

Christ In The Commandments — Week 2

THE LAW OF GOD PT. 2

THE DISCONTINUITY/CONTINUITY OF THE LAW

Shorter Catechism

Q.39 What is the duty which God requires of man?

A. The duty which God requires of man is obedience to his revealed will.

Q.40 What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law.

Q. 41. Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

Review

Last time we were together we argued for three divisions within the OT law:

The Ceremonial Law - the rituals that governed Israel's worship

The Judicial Law - the regulations that governed Israel's society

The Moral Law - the rules that governed Israel's heart

Furthermore we saw three main characteristics of the moral law that set it apart from the other two.

1. **The moral law has a self evident nature**
2. **The moral law is based off God's character not His mere will**
3. **God has joined together holiness and happiness in the moral law**

Introduction

Today we are going to see how some of these laws—namely the judicial law and the ceremonial law were both fulfilled in Jesus Christ and *abrogated* (repealed, canceled, made void); whereas the the moral law although it was also fulfilled in Jesus Christ, it continues to this day, not as a new covenant of works but as a rule of life or love. We will introduce the three uses of the law.

- ☆ The Discontinuation of the Ceremonial and Judicial Law
- ☆ The Continuation of the Moral Law

The Big Idea...

All law exists *mainly* to tell us about God

I. The Discontinuity of the Ceremonial and Judicial Law

Different classes of laws

Natural law — (ontological) law dealing with the nature of being¹

Moral law — (ethical) law dealing with what ought to be done or avoided

Positive law — (volitional) law dealing with what one chooses²

Natural law reflects God's nature. There are some things that God must do or to say it negatively, things He can't do. **2 Timothy 2:13** says God "*cannot deny himself.*" Meaning He can't act contrary to His attributes. He can't lie (**Hebrews 6:18**), not because He lacks power but because it is a contradiction to His character—God is truth (**John 14:6**) Natural law is derived from God's nature.

The moral law is derived from natural law. Because God is this way—natural law; therefore we ought to be this way—moral law. These laws must have been given to man because to have given contrary laws would have been for God to deny his holiness and wisdom.

Positive law reflects God's free and sovereign will. God is free to do whatever His holy will desires. **Psalms 115:3** says "Our God is in the heavens;

¹ 1. God's nature (primary and necessary) 2. The nature of things (secondary and created)

² 1. God's will being primary and 2. Man's will being secondary

he does all that he pleases.” Positive law is derived from pure fiat. Fiat is Latin for “let it be done.” There are rules in your own house which are based on moral law: “honor your father and mother” and rules which are based on positive law: “bedtime is at 8 pm”

Claim: The ceremonial and judicial laws have been abrogated, but the moral law remains (abrogate means to repeal, annul, abolish, make void)

Can God dispense of the ceremonial law without sinning (denying Himself)?

Yes the ceremonial law in the OT is derived from purely from God’s will. It is positive law. There was not moral goodness or evil in the ceremonial law in themselves. They came about because God wanted them to and He could have done contrary or not at all without any violation of His holy Person. God did not design the ceremonial law to last forever, He designed it to point to Jesus Christ, and when substance came, the shadow went away. Christ fulfilled and abrogated the ceremonial law.³

Examples from Scripture that God has put away the ceremonial law:⁴

1 Corinthians 7:19 “For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.” In the OT, it was a law to be circumcised, but in the NT, Paul says it counts for nothing.

Mark 7:18-19 “Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is

³ WCF 19.3 “Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the New Testament.”

⁴ Also see Hebrews 10:1-10, specifically v.9 which says “He does away with the first in order to establish the second.” The OT law required animal sacrifices “the first” but now that Jesus came God has done away with them in order to establish Christ “the second.”

expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.)”⁵ Certain foods were forbidden by law to eat in the OT, but in the NT all foods are clean.

Can God dispense of the judicial law without sinning (denying Himself)?

Yes. Although God still must punish all sin, there is no contradiction in that punishment being reserved for the judgment seat or substituted on Christ. The judicial laws came into being when Israel was born as a nation under a theocracy. That theocracy was put away when Christ came. Here’s how the WCF says it

To them also, as a body politic, He gave [various]⁶ judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging under any now, further than the *general equity* thereof may require.⁷

There may be some judicial laws today that some nations and even America hold that Ancient Israel did. That’s why the Puritans included the language of “general equity.” Here’s one verse that speaks to the fact that God doesn’t require us to follow the theocratic judicial laws of ancient Israel.

2 Peter 2:12-13 “Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.” In other words it is the body politic of each nation that we are supposed to be subject to and not the judicial law of OT Israel.

⁵ Also see Acts 10:15; Romans 14:17

⁶ original — “sundry”

⁷ WCF 19.4

II. The Continuation of Moral Law

Can God dispense of the moral law without sinning (denying Himself)?⁸

No. If God were able to dispense with the moral law at any time, then He was free⁹ to not make it in the first place. *Which means the moral law was based on positive law—meaning merely His will.* But if this were the case then God could have commanded the opposite of any one of or all of the commandments. He could have commanded us to hate him and blaspheme Him; to believe in other gods; to refuse to obey him or to believe lies about him that He is unjust or evil or weak, or to worship the Devil Himself. As Francis Turretin says “Thus the most horrible sins (hatred of God, atheism, blasphemy and the like) would become praiseworthy for...[they] would be changed and they would no longer be sins.”¹⁰

Secondly, if the moral law could be put away, then it is no different than the ceremonial law (derived merely from God’s will).¹¹ If so, then mixing wool and cotton together would have no greater or lesser guilt than murder. To even say such a thing is sufficient to show it’s absurdity, but Scripture itself constantly testifies that the moral law is so much better than the ceremonial law that they

⁸ Francis Turretin lays out the three competing opinions 1)The Moral Law is dispensable; 2) The Moral Law is partly indispensable (1st Table) and partly dispensable (2nd Table); 3) The Moral Law as far as its precepts are concerned is indispensable. [In 2) and 3), both would recognize the 4th commandment is mixed partly of moral law and partly of positive law] Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, Vol. 2, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 1994), pg. 9-10

⁹ God can be necessitated by contingent things. “Although the divine will is simply free, outwardly; still on the exercise of one free act he can be necessitated to another; as if he wills to promise absolutely, he is necessitated to fulfill the promise; if he wills to speak and reveal, he is bound to reveal the truth; if he wills to govern, he must govern justly; if he wills to have subjects using reason, he must be their legislator.” (Cajetan) Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, Vol. 2, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 1994), pg. 11

¹⁰ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, Vol. 2, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 1994), pg. 11

¹¹ The ten commandments do contain a mixture of moral and ceremonial (or natural and positive): the 4th commandment which is moral in so far as God is Lord of our calendar commanding both work and worship, but ceremonial as to the circumstances, namely the defined time; and the 5th commandment which is moral in the honoring of father and mother but ceremonial (judicial) in the promise of the land. We will see this as we tackle the commandments themselves.

are not worth comparing. **1 Corinthians 7:19** “For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but keeping the commandments of God.”¹²

Understanding this matters especially in our Biblically illiterate age. Nearly a decade ago, I was speaking to this *Christian* woman who was troubled by the fact that the church just picks and chooses which laws that they want to obey and not obey. She said we choose to disobey the OT law regarding stoning disobedient children¹³ but we choose to obey the OT law forbidding homosexuality. She cried foul.¹⁴

God cannot dispense of the moral law because the moral law is based off His nature. **2 Timothy 2:13** says “[God] cannot deny himself” —meaning God cannot deny His nature or the truth of who He is.¹⁵

How do we know that the moral law is summarily comprehended in the 10?

It’s one thing for the catechism to say it (**Q.41**), it’s another to demonstrate it. Because it could be said that the moral law is the essence of what God requires and the ten commandments are merely an expression of. For instance, we ought to love our brother and not hate him. In fact Jesus says that “everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment” (Matthew 5:21) But the 6th commandment merely says “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13). So how do we answer this?

When Jesus *rightly interprets* the Ten Commandments, He shows that they were not *merely* assertions of one duty (5th commandment) or *merely* assertions

¹² cf. 1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 51:16-17; Proverbs 21:3; Hosea 6:6; Matt 23:23; John 8:1-11; 1 Cor. 7:19;

¹³ Deut. 21:18-21

¹⁴ Additionally you will hear pastors say very naive things like “Jesus never said anything about homosexuality”—implying that it is not a big deal to Jesus. So pervasive is this line of thinking that even the Babylon Bee the satirical Christian news site posted an article entitled: “Jesus Never Said ANYTHING About Felony Home Invasion.” source: <http://babylonbee.com/news/jesus-never-said-anything-felony-home-invasion/> accessed September 13, 2017

¹⁵ And “if the law is [based] on God’s [nature] and humans are made in God’s image, then the law *fits* our nature as well.” Dr. Art Lindsley gives an example: “if a person jumps from a plane, he may feel as free as a bird for a moment, but unless he has a parachute, the law of gravity will [kill him]...God’s law is like a manufacturer’s manual showing human beings how to act according to their nature. There are consequences to each action.” Source <https://tifwe.org/resource/moral-law-and-the-ten-commandments/> accessed September 13, 2017

of one prohibition (6th commandment). Rather, each command included not *only* the letters they were signifying but the spirit behind them.¹⁶ This is the meaning of Jesus saying “You have heard that it was said...but I say to you.”¹⁷ In other words “Jesus taught that the spirit of the law is included in the letter of the law.”¹⁸

What did Jesus do on the Sermon on the Mount?

The Socinians¹⁹ a heretical group during the Protestant Reformation, as well as the ancient religion of Manichaeism²⁰ (from whom Augustine was converted), and the Roman Catholics²¹ all held (or hold) that what Christ taught on the sermon on the mount either **1) replaced** the ten commandments, or **2)**

¹⁶ Q. 99. What rules are to be observed for the right understanding of the Ten Commandments?

A. For the right understanding of the Ten Commandments, these rules are to be observed:

1. That the law is perfect, and bindeth every one to full conformity in the whole man unto the righteousness thereof, and unto entire obedience forever; so as to require the utmost perfection of every duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin.
2. That it is spiritual, and so reacheth the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul; as well as words, works, and gestures.
3. That one and the same thing, in divers respects, is required or forbidden in several commandments.
4. That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded: so, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included.
5. That what God forbids, is at no time to be done; what he commands, is always our duty; and yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times.
6. That under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto.
7. That what is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavor that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places.
8. That in what is commanded to others, we are bound, according to our places and callings, to be helpful to them; and to take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them.

¹⁷ As in Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38

¹⁸ Source <https://tifwe.org/resource/moral-law-and-the-ten-commandments/> accessed September 13, 2017 Lindsley goes on to say “the law prohibits the root as well as the fruit of the deed.”

¹⁹ “Socinianism is an unorthodox form of non-trinitarianism that was developed around the same time as the Protestant Reformation (1517-1648) by Italian humanist Lelio Sozzini and later promulgated by his cousin, Fausto Sozzini.” The beliefs they espoused were non-Trinitarian unitarianism, rationalism, open theism, as well as denying penal substitutionary atonement in favor of the example theory. Source <https://www.gotquestions.org/Socinianism.html> accessed September 11, 2017

²⁰ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Manichaeism.html>

²¹ At least in the time of Francis Turretin, see *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Vol. 2*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 1994), pg. 19

that it partly **added** to it or partly **subtracted** from it, or **3)** that it **made** what was imperfect **more perfect**.²² And therefore what Christ taught has superseded or abrogated the moral law or the ten commandments.

This is not our view.²³ I don't think these views can stand against the testimony of a more careful exegesis. Here are three reasons.

- 1) **The OT Scripture called the law perfect.** Psalm 19:7 "The law of the Lord is perfect" If the law is perfect, than why would Jesus have to replace it? Why would He have to add to it? If it was perfect and subtracted from it, it would not be perfect now. If it was perfect it cannot be made more perfect. As Francis Turretin said "The law could not be supplemented or corrected without convicting it of imperfection or faultiness (and so charging faultiness upon God, the author of the law.)"²⁴

- 2) **Christ said "I have not come to abolish [the Law] but to fulfill [it] (Matt. 5:17).** Many have interpreted Jesus here to mean that since He has fulfilled the law, therefore the law (including the moral law) has been abrogated. But the verse doesn't say that. It says the opposite. "I have not come to abolish...but to fulfill." That word *fulfill* does not mean to replace, or to add or to subtract or to make more imperfect. It means *to do* what is commanded.²⁵ Thus Christ fulfilled the law by obeying it perfectly.²⁶ Furthermore this is the same language that Paul will use later. In **Romans 13:8**, he says "the one who loves another has *fulfilled* (same Greek word) the

²² *ibid*, pg. 18-19

²³ That is, this is not the Reformed View. See Westminster Confession of Faith 19.5-6

²⁴ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Vol. 2*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 1994), pg. 20

²⁵ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Vol. 2*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 1994), pg. 20. Wilhelmus A Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service Vol. 3: The Law, Christian Graces, and the Lord's Prayer*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Reformation Heritage Books, 1994), pg. 56

²⁶ He specifically says in v.19 that anyone who teaches others to relax the Law in anyway will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

law.” Clearly Paul is not saying that the Christian has replaced, or added or subtracted or abolished the law, but rather he has done what the law requires by loving one another. (cf. **Galatians 5:14**)

- 3) **Jesus didn't deviate from what Moses taught.** Jesus did not replace, add, subtract or make more perfect anything than what Moses had already said.²⁷ When asked what the greatest commandment was (**Matthew 22:36**), he relied on Moses. **Deuteronomy 6:5** says You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. **Leviticus 19:8** says “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Furthermore, if Jesus abrogated the moral law, then it is exceedingly strange that both Paul and James would hold it up. Paul uses the exact language of the ten commandments in **Romans 13:8-9** “Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (cf. **James 2:8, 10-11**) Neither Jesus, nor Paul, nor any of the other apostles deviated from the moral law found in the Ten Commandments.

What about the specific language Jesus uses on the Sermon on the Mount?

Remember the counter claim is that what Jesus did on the Sermon on the Mount *superseded* Moses. He either replaced it (Socinians), added to or subtracted from it (Manichaeans) or he perfected the imperfect (Rome). Those

²⁷ The language of a “new” command found in John 13:34 I think is best explained in 1 John 2:7-8. Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.” The commandment to love is not new. It was announced in the Old Testament. However it is “new” in the sense that it was repaired or renovated by Christ who illustrated what true love really is. Francis Turretin has said it is “old with regard to its first promulgation in the Old Testament; new with regard to its renovation and illustration in the New.” Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Vol. 2*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 1994), pg. 20

who oppose the continuance of the moral law will point to the very specific things that Jesus said on the Mount.

Six times Jesus said a variation of “You have heard that it was said...*but* I say to you.” In Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38 and 43. In these statements, it is claimed, that Jesus is placing his teaching over and above and against Moses: “You have heard that it was said...*but* I say to you.” So is that what Jesus is doing? No. Jesus is not opposing Moses. He is opposing the Pharisees and the scribes who have either wrongly interpreted the law, or have added to the law, or have interpreted the law superficially. Let’s start with the clearest one first.

Matthew 5:43-44

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,” So the question is: Who was Jesus referring to when He said “You have heard it said?” From *who*? Well the first part “You shall love your neighbor” is clearly from Moses (**Lev. 19:18**). But the second part—“and hate your enemy” is nowhere found in Moses. In fact the opposite is found.²⁸ In **Exodus 23:4-5**, he says to rescue your enemy’s ox or donkey if you seeing it going astray. In **Proverbs 25:21**, Solomon says “If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink” Jesus is not correcting Moses. He never said “hate your enemy” These statements: “You have heard that it was said” came from wrong or superficial interpretations from the Pharisees and the scribes who have set aside Moses in favor of their traditions. Jesus shows this explicitly in Mark 7. There the Pharisees criticized the disciples for not washing their hands before they ate—which was a tradition of the elders (v.3-4). Jesus told them in **Mark 7:9-10** “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! *For* Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’;”

²⁸ In the very passage where Moses says “You shall love you neighbor as yourself” He says in “You shall not take vengeance.”

The Pharisees falsely interpreted Moses²⁹

Jesus attacked the way the Pharisees were *interpreting* Moses: purely external, purely superficial, purely the letter without the Spirit. We the Pharisees were interpreting the law superficially. For instance Jesus says in **Matthew 5:33-34** “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,” Jesus is not correction the third commandment regarding taking the name of the Lord in vain regarding oaths. He is correcting their superficial interpretation of it. The Pharisees shrunk the oath command to *merely* mean it was wrong to commit perjury: “You shall not swear falsely” or to fail in performing what was sworn. But they thought that it was perfectly ok to make oaths regarding what they thought were trivial things and break those oaths. **Matthew 23:16, 18** “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, *it is nothing*, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ [18] And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, *it is nothing*, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ They believed they could make oaths and break them with impunity. They tried to hold to the letter of Moses while denying the spirit of Moses. Jesus was correcting them, not Moses.

In **Matthew 5:21-22**, the Jews reduced the sixth commandment—“You shall not murder”—to *merely* unjust homicide. What is the root of murder? Hatred. Anger. These things are the root that produces the fruit of murder. “The law prohibits the root as well as the fruit of the deed.”³⁰ The same is true in **Matthew 5:27-28**, they reduced the seventh commandment—“You shall not

²⁹ As Francis Turretin says “Therefore the antithesis instituted by Christ is not between himself and Moses (or the law delivered by him, but the glosses of the Pharisees upon the law of Moses which which they restricted it too much and falsely interpreted it.” Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Vol. 2*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 1994), pg. 21

³⁰ Source: <https://tifwe.org/resource/moral-law-and-the-ten-commandments/> accessed September 13, 2017

commit adultery”—to merely violating the marriage bed. But Jesus said the spirit of the law also prohibited “lustful intent.” Jesus was teaching them that they had grossly under interpreted the law. That is why Jesus told the disciples in this same sermon “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (**Matthew 5:20**) You see Jesus intended to set aside the false righteousness the Pharisees thought they achieved through their under interpretation of Moses.³¹ Jesus’ intention was not to set aside Moses himself.³²

Objection: We are not under law, but under grace

One last objection. There are multiple texts that say that we as believers are *not under the law*. (Romans 6:14; 7:6; Galatians 3:23-25; 5:18; 1 Timothy 1:9).

Now we’ve already seen that the Scripture uses the word “law” to point to different things.³³ So the first question we need to ask is “which law does Paul mean?” And the second question we need to ask is “under the law for what?”

³¹ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Vol. 2*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 1994), pg. 21

³² Regarding divorce (Matthew 5:31-32), the Pharisees didn’t teach what Moses taught. Moses taught that divorce was only permissible on the grounds of sexual immorality (the idea behind “some indecency” in Deut. 24:1). Jesus points out they were teaching a no-fault divorce “Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce” as if, says Turretin “the putting away of a wife in any manner did not at all conflict with the law, provided the formula of discussion was observed and the husband, by the usual writing, ordered her to take her own things and go about her business.” See pg. 24, section XIX in *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Vol. 2*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing, 1994), pg. 24.

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Regarding retaliation (Matthew 5:38-42) I refer you to Turretin himself, same volume, page 23, section XVI - XVII. I believe the case has already been adequately made in showing that Jesus did not replace, add to or subtract from, or make more perfect the law of Moses.

³³ Sometimes the word “law” is used to speak of the law of nature (**Romans 2:14-15**); the depraved nature of man (**Romans 7:23**); the entire Scripture (**Psalms 19:7-8**); the writings of Moses (**Luke 24:44**); the gospel (**Romans 3:27**); the covenant of works in contradistinction to the covenant of grace. (**Romans 6:14**); the three divisions within the Mosaic law itself, as in the judicial law (**John 19:7**); the ceremonial law (**Hebrews 10:1**); and the moral law summarized in the ten commandments (**Matthew 22:36-38**).

We are no longer under the ceremonial law as a schoolmaster

Paul was arguing against those who combined the ceremonial law and the moral law together and who sought to be justified before God not the basis of their obedience. So as Brakel points out: “When [Paul] declares that believers are not under the law, he at times speaks of the ceremonial laws due to Christ having come.”³⁴ In other words, when Paul says in **Gal. 3:25** “now that faith has come, we are no longer under a *guardian*.” He means now that Christ has come, we are no longer under the ceremonial law. It was meant only to teach Israel about the Messiah. When Messiah came, it completed its purpose and is done away. Therefore, when Paul says “You are not under the law”—in some places He means that we are no longer to be guided like a schoolmaster by the ceremonial law, because we have Christ Himself.

We are not under the moral law as a covenant of works

At other times, when Paul declares that believers are not under the law, he is correcting those who viewed the moral law as a *condition* of the covenant of works. Remember, God established the covenant of works with Adam. Perfect obedience was necessary for gaining eternal life. Adam broke this covenant. All unbelievers are currently under the curse of the covenant of works. But Paul is saying that for those who are in Christ, the condition for salvation has already been met by Jesus Himself. We are not under the curse of the law. Jesus took the curse on for us in His death on the cross. The moral law does not serve as a *condition* to be saved for those in Christ. So when **Romans 6:14** says “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace,” Paul means we are in the covenant of grace, and because of Christ we are not under the condemning power of the law.

³⁴ Wilhelmus A Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service Vol. 3: The Law, Christian Graces, and the Lord's Prayer*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Reformation Heritage Books, 1994), pg. 59

Summary

When you see verses in the NT that say we are not under the law, you need to ask “which law does Paul mean?” and “under the law for what?” Two important truths from today’s class. **(1 The moral law—summarized in the Ten Commandments—has not been abrogated.** It continues today. **2) The moral law is not a condition for the covenant of works for believers.** We are no longer under the curse of the law. How then does the moral law relate to us? As a rule of life—as a rule of love (WCF 19.6) We’ll see that next week.

Westminster Confession of Faith

Chapter 19: Of The Law Of God

I. God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity, to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience, promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.³⁵

II. This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables:³⁶ the first four commandments containing our duty towards God; and the other six, our duty to man.³⁷

III. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits;³⁸ and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral

³⁵ GEN 1:26 -27; 2:17; ROM 2:14-15; 10:5; 5:12, 19; GAL 3:10, 12; ECC 7:29; JOB 28:28

³⁶ JAM 1:25; 2:8; 10-12; ROM 13:8-9; DEU 5:32; 10:4; EXO 24:1

³⁷ MAT 22:37-40

³⁸ HEB 9; HEB 10:1; GAL 4:1-3; COL 2:16-17

duties.³⁹ All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the New Testament.⁴⁰

IV. To them also, as a body politic, He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging under any now, further than the general equity thereof may require.⁴¹

V. The moral law does forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof;⁴² and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it.⁴³ Neither does Christ, in the Gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.⁴⁴

VI. Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned;⁴⁵ yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly;⁴⁶ discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts and lives;⁴⁷ so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin,⁴⁸ together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of His obedience.⁴⁹ It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin:⁵⁰ and the threatenings of it serve

³⁹ 1CO 5:7; 2CO 6:17; JUD 23

⁴⁰ COL 2:14-17; DAN 9:27; EPH 2:15-16

⁴¹ EXO 21-22; GEN 49:10; 1PE 2:13-14; MAT 5:17, 38-39; 1CO 9:8-10

⁴² ROM 13:8-10; EPH 6:2; 1JO 2:3-4, 7-8

⁴³ JAM 2:10-11

⁴⁴ MAT 5:17-19; JAM 2:8; ROM 3:31

⁴⁵ ROM 6:14; GAL 2:16; 3:13; 4:4-5; ACT 13:39; ROM 8:1

⁴⁶ ROM 7:12, 22, 25; PSA 119:4-6; 1CO 7:19; GAL 5:14,16,18-23

⁴⁷ ROM 7:7; ROM 3:20

⁴⁸ JAM 1:23-25; ROM 7:9,14, 24

⁴⁹ GAL 3:24; ROM 7:24-25; 8:3-4

⁵⁰ JAM 2:11; PSA 119:101, 104, 128

to show what even their sins deserve; and what afflictions, in this life, they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law.⁵¹ The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof:⁵² although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works.⁵³ So as, a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourages to the one and deters from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law: and not under grace.⁵⁴

VII. Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the Gospel, but do sweetly comply with it;⁵⁵ the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely, and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requires to be done.⁵⁶

⁵¹ EZR 9:13-14; PSA 89:30-34

⁵² LEV 26; 2CO 6:16; EPH 6:2-3; PSA 37:11; MAT 5:5; PSA 19:11

⁵³ GAL 2:16; LUK 17:10

⁵⁴ ROM 6:12, 14; 1PE 3:8-12; PSA 34:12-16; HEB 12:28-29

⁵⁵ GAL 3:21

⁵⁶ EZE 36:27; HEB 8:10; JER 31:33