

THE TOP TEN GRACE KILLERS

Grace Killer #2:

Not Understanding What Paul Meant by “Law”

REVIEW: Grace Killer #1: Adding the Old Covenant to the New

Error: We are under the New Covenant, but parts of the Old Covenant also apply to New Covenant believers.

Truth: The Old Covenant was for THE JEWS ONLY. No Christian at any time has been under the Old Covenant. We are under ONE covenant, the New Covenant.

1. The New Covenant is NEW NOT like the Old.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

2. The New Covenant does not begin at the beginning of the gospels.

Hebrews 9:15-17

For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.¹⁶For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.¹⁷For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.

3. Jesus was born under the Law and His ministry on earth was to the Jews. His sayings must thus be taken in context.

Matthew 15:21-28

Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."²³ But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."²⁴ But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

John 1:11

He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

4. The Old Covenant was a system of blessings and curses for following or not following the Law. Under the New Covenant, we are already blessed.

Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

2 Peter 1:3

Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

Grace Killer #2: Not Understanding What Paul Meant by “Law”

Error: When Paul wrote that we are not under the law, he meant the ceremonial and civil laws, not the Ten Commandments.

Truth: The Ten Commandments ARE the Old Covenant and the Old Covenant is OBSOLETE.

WHY DO CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THIS?

1. The distinctions between moral, civil/judicial, and ceremonial law are a human invention.

The Westminster Confession adds the category of judicial or civil law. These laws were specifically given for the culture and place of the Israelites and encompass all of the moral law except the Ten Commandments. This includes everything from murder to restitution for a man gored by an ox and the responsibility of the man who dug a pit to rescue his neighbor's trapped donkey (Exodus 21:12-36). Since the Jews saw no difference between their God-ordained morality and their cultural responsibilities, this category is used by Christians far more than by Jewish scholars.¹

The division of the Jewish law into different categories is a human construct designed to better understand the nature of God and define which laws church-age Christians are still required to follow. Many believe the ceremonial law is not applicable, but we are bound by the Ten Commandments. All the law is useful for instruction (2 Timothy 3:16), and nothing in the Bible indicates that God intended a distinction of categories. Christians are not under the law (Romans 10:4). Jesus fulfilled the law, thus abolishing the difference between Jew and Gentile "so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross..." (Ephesians 2:15-16).²

2. Scriptures are quoted out of context to “prove” that we are still under the moral law (Ten Commandments). Here is one example.

Quoted Out of Context	The Verse in Immediate Context
<p>Romans 3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.</p>	<p>Romans 3:21-24, 28 But now the righteousness of God <u>apart from the law</u> is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus... ²⁸ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.</p>

¹ "What is the difference between the ceremonial law, the moral law, and the judicial law in the Old Testament?" gotquestions.org/ ceremonial-law.html

² "What is the difference between the ceremonial law, the moral law, and the judicial law in the Old Testament?" gotquestions.org/ ceremonial-law.html

3. Yet, even well-known modern day teachers continue to deliberately separate the law into categories for the purpose of obligating Christians to still be under the moral law. The information is taught as if there is no debate.³

*We'll see as we walk through Paul's letter that what caused his opening outburst was a group of teachers who were teaching Gentile Christian converts that they were obliged to keep the **Jewish cultural customs of the mosaic law—the dietary, laws, circumcision and the rest of the ceremonial law in order to be truly pleasing to God.***

*Paul says that any teaching which add **keeping Mosaic ceremonial law** to faith in Christ “perverts the gospel.”*

4. However, many Bible scholars understand there is no separation.

*For if righteousness comes by the law - If justification can be secured by the observance of **any law - ceremonial or moral** - then there was no need of the death of Christ as an atonement. This is plain. If man by conformity to **any law** could be justified before God, what need was there of an atonement? The work would then have been wholly in his own power, and the merit would have been his.⁴*

IMPROVING OUR UNDERSTANDING

1. The Early Church did not separate the law into categories for the purpose of obligating Christians to still be under the moral law.

Galatians 5:1-4

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.² Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.³ **And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the WHOLE law.**⁴ You have become estranged from Christ, **you who attempt to be made righteous by law**; you have fallen from grace.*

Acts 15:5 (The Jerusalem Council: Are the Gentiles required to keep the Law of Moses?)

*But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, **“It is necessary to circumcise them, AND to command them to keep the law of Moses.”***

2. When given the chance to list the Ten Commandments, the Council DID NOT.

Acts 15:28-29 (Concluding statement of the Jerusalem Council)

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

- ²⁹ that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled,
- and from sexual immorality.

If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

⁴ From Barnes Notes on the Bible at Galatians 2:21

3. This conclusion is of no minor significance. They Jerusalem Council could have just as easily made it perfectly clear, “If you keep the Ten Commandments, you will do well.” BUT THEY DIDN’T!!! This is because they understood the question: Are we required to be circumcised AND keep the Law of Moses (The Ten Commandments)? THEY KNEW EXACTLY WHAT THEY WERE SAYING. WE ARE NOT JUSTIFIED BY LAW, BUT BY FAITH.

Acts 15:10-11

“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”

4. Paul very clearly, consistently, and repeatedly declared that we are not under any moral law.⁵

Romans 7:4-6

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. ⁵ For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. ⁶ But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Romans 6:14

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Galatians 2:21

I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

5. Some will say that, no, we aren’t made righteous by the law, but we need it as a moral guide. This is false.

Galatians 3:21-15

Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

6. Others argue that we need the Ten Commandments to teach Christians right from wrong. This is also error.

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹²teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.

⁵ Note: NO ONE is saying that Christians are amoral or immoral. God forbid. Because we are new creations who have been set free from and are dead to sin, our conduct which is RESULT of our faith, exceeds any moral code known to man reaching deeply beyond outward expression to even our thoughts. Yet, this is an act of grace and fruit of the Spirit, not through a compliance to a moral code.

7. Christians don't sin because we no longer have a sinful nature. We are new creations. All things have become new. We are free from and dead to sin.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, ALL things have become new.

CLEARING UP CONFUSION

1. The Old Covenant is OSOLETE (see review of Grace Killer #1 above).
2. The Ten Commandments are the basis of the Old Covenant and we are not under it.

Exodus 34:28

*So he (Moses) was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. **And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.***

Deuteronomy 4:13

*So He declared to you His **covenant** which He commanded you to perform, the **Ten Commandments**; and He wrote them on **two tablets of stone**.*

3. Paul referred to the Ten Commandments as the ministry of death and the ministry of condemnation.

2 Corinthians 3:6-9

*Who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.⁷But if the **ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones**, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was,⁸how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?⁹For if the **ministry of condemnation** has glory, much more does the **ministry of righteousness abound in glory**.*

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WHY THIS IS ALL SO IMPORTANT

1. If we don't understand that when Paul wrote "law" he meant all law, we aren't capable of understanding any of his writings. Everything becomes distorted.

Examples:

- *Galatians 2:21 says that if we base our righteousness of law, then we nullify the grace of God and Christ died in vain. If "law" means only ceremonial laws, then this verse loses all meaning to us who don't participate in ceremonial laws. We go on nullifying the grace of God and despising his cross without even knowing it when we omit the Ten Commandments.*
- *Romans 6 loses its meaning entirely. For example, verse 14 says that "sin has no dominion over you because you are not under law, but under grace". That would be to say that we are free from sin because we don't have to keep feasts and*

ceremonies—which is a weak and pitiful thought. We are free from sin BECAUSE we are under GRACE and are no longer under the LAW—THE ENTIRE LAW.

- *Paul calls the law the ministry of death and of condemnation. In what way is a feast or ceremony condemning? It is the law that condemns by pronouncing a curse on those who do not obey it.*
- *The Jerusalem Council blew it by not pointing this distinction out. They could have more easily said, “We conclude this, that a man is not justified by ceremonies and feasts, but by faith in Christ AND keeping the Ten Commandments. Do this and you will do well.”*
- *When Paul wrote, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes,” did he mean to say that Christ was the end of ceremonies and feasts? That makes no sense. Christ is the end of the Old Covenant and the entire Law of Moses.*

2. We begin to base our righteousness on how well we are keeping the commandments. We become either self-righteous (if we are somewhat successful), or we become defeated (if we aren't).
3. If our relationship with God has anything to do with us keeping the law, our relationship with Him diminishes and our “life” if Christ becomes all about us and what we do which brings MISERY because instinctively we know we could never be perfect enough. We fail, but Jesus never fails.
4. We begin to doubt His love for us.
5. We become estranged from Christ if we seek to be made righteous by law.
6. When we add commandments to law, we nullify the cross of Christ. This is to be anti-Christ.
7. When we nullify the cross of Christ, we negate all the He has accomplished, and to “get” anything from God, we feel we must earn it.
8. We also begin to wonder if God might be cursing us or punishing us for falling short
9. When we add law to grace, we KILL GRACE. Either we live by law or we live by grace. There is no combination of the two. GRACE + LAW = LAW.
10. If we are trying to be taught by the commandments, we never fully learn what it is to be taught by grace. Many Christians are never fully free from sin's dominion.
11. This LIFE we were given becomes more like a DEATH. We have to FORCE ourselves to obey as if nothing has changed since we believed, instead of learning to live as new creations.
12. Jesus deserves for you to have EVERYTHING He DIED to give you, but you will not have faith to receive anything from God if you are basing His blessings on your performance of the law instead of faith in Christ alone.

The difference is crucial because Jesus fulfilled the law through His death (Gal. 3:13). Attempting to now be justified before God by following laws is to make His death a worthless act (Gal. 2:21). In Christ, we died to the law, our old husband, in order to be married to Christ (Rom. 7:1-6). To return to law for instruction instead of receiving guidance from grace is to commit spiritual adultery. Adding law to grace is like asking your former spouse to come and live with you and your new spouse, and then trying to please them both. The one who nags the most, the law, will win out eventually, and the new spouse, grace, will be nullified. Furthermore, teaching law actually strengthens sin (1 Cor. 15:56); whereas, grace frees us from

the dominion of sin (Rom. 6:14). Finally, there is Paul's warning. Adding law to grace is to preach "another" gospel.⁶

⁶ Are We Preaching "Another" Gospel", Day 28