of the law, but the very principle of the law covenant of works, has been done away in this age of grace.

### III. The Law Principle of Dependence on the Energy of the Flesh, in Place of the Grace Principle of Dependence on the Power of the Indwelling Spirit, Is Done Away

The third and last major distinction between law and grace is seen in the attitude of heart-dependence which is maintained in view of any and all obligation toward God.

The law, being a covenant of works and providing no enablement, addressed itself to the limitations of the natural man. No more was expected or secured in return to its commands than the natural man in his

environment could produce. The requirements under the law are, therefore, on the plane of the limited ability of the flesh.

On the other hand, grace, being a covenant of faith, and providing the limitless enablement of the power of the indwelling Spirit, addresses itself to the unlimited resources of the supernatural man. The requirements to be met under grace are, therefore, on the plane of the unlimited ability of the Spirit. There is no divine injunction addressed to the unregenerate concerning his daily life. The gospel of the saving grace of God alone is offered to him. The only divine injunctions now in force in the world are addressed to those who are saved, and these heaven-high standards are to be realized on the principle of faith toward the sufficiency of the indwelling Spirit, and never by dependence on the energy of the flesh.

Thus it may be seen that any aspect of life or conduct which is undertaken in dependence on the energy and ability of the flesh is, to that extent, purely legal in its character, whether it be the whole revealed will of God, the actual written commandments contained in the law, the exhortations of grace, or any activity whatsoever in which the believer may engage.

Dependence on the arm of the flesh is consistent only with pure law;

dependence on the power of God is demanded under pure grace.

Since there is no provision for the flesh in the plan of God for a life under grace, the law is done away.

#### IV. Judaism Is Done Away

It is often inferred that Christianity is an outgrowth or product of Judaism. In reality these two systems are as independent of each other as the two opposing principles of law and grace. Being thus so widely different in their essential elements, they are, like the principles which they embody, as far removed the one from the other as heaven is higher than the earth. One is of the earth, the old creation, and the flesh; the other is of heaven, of the new creation, and the Spirit. As there are elements and threads of truth which run throughout the entire Bible, so certain features which belong to Judaism are seen to reappear in Christianity; but this obvious fact should not be made the basis of a supposition that these systems are the same, or that one was merged into the other. God, holiness, Satan, man, sin, redemption, and the issues of eternity, are not only relevant facts of both Judaism and Christianity, but they are essential facts of all time, from its beginning to its end. It is true that the same God is the God of the Gentile as well as of the Jew, and that the Jew anticipated the value of Christ's death by sacrifices, as we realize the value of His death through faith; but it does not therefore follow that God's purposes and ways are the same with Israel as with the church.

When these two systems are confused, it is because the differentiating essentials which constitute the Jewish religion and Christianity are ignored.

##### A. Considering Them As Rules of Life

The Old Testament system of law is absolutely superseded by the new system under grace. Christians are not under law either for justification or for sanctification. When Christ said, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill," and that nothing should pass from the law until all was fulfilled (Matt. 5:17-18), He was dealing with Israel while Judaism was still in force, and anticipating the messianic kingdom which, it is revealed, will be purely legal in its character.

## B. Considering Them Under Their Respective Aspects

In the matter of service, there is nothing but contrast between Judaism and Christianity. Israel, under Judaism, went in to perform a sacrifice; we go out to proclaim a sacrifice. Judaism had its ritual, its forms, and its ceremonies which were typical. Christianity could incorporate none of these since it provides a living union to Christ who is Substance and Antitype of all that Judaism prefigured.

## C. Considering Them in Respect to Personal Relationship to God

Under Judaism, the nation was related to Him by the covenant of Sinai, the Abrahamic covenant being temporarily set aside until Christ should come (Gal. 3:19), and individual Israelites were spiritually renewed through their personal faith, though the exact character of their salvation is not revealed. But, under grace, all the positions and possessions of the believer in relation to God transcend the earthly promises of Israel.

The message of Ephesians 2:18-3:10 does not teach that the church is being built on the prophets of the Old Testament; reference is only to the prophets and apostles of the New Testament (Cf. Eph. 4:11). In like manner, the "mystery" (Eph. 3:6) is the formation of a new humanity--the church--out of both Jews and Gentiles, and not a combining of Old Testament saints with New Testament saints.

The theological term, the Old Testament church, has no Scriptural warrant (Acts 7:38 is no exception, being merely a reference to an assembly of people). The true church began at Pentecost, and was made possible through the new outflow of grace in Christ Jesus--by His death, resurrection, and ascension--and the descent of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, Gentile branches are not grafted into Judaism, but into Christ (Rom. 11:17). He is the Vine.

Judaism speaks of an earthly people and an earthly walk in the flesh.

Christianity speaks of a heavenly people and of a heavenly walk in the Spirit.

Since one is of the old creation, its people are under the curse of the first Adam, and its history closes in failure. Since the other is of the new creation, its people are ensphered in the resurrected Christ, and its history will be the consummation of the glory of divine grace. Christianity is indebted to Israel for the humanity of Christ and for the oracles of God; but Israel, the people, must be distinguished from Judaism, the law system. Israel abides to the present hour, while Judaism, so far as divine recognition goes, ceased with the death of Christ. Israel, like all the nations was, as a whole, in Adam lost and undone. While for Israel there was healing for sin and mercy from God, no one under Judaism had any clear vision or revelation of the new life and relationship under grace, which more than all else distinguishes Christianity.

The new life and relationship which characterizes Christianity is Christ as the sphere of the new creation.

Christianity is Christ. It is the unlimited, unrestrained love of God in Christ and its final result will be the unveiling of the glory of His grace in the ages to come. Judaism, through the nation Israel, purposed the highest glory in the earth. Christianity, through the church, purposes the highest glory in heaven.

One is of the "first man" who is "of the earth, earthy."

The other is of the second Man, who is "the Lord from heaven."

Judaism was based on the law and, like the law, applied only to Israel and passed out of force with the death of Christ. So likewise, Israel alone was delivered from the written commandments of Moses through the death of Christ. However, both Jew and Gentile were delivered by that death from the hopeless principle of human merit, and from the useless struggle of the flesh.

The exalted quality of the law is never questioned. It is the expression of the very character of God.

"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). The law did not die; it was a race that died to the law in Christ the Substitute. The holy demands of infinite righteousness can never change or pass away; but one may be changed in his exact responsibility to God and to certain particulars of His holy demands.

The sanctity of the law is never preserved by those who attempt to keep it.

The holy will of God is ever wrought by any person other than Christ. The effort of humanity has universally failed. The supposition that God will be pleased and honored by any fleshly attempt to do His will is a delusion as old as the race. Those who try to keep the law, or try by their own effort to do the whole will of God, outrage the law at every step by their absolute failure.

On the other hand, those who, in recognition of the righteous character of the law, bow before those holy demands, acknowledging their utter failure and inability to fulfill them, and who flee to Christ that they may stand in His redemption, and partake of the very righteousness of God in Him, and be sheltered under the Cross whereon He met every demand of the law for them, are the only ones who really uphold the law, or keep it. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31).

We may conclude, then, that every aspect of the reign of the law has ceased with the death of Christ and the introduction of the reign of grace.

There is no longer any obligation to do the things which are written in the law, only as they have been transferred and restated under the teachings of grace;

there is no longer any obligation to secure favor with God by human merit; and

there is no longer any yoke of bondage, or impossible burden to do what no flesh has ever been able to do.

There is perfect liberty and victory in the priceless provisions of grace; "For ye are not under the law but under grace."

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/lewis-sperry-chafer/the-law-done-away/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**