

# The Law or the Holy Spirit

## What is the rule of life for a Christian?

### Introduction

My purpose in this short paper is to compare the differences between the Mosaic Law, as the rule or guide of life, with the office and work of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying believers. I do not intend to delve into the theological controversy surrounding arguments on the Old and New Covenant that stem from the Reformation onwards; but I do want to question the bland acceptance that the law is the rule of life for Christians; which is part and parcel of traditional Reformed denominations. To begin with, we must identify certain crucial defining lines of Biblical history.

### Preparatory Statements

#### What is the law in universal terms?

All would agree that the essence of 'law' is the will of God for the behaviour of mankind. Fundamentally, law in the Bible is the reflection of the will of God as applied to human ethics. It is the divine guide for human morality.

#### Was this law manifest before Sinai?

Indeed it was. Patriarchs knew what their behaviour had to be and wickedness is repeatedly condemned. Indeed the world was flooded because human behaviour was judged as evil continually (Gen 6:5). One patriarch was so careful about his walk with God that God took him directly into heavenly fellowship without the man dying (Gen 5:24).

God's covenant with Abraham is the basis of the New Covenant and precedes the Mosaic Law. Indeed Abraham is described as the rock from which we are cut, and the root that supports, us since he is the model of faith (Rm 11:18). His faith led to his justification by God. Paul emphasises that the declaration of Abraham's righteousness occurred before he was circumcised, that is before he carried the distinction of Jewishness and the seal of the Mosaic Covenant (Rm 4:8-13). Circumcision, tithing, godly morals and blood sacrifice were known to please God before the law was manifested on tablets of stone. Indeed, it is likely that Adam was given thorough instruction by God from the very beginning; certainly it seems that the principle of blood sacrifice was known to Cain and Abel.

Furthermore, the type of Christ's eternal priesthood appears before Sinai and is manifest in Melchizedek. Although the typical teachings of the Levitical priesthood are instructive to believers and foreshadow much of Christ's work, the key element of Christ's priesthood is stated to be of Melchizedek not Aaron.<sup>1</sup> Even the OT affirmed this (Ps 110:4).

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<sup>1</sup> See the argument in Heb c. 5,6,7

### What is the Mosaic Law?

The Law of Moses (i.e. the giving of God's law, mediated by Moses at Sinai) was a particular manifestation of the universal law of God given to a specific nation under theocracy,<sup>2</sup> at a specific time for a specific reason. This law was only ever meant to be temporary in effect (Gal 2:19) and its prime purpose was to reveal the depth of human sin (Rm 3:20, 5:13,20) and lead the way to the revelation of Christ (Gal 3:23-24). Since it was only given to Israel until the manifestation of their Messiah, it ceased to be effectively operative to believers (Rm 6:14, 7:6) and ceased to have fleshly effect even on Jews after 70 AD (Heb 8:13).<sup>3</sup>

Since it was a manifestation of God's universal law, it is full of important and useful items that benefit mankind and Christians, the law is good (Rm 7:12,16). The essence of the Mosaic Law was summed up by Christ as, *'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'* **This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'** *On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.* (Matt 22:37-40) which is also the essence of the law of Christ.<sup>4</sup> Such behaviour is clearly right.

### The law is limited

However, the Mosaic Law is also full of items that have no place for the believer (such as blood sacrifices, an officiating priesthood, a material temple and ceremonial regulations). These were strictly for Jews under the Old Covenant. The traditional Reformed distinction between ceremonial, civic and moral commandments, used in a false effort to remove awkward commands from useful commands, is unbiblical and arises from the scholasticism of Aquinas. Indeed, Scripture affirms that if you intend to keep the law, you must keep all of it or pay it's penalty, you cannot omit things you don't like (Jm 2:10; Gal 3:10). This means that attempts to use the law as a rule of living for believers is false. Indeed, the New Testament, incorporating the New Covenant, gives adequate guidance on where the believer finds his source of direction and it is not the law.

Neither is there an apostolic model for teaching that an exposition of the law is a necessary foundational introduction to sharing the Gospel with unbelievers. The Pauline pattern is to explain the Lordship of God as creator and man's responsibility to him, when dealing with Gentiles;<sup>5</sup> and proving that Jesus is the expected Messiah from the OT scriptures to Jews.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Direct rule by God.

<sup>3</sup> The precepts and sanctions of the law could not formally operate without an officiating priesthood and the temple in Jerusalem. Both vanished after the temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Note also that Judaism ceased to have any prophets after John the Baptist.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Jn 4:11-12,21; Rm 8:28; Eph 5:2; 1 Thess 4:9; 2 Thess 3:5; 1 Pt 2:17; Jm 2:5; Gal 6:2,10.

<sup>5</sup> For example see Acts 17:16ff.

<sup>6</sup> For example: Acts 17:2-3, 10-11.

## Thesis: The Spirit has replaced the law as the rule of life for the believer.

*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Gal 5:18*

The law was the rule of life for post-Sinai Jews and operated by laying down precepts and commands, having strictures for failure and options for mercy. The punishments and forgiveness were entirely dependent upon the priestly system, which has now vanished, and the temple or earlier tabernacle which have been destroyed. A modern Jew cannot find mercy for a trespass by offering a goat to a priest who will sacrifice it at the door of the tabernacle or altar of the temple. God has ensured that the foundational institutions of the law have been eradicated in order to emphasise that the law is not the means of ensuring communion with God. This is so obvious as to beg the question - why do so many Reformed teachers insist that the law is the proper means of regulating the believer's life?

The main reason is the huge importance of the giving of the first principles of the moral law at Sinai. The Ten Commandments are so important and so clear a testimony of right behaviour that many feel that this must form an eternal foundation for life, even for believers in Christ. They get round the problem of the law being cancelled by saying that the moral law of the 10 Commandments is an eternal, abiding separate aspect of the Mosaic Law, which has no bearing upon justification for righteousness but does have application for walking in faith. The problem is that apostolic teaching is otherwise, and the Ten Commandments do not sufficiently cover internal thoughts and emotions, which are to be taken captive by believers (2 Cor 10:5).

The writer to the Hebrews emphasises this contrast: the Old Covenant, including the moral law which written on tablets of stone, was external; while the New Covenant is internal and written on hearts and minds.

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people (Heb 8:10 and 10:16).*

The law was external, being written down as rules, and was removed [made to cease, taken away (*airo*)]. The effect of the cross was to get rid of the law that condemned and cursed us because we could not keep it.

*... having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross (Col 2:14).*

If it was removed at the cross, why do men replace it after the cross?

The law was not given merely to show we could not attain righteousness in the flesh, then after we are converted is restored to operation and we are aided by the Spirit to keep it. In this false scenario the law remains objective and external but we now have an inner power to obey its demands. There is no scripture to suggest this. The external law was removed as a complete system at the cross.

The whole point of the Sermon on the Mount is that the law is external and limited, but Jesus' demands cover internal motivations (e.g. Matt 5:21-22, 43-44). Jesus fulfilled the law in himself, he was the only perfect man under law; but then his teaching completed and exceeded it. If men could not properly obey the Mosaic Law, how could they hope to obey Christ's law? They can't! But it is equally absurd for a believer to focus upon the law and expect the Holy Spirit to give him additional grace to live legalistically. Living in

the Spirit is living in a different realm where law, as regulation, does not exist: ***But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*** (Gal 5:18)

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to live in Christ, to walk in Christ and to bear fruit that manifests Christ. Christians who live by the Spirit and bear fruit are not under law: ***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*** (Gal 5:22-23). Christians who bear fruit as a result of union with Christ (Jn 15) are not bearing fruit by striving to obey some law or fearing some legal sanction. They are bearing fruit in a natural / supernatural way. It is normal heavenly behaviour to be focused upon Christ, filled with his Spirit and bearing fruit. This is not done by focusing upon law.

A believer who wants to control his temper and anger does not do so by meditating on the sixth law (Ex 20:13) and striving for it not to get the better of him. No, he submits to Christ, abides in him, trusts in the work of the Holy Spirit, seeks to be filled with the Spirit, denies himself and lets Christ manifest his patient life through him. By focusing upon Christ and trusting in the power of the Spirit the believer is given grace to live right.

The focus of the Christian's attention must be Christ. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ whose function in salvation is to draw us after Christ and lead us into the truth of Christ. By trusting in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit and living in the Spirit we are centring on Christ. Christ is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6a); he is not merely the goal of the believer, he is the way believers get to their goal. Whenever Jesus spoke in terms of obeying his commandments, he immediately spoke of the Spirit's role as helper and indweller to be the power source to enable believers to obey those commandments (Jn 14:15-17). If obeying God results in approaching the Father, that can only be done through Christ, ***No one comes to the Father except through Me*** (Jn 14:6b); and the Spirit leads us in Christ, ***He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you*** (Jn 16:14).

This means that the believer must never focus upon law. By concentrating upon law and seeking to do what is right by applying our minds, our will power and strength we tread a very different path from being led in Christ by the Spirit. We cannot focus upon law and focus upon Christ; their ways are different. A Christian requires grace to live the life of faith and without God's supply we cannot endure even for a second; but focusing upon law leads to condemnation, there is no grace in legalism. Grace comes from focusing upon Christ, he is the source of grace: ***For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*** (Jn 1:17). If believers are called to focus upon Christ and him alone, they cannot be directed to focus upon law.

The whole point is that God has changed the system. Believers are to live in the Spirit, and the realm of the Spirit is not a place where law operates as external regulations to be strived after.

**We need to give the full force of Biblical statements in this connection.**

What follows are all the significant references where 'law' and 'Spirit' occur together in a NT verse.

***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. Rm 7:6***

Believers have died to the law. This is not just the law as a means of self-righteousness; Paul is not talking about justification by faith but about service. We serve God in a new way. The law was the old external way ('the oldness of the letter'), walking in the Spirit is the new way introduced by Christ after his glorification ('the newness of the Spirit'). The reason why we can be married to Christ is because a death has occurred which has resulted in the law being dead to us (Rm 7:1-5). The law only touches those in the flesh; believers have died to their old nature and now walk in the new nature, the newness of the Spirit.

***For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Rm 8:2***

We have been made free from the law of sin and death. The Mosaic Law focused upon sin and highlighted it. It could only minister death and never life (2 Cor 3:7). The law of life in the Spirit brings a believer entirely out of this realm where the law is king and transfers him into the heavenly realm where God is King. If we have been freed from the law by the work of Christ, it is actually sinful to seek to again live under the domain of law.

***For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Rm 8:3-4***

Believers do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.<sup>7</sup> The rigour of the law has been fulfilled in us through our union with Christ; the penalty of law was not enacted on our flesh but upon Christ's. He died for our sins and the full condemnation fell upon him. As we have died with Christ and have been resurrected in Christ we are now formally living in the realm of the Spirit of Christ. This realm is a realm of resurrected life where the law has no place, just as it has no place in heaven. God does not function by law, but in a spiritual, intuitive, heavenly way. Likewise, we are united with God through Christ and function in a non-legalistic, spiritual manner. The law does not apply to us; it has been fulfilled and finished at the cross.

***This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain -- if indeed it was in vain? Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Gal 3:2-5***

The effect of faith in Christ leads to the Spirit. Faith does not lead to law. Christians who begin in the Spirit and then seek to live under law are seeking to perfect their flesh - but the flesh has been died to in the Christian. Paul seeks to castigate those who begin in the Spirit and then degenerate to living in the flesh by submitting to law. His words are strong:

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<sup>7</sup> Genuine Christians that sin are not following their true vocation. If they backslide and sin they are not walking in faith and not walking in the Spirit; they have temporarily ceased to be believers. This does not mean that they have ceased to be elect or ceased to be God's children for a time, but they have ceased to walk in faith and thus give all the appearances of being in the flesh. Genuine believers will always be brought back to faith. An example was Peter when confronted by Paul in Antioch (Gal 2:11ff).

***For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.' Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.' Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree") (Gal 2:10-13).***

Paul emphasises that the Christian must live by faith and this is the opposite of living under law. His point is not to confront those who seek to be righteous by law for salvation since the people he is talking to are already believers (Gal 1:1-6). His point is about living the Christian life. Just as no one can be justified by law, but only by faith, so one can only live a godly life by faith not by law: 'the just shall live by faith'. 'The law is not of faith'; if living by faith is the way of the Christian walk, it cannot be by law. Those who seek to live a godly life by submitting to the law are under a curse since the law itself curses those who seek to do part of it but not all.

**The apostolic commands are to live under the aegis of the Spirit not under law.**

Merely a small sample can be given here:

- ***we should serve in the newness of the Spirit*** (Rm 7:6)
- ***walk ... according to the Spirit*** (Rm 8:1)
- ***the Spirit is life because of righteousness*** (Rm 8:10)
- ***if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live*** (Rm 8:13)
- ***as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God*** (Rm 8:14)
- ***you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'*** (Rm 8:15)
- ***The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*** (Rm 8:16)
- ***Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses*** (Rm 8:26)
- ***the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*** (Rm 14:17)
- ***abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit*** (Rm 15:13)
- ***sanctified by the Holy Spirit*** (Rm 15:16)
- ***[things which Christ has accomplished through me] by the power of the Spirit of God*** (Rm 15:18-19)
- ***my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit*** (1 Cor 2:4)
- ***God has revealed them to us through His Spirit*** (1 Cor 2:10)
- ***These things we also speak ... which the Holy Spirit teaches*** (1 Cor 2:13)

Just as the Holy Spirit brought us into the practical good of salvation (1 Cor 6:11), so we are expected to continue serving under the order established by the Spirit. This is not the realm of law, which is fleshly and for sinners ending in death, but the realm of Spirit. For this reason the walk of the Christian is called a 'walk in the Spirit' (Gal 5:16). Paul uses these same terms; if we live in the Spirit, we must walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:25). Those who live a godly life and do not walk after the flesh, are the ones who walk according to the Spirit (Rm 8:1,4).

Living under law is inimical to living according to the Spirit. It is clear, therefore, that Christians walk in the Spirit and not under law.

## The law is opposed to the Spirit as a means of self-regulation

<b>Law</b> <i>Walk in the law (Ps 119:1).</i>	<b>Holy Spirit</b> <i>Walk in the Spirit (not in the law; Gal 5:25).</i>
A temporary institution that reveals man's need of Christ by exposing sin, and then ends when Christ came.	Given to all believers as an eternal, indwelling source of life at Christ's glorification.
A means of teaching ( <i>torah</i> ) about righteousness, but without power to impart it.	The Spirit is the truth (Jn 15:26). The Spirit leads into all truth (Jn 16:13).
Guide for life for sinners on earth.	Sanctifier of the saved.
Law is to govern the flesh.	The Spirit leads spiritual people, new creatures in Christ.
Law - full of types, foreshadowing.	Spirit = the reality of Christ.
The law is the ministry of death.	The Spirit gives life.

### What is the key issue?

**Key - walk in his way (Ps 119:3).** Under law this is by precept, in the Spirit this is by empowerment.

The point of human living is to follow in the footsteps of God, to walk in God's way. Godly living is living like God. The patriarchs of our faith knew how to walk and please God without the benefit of the written law. They conversed with God and were led by him in various ways: dreams, prophecy, direct conversation with God, and angelic messengers. Scripture testifies that, despite their failings, they were declared righteous by their faith and the proof of their life. Enoch was so blessed that he was translated directly to heaven and never saw death. Despite huge failings in his youth, Israel was so close to God in old age that he could bless kings.

This closeness to God was lost when the law was imposed. Instead of the firstborn being a natural priest, a specific tribe was earmarked for divine service and then one family (Aaron's) sanctified for priesthood and only one man once a year appointed to enter the Holy of Holies to approach God. Relations with God were distant, being conducted via intermediaries, and could never be the final goal for divine/human relationships. The law was full of types not antitypes. Consequently, the law represented the attempt of the flesh to pleasing God by external measures. It relied on what you did rather than what you are.

All of Israel was called, but very few members were chosen. Those that had true faith could even break details of the law and still find favour with God; such as when David took the showbread from the tabernacle to feed his men,<sup>8</sup> whenever priestly work occurred on the Sabbath,<sup>9</sup> or when the prophet declared that God preferred righteous

<sup>8</sup> 1 Sam 21:3-6; highlighted in argument by the Lord (Matt 12:3-4).

<sup>9</sup> For instance: the double offerings required on the Sabbath day (Num 28:9), presenting the new-baked showbread (Lev 24:5; 1 Chron 9:32) or circumcision when the child's eighth day happened to fall on a Sabbath. Jesus also used this argument (Jn 7:22-23).

living to performing sacrifices.<sup>10</sup> These were intimations even then that heart obedience was greater than the precept of regulatory law. Isaiah 58 is the greatest condemnation of a nation that fastidiously kept the precept but whose heart was far from God.

The common thread between the patriarchs and those under law was that they were both flesh. God dealt with the patriarchs in grace but introduced the law to demonstrate that no man can come before God in the flesh. The flesh is corrupted by sin and this cannot be renewed; it must die. All the OT saints looked forward to God's future provision by faith so that patriarchs and those under law are saved the same way - through the cross of Christ. But only those under the New Covenant, those who have become new creatures in Christ, having died to sin and having had their old man destroyed<sup>11</sup> can live in the Spirit. NT believers are a new breed of people, they are men who have the indwelling Spirit, who was only given to abide in men after Jesus had been glorified. Although OT saints occasionally knew the power of the Spirit coming upon them, they never had the Spirit indwelling them. This is why a man like Samson could be temporarily endowed with power by the Spirit and yet live so unrighteously.

NT believers are not like the patriarchs or like those under the law. They are new creatures in Christ. God dealt with grace to the patriarchs in a comparatively intimate way; he also dealt with grace to Israel, but they were under law. Only in NT believers after the ascension of Christ do men actually come into the family of God positionally. NT believers have been made to sit with Christ in the heavenlies: *and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus* (Eph 2:6). We are seen by God as raised in Christ - this never happened to OT saints, and could not until the cross, resurrection and ascension (Jn 7:39). Peter could even say that *the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you* (1 Pt 4:14).

This is why living under the law is so repulsive to Paul. He wrote in agony to the Galatians about their desire to live under the law (after receiving the Judaizing teachers) despite his previous teaching about grace:

*O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth ... Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? ... Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Gal 3:1-5) My little children, for whom I labour in birth again until Christ is formed in you, I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you. Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? (Gal 4:19-21)*

He then explains that being under the law brings only bondage, but the realm of the Spirit is a place of liberty and love (Gal 4:24-5:6).

Christians are in a new realm, the realm of the Spirit. They do not live in the realm of ordinary men, the realm of flesh. They have died to that realm; the kingdom they abide in is one of the Spirit. They are *in Christ*, a phrase repeated dozens of times in the NT to emphasise that believers are different; they belong to God and are united in Christ.

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<sup>10</sup> *For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings* Hos 6:6. This was twice highlighted by the Lord himself (Matt 9:13 and 12:7).

<sup>11</sup> *Katargeo* means to render idle, unemployed, and inoperative; to deprive of force or power. Destroyed in the NT usually means to separate not to annihilate. Paul's point in Rm 6:6 is that the source of power of the flesh is cut off and the believer who has been crucified with Christ can live a resurrected life since the strength of sin in the man is defeated. For those who walk in faith, the source, dominion and power of sin has been overcome; thus the believer can walk in righteousness by the Spirit - putting on the new man.

They are now heavenly not earthly creatures. Sure the fulness and consummation of this only occurs when the Lord returns, but the fact is true now.

***If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col 3:1-3)***

The Mosaic Law is a thing bound to the earth and the flesh. The principles it espouses are eternal principles relating to the character of God, and as such is spiritual and eternal, but the expression of this law in the OT was never intended to be forced upon those who serve the original principles which the law is a shadow of.

The law speaks of Christ and God's purpose in shadows (Heb 8:5, 10:1) but NT believers have received the real things that the law only intimates. The law has no place, as law, for those who are already serving what the law hints at. Behind the law is the character of God, the righteous virtues of Christ. The law directs men to live approaching that character, so they must not kill or covet. But Christians are now united with Christ by his Spirit and have power to act as Christ does as the Spirit works this character out in their lives. Such is the fruit of the Spirit - the life of Christ. The law has no point, power or purpose when it tells people to not kill, when those people are already empowered and directed to not hate. In any case the law cannot empower, it can only condemn. Since there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, for those united to God in righteousness, there is no law.

***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (Gal 5:23)***

God once spoke through intermediaries: angels, patriarchs and prophets; but now he speaks to us through his Son, by his Spirit. This was why the Spirit was given the charge of inspiring the New Testament to be the last record of Jesus' words to man: ***God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son*** (Heb 1:1-2). Christ's means of direction to us is not the law, passed on by intermediaries, but the Spirit. In these last days (the time since the cross) the rule of life for believers is Christ's words applied by the Spirit of God, the word of the Gospel. We are to 'hear him' (Matt 17:5); and the Spirit ensures that the written word is enlivened to those who are listening to him in faith.<sup>12</sup> The goal of godly living is Christ; the means of attaining this is the grace given us in Christ ('every spiritual blessing' Eph 1:3). The role of the Spirit is to supervise us, guide us, empower us and mediate this grace so that we are enabled to be like Christ, bearing fruit in our lives which is Christ manifested.

This is why Paul draws attention to a new phrase, *The law of Christ* (Gal 6:2; 1 Cor 9:21). Why coin this phrase if the Mosaic Law was still binding upon believers? If the Mosaic Law was sufficient for Gospel believers, why did Christ emphasise 'new commandments' (Jn 13:34; 1 Jn 2:8). The law of love towards ones neighbour was not new (Lev 19:18); what was new was to love as Christ loved - selflessly for his enemies. This is beyond Mosaic Law which condoned hate for one's enemies (Ex 17:14-16; Ps 41:10; 139:21-22).

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<sup>12</sup> We are not advocating some kind of mystical attention to subjective impressions. The Spirit always works on the basis of the Word; he brings revelation through the written word so that reading the Bible becomes a living experience. Acts 13:27 shows that scripture can be read diligently without any understanding or hearing. The Pharisees heard Christ and read the prophets, but never HEARD Christ or understood the prophets. Without the Spirit, man's ears are closed (Matt 13:10-15). By the Spirit, it is as if modern Christians hear Christ saying to them, 'I say to you...'; a phrase repeated by the Lord scores of times in the Gospels.

In fact, in 1 Cor 9:20-21 Paul is actually saying, ‘Not being an outlaw of God, but an in-law of Christ’.<sup>13</sup> We follow God’s universal moral law automatically as we are ‘in Christ’. There are three levels of relationship to the law:

Jews	Pagans	Christians
Under law	Without law, outside the law	In-lawed to Christ
<i>to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law. (1 Cor 9:20)</i>	<i>those who are without law. (1 Cor 9:21) When Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves. (Rm 2:14)</i>	<i>not being without law toward God, but under law [lit. inlaw] toward Christ. (1 Cor 9:21) you are not under law but under grace. (Rm 6:14) you are not under the law. (Gal 5:18)</i>

These three levels are distinguished in scripture and should not be intermingled. Christians are lawful in Christ. They are lawful because of a grace relationship held by the Spirit, not because of actions they perform. In Christ, they are lawful.

## Conclusion

The overwhelming conclusion of this brief study of Biblical history and teaching is that the law cannot be the sole means of direction for the believer. The Spirit of God is the rule of life for those under the Gospel because they are *in Christ*; the rule is a new life in the Spirit (Gal 6:15-16). The law is a shadow of that rule, typically pointing forward to the reality that would come with Christ as the firstborn and head of a new creation. For those in Christ, the Law of Moses has no place as a rule of life. The ethical standard for man is Christ himself and the means of getting there is the Spirit of Christ.

It is of interest that the giving of the law was on the Day of Pentecost according to the Jews; the outpouring of the Spirit was also on this day. The institution of a new dispensation and the Gospel Age is accompanied by the gift of the Holy Spirit to give believers power to minister and speak for God. The old covenant had the external law, the new covenant has God’s Spirit in the heart of believers.

Patriarchal Age	Age of Mosaic law	New Testament Age
Pre Mosaic Law - direct contact with God (e.g. Abraham, Melchizedek).	After Mosaic law, intermediaries imposed between man and God - priests and prophets.	The Gospel - direct contact between man and God via the Spirit.
Covenant of promise to Abraham - that he would receive the Spirit. Gal 3:14-18	Imposition of the law to confine under sin and highlight transgressions. Gal 3:17-24	The realm of the Spirit - the Spirit indwells those who believe the promise in Christ. Gal 3:22

<sup>13</sup> So Robertson’s Word Pictures: ‘(Evans, Estius has it *exlex, inlex*, mh wn anomoj qeou( allV ennomoj Cristou). The genitive case of qeou and Cristou (specifying case) comes out better thus, for it seems unusual with anomoj and ennomoj, both old and regular adjectives.’

Item	OT Law	NT ministry of the Spirit
Conversion	The law of the LORD <i>is</i> perfect, converting the soul; Ps 19:7	That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit; Jn 3:6
Illumination	The commandment of the LORD <i>is</i> pure, enlightening the eyes; Ps 19:8	God has revealed <i>them</i> to us through his Spirit; 1 Cor 2:10. It has now been revealed by the Spirit; Eph 3:5
Instruction	Moreover by them your servant is warned; Ps 19:11	the Spirit of truth ... he will guide you into all truth; Jn 16:13
Guidance	The testimony of the LORD <i>is</i> sure, making wise the simple; Ps 19:7	wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit; 1 Cor 12:8 not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches; 1 Cor 2:13
Spring of joy	The statutes of the LORD <i>are</i> right, rejoicing the heart; Ps 19:8	The kingdom of God is ... joy in the Holy Spirit; Rm 14:17. joy of the Holy Spirit; 1 Thess 1:6
Object of desire	More to be desired <i>are they</i> than gold; Ps 19:10	desire spiritual <i>gifts</i> ; 1 Cor 14:1 desire the best gifts; 1 Cor 12:31
Cause of reward	<i>And</i> in keeping them <i>there is</i> great reward; Ps 19:11	If anyone's work which he has built on <i>it</i> endures, he will receive a reward ... you are the temple of God ... the Spirit of God dwells in you? 1 Cor 3:14-16. That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us; 2 Tim 1:14

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