

Jesus Has a Law

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The affirmation of my title is offensive to many theologians and pulpiteers. Those offended often hurl the *legalist* epithet at the affirmers. “No,” they say, “We are not under law, but under grace, in the Gospel age.” Is Christianity an *all grace, no law* system, or is this a mantra men repeat without due consideration of what the inspired writers refer to as “the Gospel,” “the Faith,” “the Truth,” and other like terms? Do these antinomians have no consciousness of the consequences of their denial?

Let us study this subject of eternal implications by means of some questions:

- **Why do we need God’s grace?** All accountable persons end up sinners: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Sin, if unforgiven, pays the awful “wages” of eternal separation from God (6:23). We cannot earn our forgiveness/salvation; God’s grace, manifested in the sending of the Christ and His death upon the cross, have alone made salvation possible (Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 2:11-14).
- **How do we become sinners?** We become sinners not by birth or inheritance, but by our own transgression/violation of God’s law (1 John 3:4).
- **Does the existence of sin imply the existence of law?** Reason answers that it is **impossible** to violate non-existent law (whether under Moses or under Jesus). However, the New Testament explicitly answers this question: “But where there is no law, neither is there transgression” (Rom. 4:15b; cf. 5:13b).
- **Would the absence of law under Christ obviate the need for grace?** Indeed: No law – no sin; no sin – no grace needed. Those who assert that under Christ we have “all grace and no law” thereby eliminate the very need for grace.
- **Does *all grace, no law* imply universal salvation?** Most certainly. Without law, there is no sin. Without sin, there is no condemnation. Thus all will be saved. This heretical consequence is quite sufficient to expose the fallacy of the *no law* assertion.

Some seem never to have read the apostle Paul’s references to the Gospel as the “law of Christ” (Rom. 8:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2). Moreover, James twice calls it the “law of liberty” and says we will be judged by it (1:25; 2:12).

The favorite passage of those who strip the Gospel of its legal character is Romans 6:4b: “For ye are not under law, but under grace.” Their misuse of this passage makes Paul contradict himself. They miss his use of the figure of speech (enthymeme) in which he mitigates one element so as to emphasize the other, with *only* understood in the negation and *also* understood in the affirmation: “For ye are not [only] under law, but [also] under grace.” Jesus, John, Peter, and Paul also employed this same figure (e.g., Mat. 10:34; John 12:44; Acts 5:4b; 1 John 3:18; et al.). Jesus has

a law. It is His New Testament (Heb. 9:16-17), by which all who have lived since Calvary shall be judged at last (John 12:48).

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