

“Not Under Law But Under Grace”

When the children of Israel were going to the Promised Land, God gave them a law. The law was part of His covenant relationship with them. But after Jesus came, many Jewish Christians wanted to know what role the law should continue to play in their lives. Were Christians



How many locks did Delilah cut from Samson's hair? Where was Delilah from and what was she promised for delivering Samson?

obligated to keep the law? If not, what was to keep them from living sinfully? The apostle Paul proclaimed that Christians “are not under law but under grace” (Romans 6:14). Could that really be true? If so, what would that look like? *What would that mean?*

The Purpose of the Law—In Galatians 3:23-29, Paul explained that the law of Moses was a “*paidagogos*,” which is translated schoolmaster, tutor, or guardian. In the Greco-Roman world, the son of a wealthy man would be cared for by a *paidagogos*, a slave given the responsibility of watching over his master's son. This guardian would watch over the boy constantly; taking him to school, guiding him, guarding him, and directing him. A *paidagogos* was needed. However, when the boy became a man, he no longer needed a *paidagogos*. He was free from tutelage.

Paul said the law was just like that in the life of Israel. It's end-goal was to bring the nation of Israel to a state of maturity and faith, where they would accept Jesus as their Messiah. And once they came to faith in Jesus, like a boy who became a man, they would no longer need the law in the same way. “Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith” (Galatians 3:23-26).

A boy under a guardian is like a slave (Galatians 4:1-2). The Jews were slaves under the law. But when Christ came, the law was lifted—for those who accepted Jesus as their Messiah—because that was the purpose of the law. The son of a king doesn't need a law to tell him to do the king's will. The king's son—in many ways—is exempt from the law, yet he does the king's will because he loves the king (the king is his father). The king's will has become his will. This is what being a Christian is about: “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God” (Galatians 4:4-7).

Not Under Law But Under Grace—Paul has a similar discussion with the church in Rome. He tells them they are “made right with God,” not by keeping the law (which all had failed to do), but by putting their faith “in Christ.” We are made right with God, because God is gracious and put forward His only begotten Son as a sin offering *on our behalf*.

In Romans 6, Paul anticipated objections. Many wouldn't accept this message of grace and not law, because they feared everyone would *run amok*. “If we're not under Law,” they object, “won't everyone just go on sinning?” “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:1-4).

You cannot be a child of God, free from the burden of the law, so long as you still *live to sin*. That kind of a person is unconverted and is still a slave of sin. The true convert “died to sin” and when baptized into the death of Christ. Paul asks in verse 15, “Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace?” Again the answer: “By no means!” Through the power of the cross, and the work of God's Holy Spirit, Christians have become slaves of righteousness. We do what is right, not because of a law written on stone tablets, but because we truly want to please our heavenly Father. Our hearts and minds have been *converted* by God's grace.

The Bottom Line—God expects your life to be a grateful response to His grace. When your heart and mind are transformed by His mercies, you will know His will and present your body to Him as a “living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1-2). This won't be motivated by law, but motivated by His grace. When you live in response to the gospel and walk by the Spirit, your life will be full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). This kind of life does not violate God's law, but actually fulfills the “law of Christ” because you are loving others and helping to bear their burdens (Galatians 6:2).

It couldn't be stated more clearly than this: “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works” (Titus 2:11-14).

By Wes McAdams

To our valued visitors: *Please feel free to participate!*

You should expect to hear singing with voices only, a few “family” announcements, prayers spoken, and see the Lord's Supper offered, then free-willed giving, and gospel preaching from the Bible. Any response is up to you and will be kindly received. We are glad you decided to worship God with us on this first day of the week!

Birthday/Anniversary Lunch: 2nd Sunday...

Singing: Morton St on Tuesday (10/23) 7PM. Come sing His praises!

Lectureship: Ivanhoe (10/21-24) “Preaching the Cross”

Craft Activity Time: Saturday (11/3), 3PM until we finish being “crafty”...

Friday Bible Study: 7PM to 8PM, yes, here every Friday ... Lord willing!