

1. Law & Grace (Article 1)

We do not keep the Ten Commandments (old covenant) for the same purpose that Israel was commanded to keep them. They kept it as a demonstration of faith in the promise of a Savior who would institute a new covenant. Once the old covenant was fulfilled there is no reason to still keep it. Now, instead we keep the new covenant of grace.

The new covenant of grace is not absent of elements of the Old Covenant.

Like a caterpillar that is transformed into a butterfly, the Old Covenant was transformed into a new and more beautiful covenant.

The caterpillar was not destroyed – it was transformed into a new shape.

The old covenant (caterpillar) was transformed by Jesus Christ into a new covenant (butterfly) and looks different to those on the grace side of the cross than to Israel on the law side of the cross. We are not subject to the old covenant – it was transformed. We are now subject to the new covenant.

Jesus did not destroy the Ten Commandments, He molded them into a new covenant (new commandments) having the same moral values as the old, but now personalized, expanded and empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Do we keep the Ten Commandments the same way as Israel? No. The Bible explains clearly that it is not enough. We now keep the commandments the way Jesus explained as transformed in the new covenant.

Law and grace work together as a team in bringing salvation in Jesus Christ. Law brings conviction of sin and shows our need for a Savior Grace is the lifeline extended to us from Jesus Christ through whom we receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Once a person is under grace, the old law changes form. It no longer functions as our master.

At one time Israel was under the law (old covenant), but with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection we are now under grace (new covenant). Even in the old covenant it was not keeping of the law that saved Israel – it was grace through faith in God's promise. Nevertheless, in keeping covenant with God, Israel demonstrated faith by living “under” the law. The law was external and written on two stone tablets (Ten Commandments). And thus, Israel's devotion to God was seen in external works of the law.

The law was in the drivers seat. It was in control for the purpose of leading Israel and all mankind to Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ came the law changed position, and grace took over the wheel. The law was exchanged with grace.

Law did not have the power of grace. **The law was defeated by sin, while grace defeated sin.** Those who lived under the law were in bondage to the power/control of sin. Jesus defeated sin and offered us grace. Through the power of the Holy Spirit all who partake of His grace have a new power that defeats sin.

We are under grace, but not at liberty to live in sin. Grace gives us the freedom and power to obey Jesus Christ. We are not under law. If keeping the law was enough to make us acceptable to God, there would have been no need for Jesus to come. The law proved our need for Jesus Christ.

In fact, it is possible to be an obedient follower of Jesus Christ without knowing the literal words of the Ten Commandments from the old covenant law. I say this only to emphasize that with grace in control it is the Holy Spirit that empowers the believer to “walk in the Spirit” so as not to fulfill the “lust of the flesh”. Should a believer in Jesus Christ know the Ten Commandments? Absolutely! But when grace came, where did the Ten Commandments go? What happened to the law? There is great value and purpose in the Ten Commandments as you will see in a next document and by reading on.

2. The Old Covenant

As noted in the history section, the Ten Commandments were part of God's covenant with Israel (Exodus 34:28). The Ten Commandments were the “rules” that would govern the covenant relationship. The purpose of the rules were that of maintaining right relationship with God and one another as an example to the world of the existence and character of Jehovah God. Israel's commitment to God's covenant brought his blessing upon Israel. God's sole purpose with Israel was to bring forth a Light that would bring salvation to the world.

“I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,(Isa. 42:6).

“he says: “It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”(Isa. 49:6)

“Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations.” (Isa. 51:4)

God's covenant with Israel was a foreshadowing of the new covenant that would be established in Jesus Christ. Through God's covenant with Israel, God captivated the world with His blessings upon Israel, His judgments, and His power. The prophecies of a Saviour who would bring salvation even to the gentiles (non-jewish people) was proclaimed to the world through Israel. **God chose Israel to be His light set upon a hill that could not be hidden.**

God commanded Moses to place the Ten Commandments in the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:16; Deut. 31:25-26; Heb. 9:4). The ark of the covenant was put in the tabernacle in the holy of holies. It was placed just under the mercy seat and it was the place God said He would meet with Moses. Throughout Israel's history, the ark symbolized the presence of God. It was in keeping covenant with God that His presence was also with Israel. God's existence was revealed to the world through His covenant with Israel.

The Ten Commandments were tablets of testimony (Exodus 34:28). In Hebrew testimony means witness. The first books in the Bible are called the Old Testament

[testimony] because they are about the first covenant. The Ten Commandments were evidence of the covenant God had established with Israel. Located in the tabernacle in the center of the camp (where the presence of God was) they would serve as a constant reminder of God's covenant with Israel. Throughout Israel's wanderings in the wilderness and subsequent inheritance of the promised land, knowledge of the testimony of the covenant was not confined to the borders of Israel. Israel's "testimony" preceded them. Other nations knew they could not stand against the God of Israel.

God's covenant was with Israel specifically, but this fact did not exclude non-jews from making the God of Israel their God too (I.e: Rahab the harlot, Ninevah, Nebuchadnezzar, Ruth). Gentiles who were converted to the God of Israel (Jehovah) were called proselytes. These could be participants in God's covenant. God's covenant was made with Israel but was a witness to all people. And **through Israel all people would be introduced to the Saviour of all mankind – Jesus Christ.**

When Israel disobeyed God's Ten Commandments it was synonymous with breaking covenant. Israel was often accused of unbelief and rebellion. These attitudes and accompanying bouts of disobedience and disregard for the law, brought severe punishment from God. Israel's disobedience and unbelief reflected on God's reputation. God desired Israel's obedience so they could continue to be God's light.

Under the old covenant people were still saved by faith. Israel was bound to keep the law because it was the covenant way of life. But the Ten Commandments by themselves did not bring them salvation. When God first established His covenant verbally with Abraham, Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. God's covenant with Israel included the promise of a Saviour who would bring salvation to all mankind. Those who kept the covenant by faith were those who looked ahead and believed in God's word for those things which were not yet seen.

The old covenant through the Nation of Israel was setting the stage for the institution of the new covenant in Jesus Christ.

"Brothers and sisters, let us think in human terms: Even an agreement [covenant] made between two persons is firm. After that agreement [covenant] is accepted by both people, no one can stop it or add anything to it. God made promises both to Abraham and to his descendant. God did not say, "and to your descendants." That would mean many people. But God said, "and to your descendant." That means only one person; that person is Christ.

This is what I mean: God had an agreement [covenant] with Abraham and promised to keep it. The law, which came four hundred thirty years later, cannot change that agreement and so destroy God's promise to Abraham. If the law could give us Abraham's blessing, then the promise would not be necessary. But that is not possible, because God freely gave his blessings to Abraham through the promise he had made.

So what was the law for? It was given to show that the wrong things people do are against God's will. And it continued until the special descendant [Jesus Christ], who had been promised, came. The law was given through angels who used Moses for a mediator to give the law to people. But a mediator is not needed when there is only one side, and God is only one.

Does this mean that the law is against God's promises? Never! That would be true only if the law could make us right. But God did not give a law that can bring life. Instead, the Scriptures showed that the whole world is bound by sin. This was so the promise would be given through faith to people who believe in Jesus Christ." (Gal. 3:17-22 NCV)

It is critical to know the context of the Ten Commandments in the old covenant, so we can understand its purpose today.

3. The New Covenant

With Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection the Old Covenant was fulfilled and a new covenant was instituted.

"But our High Priest [Jesus Christ] has been given a ministry that is far superior to the ministry of those who serve under the old laws, for he is the one who guarantees for us a better covenant with God, based on better promises. If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. But God himself found fault with the old one when he said: "The day will come, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah..." (Heb. 8:6-8 NLT)

Does this mean the old covenant was God's mistake? Not at all. The old covenant with its laws, priests, tabernacle/temple, animal sacrifices, etc was a picture of what Jesus Christ would do. God was not short-sited or ignorant about the inadequacies of the Old Covenant and so, came up with a new plan to send Jesus to make things right. Jesus was not an after thought. His coming and purpose was prophesied to the first people ever created – Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:15). His coming was intentional from the fall of mankind and the promise of his coming brought hope to Israel through the old covenant.

Jesus accomplished in the new covenant what the old covenant was not adequate to do – defeat sin. The old covenant proved that sin was more powerful than the law. As soon as the law in the old covenant said, *"Thou shalt not..."* mankind could not resist temptation and the power of sin. Thus, Israel ultimately broke the covenant. Sin overpowered mankind, but Jesus overpowered sin. Israel was enslaved to sin, just as they had been enslaved to Egypt hundreds of years earlier. Just as Moses (who was given the written old covenant) was the savior for Israel from captivity in Egypt; now Jesus (who was mediator of new covenant) was the Saviour for Israel (and all people) from captivity to sin.

The law's purpose was to expose sin (old covenant). Jesus purpose was to defeat sin (new covenant).

Just prior to Moses receiving the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments, Moses had written down everything God had told him in a book called the Book of the Covenant. He read it to the people of Israel who whole-heartedly agreed to obey. To seal (confirm) the covenant, a sacrifice was made and the blood of bulls was sprinkled on the altar and the people. Exodus 24:8.

When Jesus instituted the new covenant, he was in an upper room with His twelve disciples sharing the passover meal just before His crucifixion. He took the cup of wine and said,

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” (Luke 24:20).

The new covenant was also sealed with the blood of a sacrifice. Jesus was the Lamb slain, and His blood was poured out for the sins of mankind. This was the end of the old covenant and the beginning of a new one.

The Ten Commandments were part of the old covenant. **Jesus was not in conflict with the old covenant** as the priests, scribes and pharisees of the day suggested. And lest people think that Jesus came to bash the law and prophets of the Old Testament, **Jesus Himself stated that He did not come to destroy the law and the prophets. He came not to destroy, but to fulfill (Matt. 5:17).**

Jesus fulfilled the law. He did not destroy it. Through His fulfillment we find salvation from our sins in Him alone. Jesus Christ fulfilled the old covenant and its laws when:

1. He lived a sinless life
2. Became the sacrifice for our sins
3. Was raised from the dead defeating sin and death

Jesus Christ became our:

1. Our High Priest
2. Our Sacrifice
3. Our Temple

To be in right standing with God no longer requires the old covenant way of life. When Jesus fulfilled the old covenant, He himself became the new. Right standing with God comes through Jesus Christ alone. The law made us slaves to sin. Jesus came to set us free from this slavery. His power over sin and our welcome into his kingdom is what we call **GRACE**.

“Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is that the Jewish people might be saved. I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. For they don’t understand God’s way of making people right with himself. Instead, they are clinging to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. They won’t go along with God’s way. For Christ has accomplished the whole purpose of the law. All who believe in him are made right with God.” (Rom. 10:1-4)

At the moment of Jesus’ death on the cross, Matthew 27:51 states that the veil (separating the entrance to the holy of holies) of the Temple was ripped from top to bottom, symbolizing that with Jesus death there was no longer a need for the temple. Jesus Himself became the new temple. It was no longer necessary for the high priest to enter into the holy place, meet with God (at the mercy seat and ark of the covenant), and intercede to God for the sins of the people. Jesus fulfilled the purpose of the temple, and became the new door through which to come to God. People no longer had to come to the temple and offer sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins. Now they would come to the new Temple – Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Shortly

after Jesus' ascension into heaven He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell all who would trust in Jesus Christ. In I Corinthians 6:19 we are told that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit – the place in which He dwells.

So then, what happened to the law (Ten Commandments)? Where did they go? Were they suddenly made obsolete? Were they not important any more?

They were part of the old covenant which was transformed into the new covenant in Jesus Christ. The Ten Commandments are laws of great moral value and significance. They provide guidance for right living toward God and toward one another. They provide an excellent foundation for moral civilization. And Jesus Himself never destroyed the law. In fact, the Apostle Paul said that the “law is good...” (I Tim. 1:8).

So what is the Ten Commandments place in an era of grace through the new covenant?

The Scriptures are very clear where the law went:

“The day will come,” says the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,” says the Lord.

“But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day,” says the Lord. “I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their family, saying, ‘You should know the Lord.’ For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know me,” says the Lord. “And I will forgive their wickedness and will never again remember their sins.”
(Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-13)

The law that was once external, written on two stone tablets and placed in the ark of the covenant for the people of God (Israel) is now transferred into the hearts of all who know Jesus Christ and have become partakers in the new covenant.

The Ten Commandments moved from a position of external to internal. Ezekiel 36:25-27 also talks about the change of heart that would take place with the coming of the new covenant:

“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”

This is what the law and the new covenant looks like: the law would be put into the minds and hearts of His people. With the new covenant also came the promise of the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who receive Jesus Christ. It is the Holy Spirit that guides us in following God's decrees and gives us the power to keep His laws.

A believer (part of the new covenant) has a new relationship to the law. The old relationship was slavery. The law brought condemnation. It declared him guilty. It proved

the power of sin dominating the heart and body. A believer's new relationship with the law is that of freedom and victory. It is freedom from the master of sin. Christ has set the believer free from the power of sin and the condemnation of the law (Rom. 8:1). **Now we are free to obey the law in a new way!** Through the power of the Holy Spirit that indwells us. We are not saved or justified before God by trying to keep the law. We are saved and justified through Jesus Christ and as Christ was victorious over the power of sin, so we too can walk in this victory by the power of His Holy Spirit which He has given us.

A believer's mission is not to obey the Ten Commandments – that is old covenant thinking and it proved inadequate (which was its purpose). A believer's mission, is to obey the Holy Spirit (“*who will “move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws”*”).

When Jesus gave His famous Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 He referred to some of the old covenant laws. Understanding that His crowd were Jews and devout followers of the law of Moses, by way of introduction He attempted to make them understand that what He was about to say was not with the intent of destroying the old covenant laws or the prophets. Jesus declared His purpose of fulfilling the law and the prophets. Jesus then began quoting old covenant laws and restating the law in the context of the new covenant (**which addresses heart issues because the law would be placed in their hearts**).

For example, let's look at Matthew 5:21-22:

“You have heard that the law of Moses says, ‘Do not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’ But I say, if you are angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the high council. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.”

Why would Jesus restate much of the old covenant law this way? Was Jesus changing the law? No. Jesus was explaining what the law in the new covenant would look like. Remember, the law went from being external to internal. In other words, **the law of Moses forbade you from murdering someone. This same law internalized not only forbids the physical act of murder, but also forbids you from hating someone.** According to the old covenant, you were not guilty if you hated someone, but if you murdered them, the law declared you guilty. In the new covenant of Jesus Christ this law declares a person guilty who hates someone in their heart.

“If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.”
(1 John 4:20-21)

Jesus explained clearly that all the Old Covenant laws and prophets hang on two basic commandments: **Love God and Love one another (Matt. 22:34-40)**. When the old covenant law (Ten Commandments) comes through the cross it is placed into the hearts of God's people and the overriding commands are loving God and one another. As partakers in the new covenant, it is in keeping these two commands that we fulfill the law and establish our ethics and lifestyles as followers of Jesus Christ.

“...for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.” Romans 13:8-10

In John 13:34-35 Jesus gives a new commandment. Keeping it is what will identify a true follower of Jesus Christ.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

Let's see what the Old Covenant Ten Commandments look like on the other side of the cross when planted into the hearts of His people and rooted in the love of God.

Old & New Covenant Laws Compared

The Old Covenant laws (Ten Commandments) were transformed into New Covenant laws through Jesus Christ. Following are the Ten Commandments from the old covenant compared to the equivalent new covenant commandments.

Old Covenant Ten Commandments	Equivalent New Covenant Laws
1. No other gods	<u>Do not love the world; worship and serve God only...</u>
2. No Idols	<u>Do not make idols nor be full of greed...</u>
3. Do not take God's name in vain	<u>Do not swear by anything, avoid hypocrisy...</u>
4. Keep Sabbath holy	<u>Jesus Christ is our Sabbath Rest...</u>
5. Honor parents	<u>Obey and honor parents...</u>
6. Do not murder	<u>Do not be angry with or hate brothers or sisters...</u>
7. Do not commit adultery	<u>Do not be filled with lust, do not divorce or marry one who is divorced...</u>
8. Do not steal	<u>Do not take from others, and be generous to those in need...</u>
9. Do not give false testimony	<u>Do not give false testimony or speak evil against your brother...</u>
10. Do not covet	<u>Be content; do not worry...</u>

Also see Article 2...