

It is important to make a distinction here between the moral and the ceremonial/civil aspects of the Law. When we speak about preaching the Law, we are speaking about bringing the moral aspects of the Law to bear upon the hearer's conscience. We are talking about our conformity to the character and nature of God which is made manifest in the moral aspects of the Law. This is not to say that the ceremonial and civil aspects of the Law do not have any place in preaching or teaching us, surely they do. But they are not a system of legal obedience as a requirement to somehow please God. In the New Covenant age the ceremonial and civil aspects of the Law simply give us an understanding of the nature of God and the nature of the worship of God as it was expressed through the Old Covenant with Israel. But now something far greater has come in the person and work of Jesus that has fulfilled the ceremonial and civil aspects of the Law. This is the main point in the New Testament book of Hebrews chapters 1-10.

Therefore let us see that the Law surely does have a place in the life of a New Testament Christian. This is especially true of the moral aspects of the Law as a matter of obedience and pleasing God in response to the great salvation and forgiveness of sins that He has provided for us in Christ. Not only this, but even the New Testament is filled with imperatives that command us to behave in certain ways and to do certain things. It also forbids us from doing many things. These New Testament commands sound much like the moral commandments in the Law.

**Ephesians 4:25-32** - 25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.** 26 Be angry, and yet **do not sin**; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 **Let him who steals steal no longer**; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need. 29 **Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth**, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other**, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. NASB

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-8** - 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that **you abstain from sexual immorality**; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. 8 Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. NASB

**1 Peter 2:13-17** - 13 **Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14 or to governors** as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. 15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. 16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. 17 **Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.** NASB

The Law then does have its place in our Christian Faith. But it should never be set forth as a system of legal achievement in order to be saved, but rather a grateful response to the salvation that God gives as a free gift in Christ. Salvation comes by faith alone, apart from the works of the Law, as a free gift from God, by His free grace, because of the merits of Christ.

**Romans 3:21-24** - 21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being **justified as a gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; NASB

**Romans 3:28** - 28 For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.** NASB  
**Galatians 2:16** - 16 nevertheless knowing that **a man is not justified by the works of the Law** but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since **by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.** NASB

## New Testament Texts and Contexts – The Gospels and Acts

As we survey the texts of the New Testament, we see the Old Covenant Mosaic Law used many times and in many ways. Primary among these is the very way in which the Law is spoken of as being **temporary** and **preparatory**, having **reached a point of fulfillment** and thus now serving only as a basis and foundation for the Age of Messianic Salvation that has now come in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This new age is frequently referred to in the New Testament as the “Kingdom of God.” This temporary and preparatory nature of the Law is seen in clear statements by the Lord Jesus.

**Matthew 11:13** - 13 "For all **the prophets and the Law prophesied until John**. NASB

**Luke 16:16-17** - 16 "**The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached**, and every one is forcing his way into it. 17 "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than **for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail**. NASB

Jesus contrasted the Law with the “*gospel of the Kingdom of God*,” the new age that had now arrived, which was first preached by John, the forerunner of the Christ. Even though these two are held in contrast, Jesus still maintained that the Law could “*not fail*,” but rather explained that He came to fulfill it. He maintains therefore that what the Law has established is sound and true, and will remain until the consummation of the ages, but has now reached a time of fulfillment and ushered in a new age, an age He refers to as the Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven. These two terms are synonymous in the Gospels.

**Matthew 5:17-19** - 17 "**Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill**. 18 "For truly I say to you, **until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished**. 19 "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in **the kingdom of heaven**. NASB

Therefore as Jesus would speak about the Law, He continually held forth this idea that the what the moral aspects of the Law had established, was true and righteous and a standard by which we appraise what is good and evil, just and unjust. Nevertheless He would maintain that it had reached a time of fulfillment and that the religious leaders of His day had badly misunderstood it. At times, He had scathing words for them and would correct them and point them to the true meaning of the Law.

**Matthew 23:23-24** - 23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have **neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness**; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. 24 "**You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!**" NASB

He would hold Himself out as a judge and interpreter of the very Law itself. As He did this, He would frequently show Himself to be the sum total of the Law and the very fulfillment of it Himself, and claim to be greater than the most revered objects in the Law such as the Temple.

**Matthew 12:1-8** - 12 At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath through the grainfields, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. 2 **But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Behold, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath."** 3 But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he became hungry, he and his companions; 4 how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? 5 **"Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, and are innocent?** 6 **"But I say to you, that something greater than the temple is here. 7 "But if you had known what this means, 'I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 **"For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."** NASB**

Even though the Law may condemn a woman caught in adultery in John chapter 8, Jesus could stand as a **mediator** between her and the condemnation of the Law and offer her forgiveness. And this He would do silencing the religious hypocrites who show themselves to be equally as sinful as the very woman whom they would condemn.