

*The Covenant at*

Sinai

(Part 2)

A  
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*Teaching Series*

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# Lesson 7 Outline: *God's Covenant at Sinai (Part 2)*

## I. An Introduction:

\*Objection 1: Has to do with the NATURE of the Mosaic Covenant

\*Objection 2: Has to do with the REQUIREMENT of the Mosaic Covenant

\*Objection 3: Has to do with the AUTHORITY of the Mosaic Covenant

## II. The First Objection: The *Nature* of the Mosaic Covenant

\*The Big Question:

→ If it's part of the Covenant of Grace, why do some Scriptures seem to speak of it negatively?

\*The Short Answer:

→ There are some differences—but they are in “administration” rather than “essence”

→ The same mango can be served up two different ways—it was the same with the OT and NT

→ What are the differences in administration between the OT and the NT?

### 1. EMPHASIS:

→ In the OT, the physical is emphasized; in the NT, it's the eternal that's emphasized

→ We see this in Hebrews 11:8-10 with the land of Canaan in particular

→ God was always teaching about eternal things, but in the OT it was in and through pictures

→ Example: in many ways, the entire OT was like a big Sunday-school class

	THE MAIN FOCUS	THE MAIN POINT
THE OLD TESTAMENT	Earthly Pictures (the “husk”)	JESUS and the GOSPEL
THE NEW TESTAMENT	Eternal Realities (the “kernel”)	

## 2. CLARITY:

- Even the OT was about the gospel—but it was much less clear than the clarity we have now
- We see this in Hebrews 8:5; 10:1 (“shadows”) and Ephesians 3:5 (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Pet. 1:10-12)
- We are so privileged in the new covenant to have the kind of gospel clarity we do now
- Example: we could compare it to the light of dawn versus the light we have at noon-day

	HOW THE LORD TAUGHT	WHAT THE LORD TAUGHT
THE OLD TESTAMENT	Not so Clear	JESUS and the GOSPEL
THE NEW TESTAMENT	Very Clear	

## 3. CONSUMMATION:

- There's a huge difference between seeing the sign for an ice-cream shop and eating ice-cream!
- When Jesus came, the signs gave way to the substance; what was promised was finally performed
- We see this in Hebrews 9:9; 10:1
- The point is that the OT sacrifices/rituals were nothing without the reality they pointed to (Jesus)
- Example: the difference between a shadow of a gushing river and the actual gushing river itself

	WHAT WE SEE	WHO WE SEE
THE OLD TESTAMENT	Signs and Pictures	JESUS and the GOSPEL
THE NEW TESTAMENT	The Person Himself	

#### 4. ABROGATION

- We spoke earlier of the differences between the Moral, Ceremonial, and Judicial laws
- Again: the Ceremonial Laws had to do with Israel's worship; the Judicials with their civil state
- The Moral Law was permanent; but the Ceremonials and Judicials were temporary
- Jesus declared all foods clean in the NT. We also see the same principle in Colossians 2:16-17
- Example: the external fuel tank that disconnects from the space shuttle after it's served its purpose

	WHAT GOD DID	WHY GOD DID IT
THE OLD TESTAMENT	Added Civil and Ceremonial Laws	JESUS and the GOSPEL
THE NEW TESTAMENT	Abolished Civil and Ceremonial Laws	

#### 5. FREEDOM

- The meaning of Paul's words in Galatians 3:23: Before Christ, the *object* of our faith came. . .
- The Ceremonial Law preached the gospel to the OT Jews—but it was also burdensome
- It was burdensome for them—like an imprisonment—but it was a *gracious* imprisonment
- How so? It was this burdensome imprisonment that served to protect them from the curse
- Example: Jewish people in hiding during the days of Nazi Germany
- It's the same for us: Now we've been liberated from the bondage of the OT Ceremonial Laws

	THE SITUATION	THE REASON
THE OLD TESTAMENT	A Gracious Imprisonment	JESUS and the GOSPEL
THE NEW TESTAMENT	An Unnecessary Imprisonment	

## 6. EFFECT:

→ Example: It was actually the second time Edwards' preached that sermon that it took effect

→ We see this principle in Jeremiah 31:33 (cf. Deut. 29:4; Is. 10:22, etc)

→ Question: Didn't God write His Law in the hearts of His OT people too?? (Ps. 119:11)

→ Answer: Yes He did. Then what is Jeremiah 31:33 really actually saying??

→ The same gospel was preached to them (Heb. 4:2,6). But overall, to little effect. In the NT, God would also write His Law in the hearts of His people—but on a much greater scale. . .

	EFFECT OF PREACHING	CONTENT OF PREACHING
THE OLD TESTAMENT	Few were Changed	JESUS and the GOSPEL
THE NEW TESTAMENT	Many are Changed	

## 7. COMPARISON:

→ We see this in 2 Corinthians 3:7-11: “how much more” is the glory in the NT!! (cf. Heb. 7:22)

→ Example: the difference in glory between the light of the moon and the light of the sun

→ Substance is better than the shadows; Fulfillment is better than promise; Reality better than sign

	ITS ADMINISTRATION	ITS ESSENCE
THE OLD TESTAMENT	Came with Glory	JESUS and the GOSPEL
THE NEW TESTAMENT	Comes with Far Greater Glory	

## 8. SUMMARY:

→ These Scriptures aren't contrasting the “old covenant” with the Covenant of Grace

→ Rather, the contrast is between the OT Covenant of Grace and the NT Covenant of Grace

SUMMARY OF THE DIFFERENCES IN ADMINISTRATION BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS:

	IN THE OLD COVENANT	IN THE NEW COVENANT
EMPHASIS	The gospel was packaged in a temporal husk	The gospel is set forth without the temporal husk
CLARITY	The gospel was revealed but indirectly and darkly	The gospel is set forth with full noon-day clarity
CONSUMMATION	Redemption was promised, pictured, signified	Redemption is performed by Christ the substance
ABROGATION	The Ceremonial Laws applied to OT church	The Ceremonial Laws abrogated for NT church
FREEDOM	God's people were held in custody and burdened	God's people are set free from that bondage
EFFECT	God's Word produced little effect on most hearts	God's Word has a much greater effect on hearts
COMPARISON	Thus, the old covenant was full of gospel glory	But the glory of the new covenant is much greater

### III. The Second Objection: The *Requirement* of the Mosaic Covenant

#### 1. GENERAL PASSAGES from the Law

→ Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 27:26 (Gal. 3:11-12)

→ See also Deuteronomy 4:1; 5:33; 6:25; 7:12; 8:1; 11:26-27

→ The Question: What do these Scriptures mean? What to do with these passages?

#### 2. GOSPEL OBEDIENCE in the Law

→ First, we could say that many of these kinds of passages have been understood evangelically

→ One example is Deuteronomy 7:9

→ This isn't describing the cause of God's blessing but the characteristics of those who have it

→ It isn't describing HOW to gain God's favor but rather WHO are those who have gained it

→ This is also how we can understand the Beatitudes (cf. Jn. 5:29; Lk. 11:28; Ps. 103:17-18)

→ This isn't describing the MEANS of obtaining life—but rather the MARKS of those who have it

#### 3. PERFECT OBEDIENCE in the Law

→ This is a principle by which we can understand many passages—but it doesn't explain all passages

- Paul makes it clear he's talking about perfect obedience in Romans 10:5 and Galatians 3:12
- Again, these passages quote Deuteronomy 27:26 and Leviticus 18:5
- The Covenant of Grace requires faith; but these passages require perfect obedience
- What do we make of such passages??

#### 4. A TWO-FOLD UNDERSTANDING of the Law

- The Law must actually be taken in TWO different ways: *Largely* or *Strictly* considered
- Taken **LARGELY**, the Law refers to everything—including the gospel promises of mercy
- But taken **STRICTLY**, the Law refers to an abstracted rule of righteousness based on obedience
- This is the key that unlocks so many Scriptures and reconciles different Scriptures together
- Hebrews 4:2,6 speaks of the Law *largely* taken; but 2 Corinthians 3:6-9 as the Law *strictly* taken
- The Law itself commands two very different things: 1) Faith in Christ, and 2) Perfect Obedience

#### THE LAW LARGELY TAKEN VERSUS STRICTLY TAKEN

	UNDERSTOOD	WHAT IT DOES	WHAT IT REQUIRES	WHAT IT SAYS	HOW IT'S DESCRIBED
THE LAW	<i>Largely taken</i>	Provides Gospel Mercies	Faith in Christ	Believe and Live	A Gospel Ministry
	<i>Strictly taken</i>	Commands and Condemns	Perfect Obedience	Obey and Live	A Ministry of Death

#### A) A Few *EXAMPLES*:

\*We see this in **ROMANS 10:5-6**. . .

- Romans 10:5, Paul is referring to the Law as **STRICTLY** taken (excluding the promises)
- But in the next verse (10:6), Paul is referring to the Law as **LARGELY** taken (including them)

\*We see it in **ROMANS 3:21-22**. . .

- In 3:21, salvation is “apart from the Law”: that is, the Law **STRICTLY** speaking
- But in 3:22, that salvation is “witnessed by the Law”: that is, the Law **LARGELY** speaking
- As one put it: “The Law itself testifies, that the righteousness of God is apart from the Law.”

\*We apply it to GALATIANS 3:10-12. . .

- In both of these passages, Paul is considering the Law from **BOTH** perspectives
- In Galatians 3:10-12, Paul is only considering the Law in its **STRICTER** sense
- When Paul says “the Law is not of faith” he means the Law in its **STRICT** sense is not of faith
- The way of the gospel, we could say, is **IN** the Law—but it is not **OF** the Law

#### THE LAW LARGELY AND STRICTLY TAKEN: *A SUMMARY*

	UNDERSTOOD	CONSIDERED AS	RIGHTEOUSNESS IS	REQUIRES	EXAMPLES FROM SCRIPTURE
THE LAW	<i>Largely</i>	Including Christ	Witnessed in the Law	Faith	Rom.3:21;10:6-9;(Jn.5:46; Heb.4:2,6)
	<i>Strictly</i>	Abstracted from Christ	Demanded by the Law	Works	Rom.3:21;10:5;Gal.3:10ff;2Cor.3:6ff

#### *B) A Few CLARIFICATIONS:*

- The Law **LARGELY** taken belongs to the Covenant of Grace because it reveals Christ
- This is why Sinai as a whole is part of the Covenant of Grace: It includes promises of grace
- But the Law **STRICTLY** understood actually contains the content of the Covenant of Works
- Not that the Covenant of Works itself was republished—but its content was simply repeated

*\*But how can these things be? How can these two opposed systems exist together??*

- Not by way of “ingrediency” but “subserviency”; Not “coordination” but “subordination”

- The two were not blended or mixed together; they remained very much distinct
- It wasn't like adding chocolate syrup to milk; it was rather like adding oil to water
- Think of a bag of beef jerky. There are really 2 items in there: 1) the beef; 2) the white packet
- Think of how bay leaves function for the curry you're cooking on the stove
- The content of the Covenant of Works was added to the Covenant of Grace revealed at Sinai
- It was added in a way that submitted to and to serve the purposes of the Covenant of Grace

*\*What did this look like in particular?*

- The Law in its STRICTER sense was added. . .
- . . .in order to drive God's people to Christ as He was revealed in the Law's LARGER sense
- “Do this and live” was added so God's people might flee to Christ and “believe and live”
- This is how the Jews went astray; they misunderstood why God gave the Law in its strict sense
- They not only ADDED to the Law—they TOOK AWAY Christ who was revealed in the Law
- But God's purpose for setting forth the Law at Sinai was always to lead men to the Gospel

*\*The Difference in Function between the Law and the Gospel*

- Apart from the Christ and the Gospel, the Law is indeed merely “a letter that kills” (2 Cor.3)
- They have different FUNCTIONS—but the Law and the Gospel both have the same GOAL
- Think of FARMING: You can't farm without Plowing; neither can you farm without Sowing
- The two have different functions but the same goal. So it is with the Law and the Gospel

C) ONE FINAL THOUGHT:

- What we've seen is that the Law actually requires BOTH 1) Faith AND 2) Perfect Obedience
- Sinai required FAITH because that is what is required of US
- Sinai required PERFECT OBEDIENCE because that is what was required of CHRIST
- So both faith and obedience are required because both are necessary for our salvation
- It's Christ's perfect obedience that justifies us—but it can only be imputed to us through faith

FRANCIS TURRETIN: “Again, these two conditions are proposed because they are necessary to the salvation of the sinner: *perfect obedience in Christ* to fulfill the righteousness of the law. . .without which the justice of God did not permit life to be given to us; *faith however in us* that the perfect obedience and satisfaction of Christ might be applied to us and become ours by imputation. *Thus what was demanded of us in the Covenant of Works is fulfilled by Christ in the Covenant of Grace.* Nor is it absurd that in this way justification takes place by works and by faith—by *the works of Christ* and by *our faith*. And thus in sweet harmony the law and the gospel meet together in this covenant. The law is not administered without the gospel, nor the gospel without the law. So that it is as it were a legal-gospel and an evangelical-law; a gospel full of obedience and a law full of faith. So the gospel does not destroy the law, but establishes it (Romans 3:31) by giving us Christ, who perfectly fulfilled it. And the law is not against the gospel, since it refers and leads us to it as its end.”

FRANCIS ROBERTS' VIEW OF THE DUAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE LAW

WHAT THE LAW DEMANDS	MANNER IN WHICH EACH IS REVEALED	INTENDED FOCUS	GOD'S PURPOSE FOR US IN EACH COMMAND	PRIMARY REASON BOTH ARE GIVEN	WHAT WE ARE MEANT TO LEARN
<i>Do and live</i>	Often & clearly	Secondary	To drive sinners to Jesus	We need both Jesus' doing & our believing	We obtain perfect doing in Christ by faith in Him
<i>Believe and live</i>	Seldom & obscurely	Primary	To save sinners in Jesus		

5. CLOSING SUMMARY:

- The Law commands BOTH faith AND perfect obedience. Why?
- “Do and live” was always meant to drive us to Christ that in Him we might “believe and live”
- Also, it's Christ's obedience that saves us; and His obedience is imputed to us by faith

IV. The Third Objection: The *Authority* of the Mosaic Covenant

\*The dialogue in the book, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity: Is a Christian under the Law?*

\*We're not under the Ceremonial or Judicial Laws—but what about the MORAL Law??

→ On the one hand, most of us would say absolute we need to keep the 10 Commandments

→ Matthew 5-7; Mark 7:8; Matthew 23:23; Matthew 5:17, etc, would tell us: Absolutely!

→ But then what do we do with Scriptures such as Romans 6:14; 7:4; and Galatians 2:19?

→ Are Christians bound to/under the Moral Law or are we not?

## 1. CLARIFYING THE MEANING:

→ We need to clarify if we mean: 1) the law of nature; 2) the law of works; or 3) the law of Christ

→ We can think of the Moral Law like H<sub>2</sub>O: the same substance actually takes on THREE forms:

→ The Moral Law actually takes on 3 forms: the law of nature; the law of works; the law of Christ

## 2. SURVEYING THE SCRIPTURE:

### A) *The Law of NATURE:*

\*We see this in Romans 2:14-15

\*When God created man, he wrote His Law inwardly on his heart

\*The Law of Nature simply says: “Obey”; “Do”; “Love the Lord your God. . .”

#### THE LAW OF NATURE: *A SUMMARY*

THE LAW OF NATURE	ITS ESSENCE	WHEN IT WAS GIVEN	HOW IT WAS GIVEN	WHAT IT SAID
	The Moral Law	At Creation	Written on Adam's Heart	“Do; Obey”

### B) *The Law of WORKS:*

\*We see this in Genesis 2:16-17

\*The command God gives Adam here is something distinct from creation

\*Also: this was so much more than just a **COMMAND**—it was actually a **COVENANT**

\*Lastly: the content of the Covenant of Works was actually the Moral Law (10 Commandments)!

\*How? Because **ALL** of God's commands were wrapped up together in that **SINGLE** command

\*And so, here in Genesis 2:16-17, the Natural law took on the form of the Covenant of Works

\*Or we could say that here the Law of Nature took on the form of the Law of Works

\*So, the Natural Law of “Do” or “Obey” took on the form of “Do and live” or “Obey and live”

\*This is the form of the Law Paul is speaking of in Romans 10:5-6 and Galatians 3:10-12

**THE LAW OF NATURE AND THE LAW OF WORKS: A COMPARISON**

	WHEN GIVEN	WHAT GOD DID	WHAT IT SAID	WHAT IT WAS
THE LAW OF NATURE	Genesis 1	Wrote His Law on Adam's Heart	“Do; Obey”	THE MORAL LAW
THE LAW OF WORKS	Genesis 2:16-17	Gave Adam a Law as a Covenant	“Do/Obey <i>for life</i> ”	

*C) The Law of CHRIST:*

\*The last form which the same Moral Law takes is the Law of Christ

\*Jesus never gave His people a **NEW** Law; the Law He gives us is the same Moral Law

\***BUT:** Now in Christ, the Law is no longer given to us **IN ITS COVENANT FORM**

\*We are still bound to keep the Moral Law—only **NOT** as a Covenant—**BUT** rather as a Rule

\*Instead of “**DO** and live”; the Law comes to us in the form of “**LIVE** and do”

**THE LAW OF WORKS AND THE LAW OF CHRIST: A COMPARISON**

	PARTICULAR FORM	WHAT IT SAYS TO US		
The Moral Law	The Law of Works	Do and Live	Do for life	Obey in order to obtain blessing
	The Law of Christ	Live and Do	Do from life	Obey because you've obtained it

A SUMMARY OF THE MORAL LAW IN ITS DIFFERENT FORMS IN SCRIPTURE

TYPE OF LAW	WHEN IT WAS GIVEN	HOW IT WAS GIVEN	WHAT IT SAYS	TO WHOM IT'S GIVEN
<i>The Law of Nature</i>	At Creation	As the Moral Law	Obey	Adam at creation
<i>The Law of Works</i>	At Genesis 2:16-17	As a Covenant of Works	Obey <i>for</i> life	Those outside of Jesus
<i>The Law of Christ</i>	Throughout Scripture	As a Rule of Life	Obey <i>from</i> life	Those in Jesus

### 3. RESOLVING THE QUESTION:

→ Believers are NOT under the Moral Law as THE LAW OF WORKS

→ But believers ARE under the Moral Law as THE LAW OF CHRIST

\*So how do we interpret passages such as Romans 6:14; 7:4-6 and Galatians 2:19?

→ We have died to the Law IN ITS COVENANT FORM (as the Law of Works)

\*But at the same time, as believers we are called to keep the Moral Law as the Law of Christ

→ As we saw from the other Scriptures above

\*These two truths are wonderfully set before us if we compare Romans 6:14 and 1 Corinthians 9:21:

A) Believers are NOT “under the Law” (Romans 6:14)

B) Yet, believers are also NOT “without the Law of God” (1 Corinthians 9:2a)

C) Instead, believers ARE “under the Law of Christ” (1 Corinthians 9:21b)

THE SCRIPTURES	THE TRUTHS		THE LATIN	THE GREEK
ROMANS 6:14	Believers are <i>not</i>	<i>Under</i> the Law (legalism)	<i>Sub lege</i>	<i>'upo nomon</i>
1 CORINTHIANS 9:21a	<i>Nor</i> are they	<i>Without</i> Law (antinomianism)	<i>Sine lege</i>	<i>anomos</i>
1 CORINTHIANS 9:21b	But they are <i>rather</i>	<i>Within</i> or in Law (orthodoxy)	<i>In lege</i>	<i>ennomos</i>