

# **"ALL Old Testament Laws Cancelled"**

24 Reasons Why All Old Testament Laws Are Cancelled  
And All New Testament Laws Are for Our Obedience

Greg Gibson

Dedicated to all who base their practice on  
Old Testament laws, including:

Reformed, Covenant Theologians;  
Seventh-Day Adventists;  
Other Sabbath-Keepers;  
And Roman Catholics.

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<b>Abridged Table of Contents</b>	
<b>Expanded Table of Contents</b>	4
<b>Author's Preface</b>	6
<b>Introduction</b>	8
<b>Part I. 9 Objections to "All Old Testament Laws Are Cancelled"</b>	16
<b>Part II. 8 Reasons Why All Old Testament Laws Are Cancelled</b>	80
<b>Part III. 3 Objections to "All New Testament Laws Are For Our Obedience"</b>	108
<b>Part IV. 4 Reasons Why All New Testament Laws Are For Our Obedience</b>	118
<b>Part V. Conclusion: Sanctification Is Christ-Centered (Not Law-Centered)</b>	128
<b>Appendix I: Does New Covenant Theology Allow Bestiality and Incest?</b>	136
<b>Appendix II: 13 Ways How We Use the Whole Old Testament Today</b>	140
<b>Annotated Bibliography</b>	143
<b>Scripture Index</b>	148
<b>Subject Index</b>	153
<b>Author Index</b>	155

See the *Expanded Table of Contents* on the next page...

## Expanded Table of Contents

<b>Author's Preface</b>	6		
<b>Introduction</b>	8		
<b>Part I. 9 Objections to "All O.T. Laws Are Cancelled"</b>	16		
1. "But the Ten Commandments Are the Eternal, Unchanging, Moral Law of God"	17		
7 Clear Facts About the Sabbath	30		
What About Decalogue-Evangelism?	35		
2. "But Christ Did Not Come to Abolish the Law"	41		
3. "But the Law Is Written on the Heart in the N.C."	56		
4. "But There Is One Covenant of Grace"	65		
5. "But We Do Not Void the Law, We Uphold it"	72		
6. "But the Law Is Holy, Righteous, and Good"	73		
7. "But All Scripture Is God-Breathed and Useful"	74		
8. "But O.T. Commands Are Quoted in the N.T."	76		
9. "But That's Just Dispensationalism"	79		
<b>Part II. 8 Reasons Why All O.T. Laws Are Cancelled</b>	80		
10. The Decalogue Is the Foundational Document of the Whole O.C.	81		
11. The Law of Moses Can't Be Divided Into 3 Parts	82		
12. The Apostles Never Made Exceptions Qualifying Their Criticisms of the Law of Moses	84		
13. Since Genesis Is Part of the Law, the Commands From Genesis - Sinai Are Cancelled	86		
14. The Jerusalem Council Concluded That Gentile Converts Don't Need to Obey the Law for Justification & Sanctification	87		
		15. The Whole Decalogue Had an Historical Beginning & End	90
		16. The Church Is Built on the Foundation of N.T. Apostles and Prophets' Teaching	92
		17. Archaeology Testifies That Our Bible Contains 2 Separate Canons (Rules)	94
		<b>Part III. 3 Objections to "All N.T. Laws Are for Our Obedience"</b>	108
		18. "But We're Not Under Law, But Under Grace"	109
		19. "But Love Is the Only Law"	112
		20. "But the New Covenant Law Is Written in the Heart, Not the New Testament"	115
		<b>Part IV. 4 Reasons Why All N.T. Laws Are for Our Obedience</b>	118
		21. The Apostles Gave Hundreds of Commands After the Cross	119
		22. Sin Is Lawlessness	120
		23. The Bible Never Criticizes the Law of Christ, But Praises It	121
		24. Jesus Christ is Lord	123
		<b>Part V. Conclusion: Sanctification Is Christ-Centered (Not Law-Centered)</b>	128
		<b>Appendix I: Does New Covenant Theology Allow Bestiality and Incest?</b>	136
		<b>Appendix II: 13 Ways How We Still Use the Whole O.T.</b>	140
		<b>Annotated Bibliography of the Most Helpful Sources</b>	143
		<b>Scripture Index</b>	148
		<b>Subject Index</b>	153
		<b>Author Index</b>	155

## Author's Preface

When I was an "omniscient teenager," I decided to read through the whole Bible, starting from the Old Testament. Soon, I stopped eating pork, and started keeping the Sabbath. Later, I wondered if I'd go to hell if I stopped keeping the Sabbath. Now, I know I wasn't the only one confused.

Also, when I was a one-year old babe in Christ, my Presbyterian friends tried to convince me of infant baptism, while my Baptist friends tried to convince me of believer's baptism. However, I didn't understand then that Reformed, Covenant Theology's infant baptism was a practice based on the Old Testament command for Abraham to circumcise all the males (infants and adults) in his household.

"It is true that there is no express command to baptize infants in the New Testament, no express record of the baptism of infants, and no passages so stringently implying it that we must infer from them that infants were baptized...the warrant for infant baptism is not to be sought in the New Testament but in the Old Testament, when the Church was instituted..."<sup>1</sup>

Christians have debated this law controversy since the 1st century:

- Pharisee believers vs. Gentile believers (1st century, Acts 15)
- Roman Empire Church vs. "Anabaptists" (4th - 16th centuries)
- Reformers vs. Anabaptists (16th century Reformation)

Perhaps the Bible's 3 most complex, theological questions are:

- God's sovereignty and man's will?
- The Law in the New Testament?
- End time prophecy?

"...Jonathan Edwards (1703-58) observed, "There is perhaps no part of divinity attended with so much intricacy, and wherein

<sup>1</sup> B.B. Warfield, *Studies in Theology*, 399-400, in "Warfield on the Warrant for Infant Baptism," Midwest Center for Theological Studies Blog, <http://www.mctsowensboro.org/blog/?p=365>, Rich Barcellos, May 6, 2008.

orthodox divines...differ as stating the precise agreement and difference between the 2 dispensations of Moses and Christ."<sup>2</sup>

As I read different views on the law, I'm amazed at how much fuzzy thinking exists. What I've tried to do here is clear up some of that fog.

My thesis is simple: All Old Testament laws are cancelled, and all New Testament laws are for our obedience. But, you don't have to agree with me to fellowship with me. If you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, that's good enough for me.

New Covenant Theology (the view in this book) is a rapidly-spreading view with a better priest, better sacrifice, and better covenant (containing a better law).

Jesus prayed for us, "...May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent Me..." (Jn. 17:23, NIV). May it please the Father to answer His Son's prayer, even through this book.

### "The New Covenant Reformation"

1. Scripture Alone: Our authority is the Bible alone, not tradition.
2. Grace Alone: God saves us by His grace alone, not our works.
3. Faith Alone: God justifies us by faith alone, not our works.
4. Christ Alone: Salvation is by Christ alone, not priests, saints, etc.
5. Glory to God Alone: Bible preaching and Christian living are God-centered alone, not man-centered.
6. Regeneration Alone: The New Covenant Church includes the regenerate alone, not the unregenerate (baptized infants, or all who prayed a "sinner's prayer" but prove to be hypocrites or apostates).
7. New Covenant Alone: New Covenant Christians obey all New Testament laws alone, not Old Testament laws (the Sabbath, food laws, infant baptism, priesthood, and state-church theocracy).

<sup>2</sup> Stanley N. Gundry, Ed., *Five Views on Law and Gospel*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 14).

**Introduction**

Have you ever felt confused trying to understand what the New Testament teaches about the law? Ever struggled with how to interpret Paul's apparent contradictory, positive and negative statements about the law? Is the law good or bad? Ever wondered which commands God will hold you accountable for on the Judgment Day? For example...

- If you work on the Sabbath, will you go to hell?
- Is it still a sin to eat pork bacon, sausage, or hot dogs?
- Should we baptize believers only, or also their infants?
- Do we need human priests to represent us before God?
- Should the government execute adulterers and gays?

Or, since we're "not under the law"...

- What is sin?
- How can you know right from wrong?
- Do we have defined, objective, specific laws?

Every Spirit-born heart cries out, "Lord, what do you want me to do? How can I please you?" (1 Cor. 7:32; 1 Thes. 4:1).

Let's be honest, few issues in the New Testament are harder to understand than the law. (I confess that I still have some questions.) Many sincere brothers differ about the law.

*The goal of this study is to help you harmonize all (not merely some) of the Bible's verses on law, so that you will obey all that Christ commanded. Here are the 5 main conclusions you'll see below...*

1. The whole Old Testament is still useful for doctrine/faith.
2. All Old Testament commands were cancelled.
3. Some Old Testament commands were transferred to the N.T.
4. All New Testament commands are for our obedience.
5. Our obedience is often motivated by truths about Christ.

If it can be proven true that all Old Testament commands are cancelled, then that undermines the foundation of all Old Covenant -

based groups including Roman Catholicism; Mormonism; Adventism; Reformed, Covenant Theology; etc. (Among those 4 major groups, the only evangelical one is Covenant Theology.)

Here are 6 popular views of which commands we must obey...

<b>6 Popular Views on Which Laws We Must Obey</b>	
<b>Orthodox Judaism</b>	<u>All O.T., and No N.T. Laws:</u> 1. Decalogue 2. Temple 3. Priests, sacrifices 4. State-Church theocracy 5. Infant members
<b>Roman Catholicism</b>	<u>Some O.T., and All N.T. Laws:</u> 1. Decalogue 2. Priests, sacrifices 3. State-Church theocracy 4. Infant members 5. All N.T. laws
<b>Theocracy, Reformed, Covenant Theology</b>	<u>Some O.T., and All N.T. Laws:</u> 1. Decalogue 2. State-Church theocracy 3. Infant members 4. All N.T. laws
<b>Non-Theocracy, Reformed, Covenant Theology</b>	<u>Some O.T., and All N.T. Laws:</u> 1. Decalogue 2. Infant members 3. All N.T. laws
<b>Reformed Baptist, Covenant Theology</b>	<u>Some O.T., and All N.T. Laws:</u> 1. Decalogue 2. All N.T. laws
<b>New Covenant Theology</b>	<u>No O.T., and All N.T. Laws:</u> 1. All N.T. laws
<b>Antinomianism</b>	<u>No O.T., and No N.T. Laws:</u> 0. No laws

Only 3 of the above views use consistent O.T. - N.T. hermeneutics: Orthodox Judaism, New Covenant Theology, and Antinomianism. The other 4 views mix inconsistent, selective O.T. - N.T. hermeneutics.

### Before We Start...

Portray: The theological labels below are intended to portray only some, not all, who profess them. Within most labels, you'll find diversity, not uniformity. The goal of the 20 charts is to illustrate only some popular views, not all historical or scholarly views. (So, if the shoe fits, wear it.)

Obey: The Bible is Christ-centered. Preaching is Christ-centered. And, sanctification is Christ-centered. Yet, it's OK to focus temporarily on law for the purposes of debate, definition, and topical study. This book is not designed as a comprehensive, balanced study on preaching or sanctification. (Those topics would require whole books!) This book focuses mostly on only one part of our sanctification: Obeying God's commands. The focus is more on which commands to obey (N.T.), rather than how to obey (the Holy Spirit's grace), or why to obey (love).

Pray: We learn more when we humble ourselves to pray for wisdom. If we would pray before reading anything, then we would agree more because the same Spirit would teach us the same truth. Will you please consider praying, "Lord, if I'm right, please don't let me be deceived. But if I'm wrong, please correct me now, instead of on the Judgment Day?" I've prayed that prayer many times, and I hope you will too.

### Thesis: All Old Testament Laws Are Cancelled, And All New Testament Laws Are for Our Obedience

The thesis I'm going to try to prove here is simply this: "All Old Testament commands are cancelled, and all New Testament commands are for our obedience." (O.T. laws are cancelled for regulation, but not revelation.) So, what is the history of this view?

Most of the Apostolic Fathers were non-Sabbatarians (but I don't know their views on other Old Testament laws).

And, many of the "Anabaptists" from the 4th - 16th centuries based their practice on the New Testament. The 16th-century Anabaptists were especially clear on this...

"...the Anabaptists, their view of the law was relatively monolithic (Munsterites excepted). They are widely recognized for their insistence on the newness of the New Covenant. For the Radical Reformers, the law which Christ spoke was no mere reissuing of Sinai. It marked a significant shift in God's program...they emphatically taught that the distinction between the OT and the NT is absolute, and it is the NT alone that is normative in questions of Christian ethics. (cf. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 142-144) Christ's fulfillment of Moses' law is precisely what rendered it 'old.' It is not merely part of the old law that is abolished; it is the whole of it that is fulfilled and so displaced by the new. The idea here is not so much that of 'advance' as it is change."<sup>3</sup>

Among today's scholars, Doug Moo sounds like he shares some similarities to my thesis...

"I will state at this point the position for which I will argue: The entire Mosaic law comes to fulfillment in Christ, and this fulfillment means that this law is no longer a *direct and immediate* source of, or judge of, the conduct of God's people. Christian behavior, rather, is now guided directly by 'the law of Christ.' This 'law' does not consist of legal prescriptions and ordinances, but of the teaching and example of Jesus and the apostles, the central demand of love, and the guiding influence of the indwelling Holy Spirit."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Tom Wells and Fred Zaspel, *New Covenant Theology*, (Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media, 2002), 83.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas J. Moo, "The Law of Christ as the Fulfillment of the Law of Moses," in Gundry, 343.

And, *Shepherds' Fellowship* blog (with John MacArthur) posted a series on the law by Nathan Busenitz, with some common ground...

"...**how are Christians practically to approach the Old Testament Law?** Clearly, they are not to follow all of its restrictions, for the Law of Christ has replaced the Law of Moses...First, believers must recognize that the Mosaic Law is not binding for Christians. This includes all of the individual precepts that make up that Law. These commands, whether deemed moral, ceremonial, or civil, were part of God's covenant with Israel. They are not part of His covenant with the Church."<sup>5</sup>

### **Discontinuity in Practice, But Continuity in Doctrine**

For centuries, theologians have debated how much continuity vs. discontinuity exists between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In this book, I'll try to show that the simple answer is there is discontinuity in practice, but continuity in doctrine/faith.

There is discontinuity in practice between the Old Testament vs. the New Testament since they contain 2 separate laws (although many of the same commands are transferred). And, there is continuity in doctrine/faith between them since God never changes. (Also, there is continuity in God's one, eternal plan in Christ which organizes all the covenants and the whole Bible.)

### **Are O.T. Laws Continued if Not Cancelled, Or Cancelled if Not Repeated?**

One of the reasons why many disagree on this question about law is because they start with opposite hermeneutics. Those who defend obeying some Old Testament laws often assume that all Old Testament laws are continued unless they're cancelled in the New Testament. While those who defend obeying only New Testament laws, often assume that all Old Testament laws are cancelled if they're not repeated in the New Testament. (Personally, I view Old Testament laws repeated in the New Testament as transferred, instead of continued.)

<sup>5</sup> Nathan Busenitz, "Wrapping Up the Law," *Pulpit Magazine*, (Shepherds' Fellowship: 2/28/08), [www.sfpulpit.com/2008/02/28/wrapping-up-the-law/](http://www.sfpulpit.com/2008/02/28/wrapping-up-the-law/)

If all Old Testament laws were cancelled, how would you expect God to say it? Of course, you wouldn't expect Him to have to cancel all 613 laws individually in the New Testament. Wouldn't it be more likely to expect Him to say that the (whole) law is cancelled? As you'll see below, He's said many times and in many ways that the (whole) law and (whole) Old Covenant are "cancelled."

### **"The 30-Second, Law-View Test"**

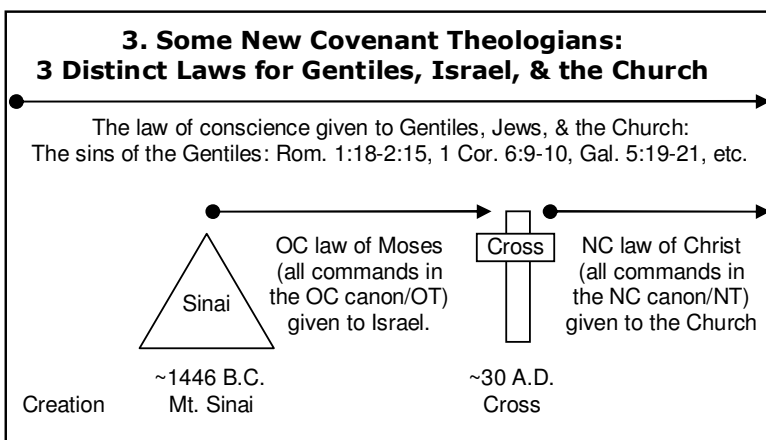
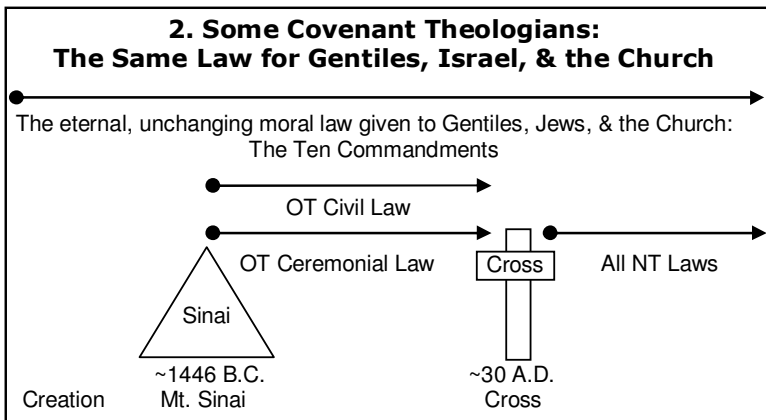
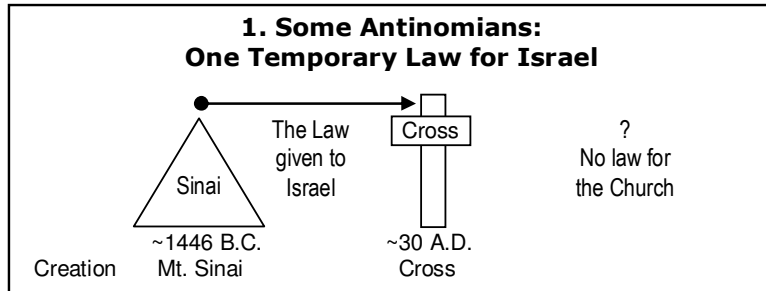
Here's a simple test to identify anyone's law hermeneutic in less than 30 seconds. If a Christian child dishonors his parents, which command did he violate?

1. Both Ex. 20:12 and Eph. 6:2 (Covenant Theology).
2. Neither Ex. 20:12 nor Eph. 6:2 (Antinomianism).
3. Only Eph. 6:2, not Ex. 20:12 (New Covenant Theology).

This test will instantly and clearly define anyone's view of God's law.

Now, let's take those same, 3 systems above and try to diagram them. Look closely at the 3, following diagrams. If you can understand these diagrams, then you will understand this whole book...

**3 Different Views of the Law of God Throughout Redemptive History**



Universal law is revealed in the conscience. And, some of that conscience law is also revealed in covenant law. So, for sins revealed in both, there is overlap. For example, if Gentiles, Jews, or Christians committed adultery, which laws did they violate?

1. Gentiles violate only the law of conscience, not Ex. 20:14; Rom. 1:24; etc.
2. Old Covenant Jews violate the law of conscience and O.C. law from Ex. 20:14; etc.
3. New Covenant saints violate the law of conscience and N.C. law from Rom. 1:24; etc.

**"The 5 P's of Obedience"**

1. The Picture of obedience: The Lord Jesus Christ (who we obey)
2. The Power for Obedience: The Holy Spirit's effectual grace (how we obey)
3. The Position of Obedience: In Christ/union with Him (where we obey from; "Since you are..., therefore obey" not "If you obey, then you will become...")
4. The Prompts for Obedience: Indicative/doctrinal truths in the O.T. – N.T. (why we obey)
5. The Practice of Obedience: All New Testament commands (what we obey)

As I mentioned earlier, this book defines and defends #5, what we obey.

So much for the introduction. Are you ready now to search the Scriptures? OK, here are 9 objections to, "All Old Testament laws are cancelled."