

Sunday, May 24, 2026 am

What God Has (and has not) Joined Together (13) Grace and Law (1)

Today we continue our 2026 theme. Last week we began discussing how God has joined together grace and law. Our focus in that lesson was about what grace is and how the gospel is a product of His grace – not just the message, but a call to obedience. Grace by definition is unmerited (unearned) favor (reward). It is a gift. And while grace is the prime factor in our salvation, we do have a part in receiving His grace. The concern as we noted is that while most advocate the importance of obedience (and keeping God’s law), they distinguish that from salvation through grace. IOW, you SHOULD keep the law but it has no bearing on your eternal destiny.

Today, I want to discuss law as it relates to the grace of God. The premise of this lesson is a consideration of passages like Romans 6:14, 11:6, Galatians 2:16, 3:11 & 5:4. These passages seem to imply that if we are under God’s grace, we do not need law. Or more specifically, keeping law is not necessary to secure our salvation.

I. God’s law and our salvation

- a. By definition law is a rule or system of rules recognized by an entity (country, municipality, organization, etc.) that regulates and enforces conduct. It is enforced by the authority of that entity.
- b. The term “law” has many different means. To understand what “law” is under consideration, we need to consider the context. There are different “laws” addressed in scripture. For example:
 - i. There are civil laws – Genesis 47:26 – Joseph made a law in Egypt during years of prosperity. Often the LOM addressed civil matters – Numbers 15:16 when Israel inherited Canaan, there was to be “one law... for the native-born and for the stranger.” Leviticus 13 & 14 spoke of the laws of leprosy.
 - ii. There is the law of sin – Romans 7:22-25. In this text Paul CONTRASTS different laws. This is the law we need to avoid.
 - iii. There is the law of works – Romans 3:27. This is the “meritorious works” where one earns his salvation (similar to “not of works lest anyone should boast” – Ephesians 2:9).
 - iv. The Law of Moses – Acts 13:38-39 where Paul was preaching to Jews in a synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia (Asia Minor). He notes that Jesus made available justification that was not possible under the Law of Moses. In Acts 15:5 – Judaizing teachers were willing to accept Gentiles but only if they kept the law of Moses. NOTE: As you discuss law vs. faith and law vs. grace, you will often find it within contexts contrasting the LOM with the Law of Christ. We will see this in a few moments.
 - v. The Law of Christ – Has Jesus given us a law that we must follow? Scripture is clear that there IS a law we must accept and follow.
- c. God has given us a law that we MUST follow (obey)
 - i. Romans 3:27 – the law of faith – in this text Paul makes a distinction between two different types of law. Paul is contrasting works of law with the law of faith. His point is the “law of faith” is one we MUST follow. More on this in a moment.
 - ii. Romans 8:2 – the law of Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. In a book where Paul has contrasted grace & faith with law, he notes a law that makes us free (saves us).
 - iii. Romans 8:7 – the law of God – Paul speaks of not living a carnal (worldly, fleshly) life. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. Why? “Because it is not subject to the law of God. Implied in this text is the law of God is something we NEED to follow.
 - iv. 1 Corinthians 9:21 – we are under law toward Christ. As Paul lived and taught, he adapted himself to the cultures of those he was around. BUT he noted in what he did he was under

law toward Christ. Necessarily implied is that he was expected to follow the law of Christ. **Galatians 6:2** – further elaborates on our need to fulfill the law of Christ. He gives instruction that ARE to follow (NOTE: *bear* – is an imperative verb).

- v. James 1:25 – we look into the “perfect law of liberty” AND continue in it! That is the one who will be blessed in what he does. This is within a context that emphasizes if we are not applying this law as we live we are lying to ourselves.
- vi. James 2:8 speaks of the royal law – loving your neighbor as yourself. A “kingly law” calls for us to care about others, even as we care about ourselves. We are told to fulfill this law.
- vii. 1 John 3:4 – sin is transgression of the law (lawlessness). John defines what sin is – acting outside of law. When we disobey God, we are violating law. What law? God’s law. Which I believe all the above texts emphasize.
- viii. CF. Isaiah 2:1-2 – prophesying of the time of Jesus, and specifically the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), He noted, “*For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*” Implied, was that in the established kingdom of God/Christ/heaven (all the same – which we have previously addressed – TT) there would a law (NOTE: Law is a necessary quality of a kingdom).
- ix. THE POINT of these texts. These passages emphasize that there IS a law that applies to us. Are we to conclude that it is a law WITHOUT an action on our part? Or that there is a law we are subject to and our salvation depends upon the keeping of this law?
- x. BUT this is a specific law, not just any law. As we examine various contexts of scripture, we can determine which law is being applied.

II. **But what about passages that distinguish between law and grace?**

- a. Romans 6:14 – you are not under law, but under grace.
 - i. The primary doctrinal message of Romans AND Galatians is that the gospel is the power of God to salvation to all (Romans 1:16). In these letters, Paul is emphasizing to his Jewish audience that they are no longer under the Law of Moses AND to Gentiles that they do not need the Law of Moses. Most of the time when Paul mentions not being under law (and not of works) he is contrasting our salvation (by the grace of God) to that of the LOM (or a similar meritorious system).
 - ii. Prior to our text in Romans, Paul has addressed how Abraham was justified by faith and not the law
 - 1. Romans 3:27-28 – after describing everyone as sinners (chs. 1-3) and how we need faith to be justified by Him, Paul begins to discuss the LOM. Note vs. 27-28 – boasting is excluded by “the law of faith” and APART from the deeds of the law. WHAT law? Note vs. 29 – “Or is He the God of the Jews only?” His point is salvation is available to all.
 - 2. 4:1—4 - this leads to a discussion about Abraham was justified by faith and not of works. NOTE why – lest he should boast (meritorious or earned behavior). 4:9-12 reminds us that Abraham preceded the LOM (by ~500 years). He believed and was considered righteous before he was circumcised. Circumcision was an act of faith (because God told him to). NOTE: As we have emphasized in previous studies, Abraham’s faith acted – he obeyed God (James 2:21-24). It was not “I do not have to obey God because I believe Him”. Romans 4:13-16 continues to develop this where Paul’s point is salvation is of faith according to God’s grace (not the LOM).
 - 3. Moving ahead to Romans 5:20-21 Paul emphasizes that though law (i.e. the LOM) sin was identified and sadly it abounded. However, God’s grace is greater than our sin.

4. 6:1-2 this leads anticipating a question: Since God's grace is greater than our sins, can we continue in sin? (Let that question sink in if you think obedience is not necessary).
 5. Paul's answer is ABSOLUTELY NOT! He emphasized that because they had been baptized, they put to death the man of sin and were now to be different – they were servants of righteousness (thus they had a *law* they were expected to obey). In 6:11-12 he commands (imperative verbs) that they not let sin reign in their mortal bodies but rather to present themselves alive to God.
- iii. THIS leads to our text – Romans 6:14 – CLEARLY the primary law Paul has in mind is the LOM.
 - iv. 6:15-18 - Following this declaration in this text he again reminds them they cannot continue to sin being “not under law but under grace.” You belong to God and must serve Him.
 - v. Conclusion: A salvation by grace through faith, not of the law does NOT negate our need to obey what He tells us to do! And our decision HAS eternal consequences.
- b. Romans 11:5-6 – *Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.*
 - i. While this text contrasts works and grace, there is a specific type of works Paul has in mind (meritorious – you earn your salvation).
 - ii. Note the context beginning in Romans 11:1-4, “Has God cast away His people?” Paul is speaking of the Jews. And the answer is “Certainly not!” He notes that there are SOME Jews who would be saved. He described them as a remnant according to the election of grace (citing the example of Elijah – Rom. 11:2-4).
 - iii. At the time Paul was writing there were Jews who were saved. BUT it was NOT by the LOM or works (meritorious – note how he describes the works – as completely contrary to grace.) Paul uses himself as an example (11:1) – he was Jew, BUT he was now saved in Christ Jesus. How? He obeyed the gospel – Acts 22:16. This made him a part of that “remnant.” Paul obeyed God, but did his works merit (earn) his salvation? Certainly not! Cf. 1 Cor. 15:8-10.
 - iv. This text is not saying that submitting to the law of God is not necessary.
 - c. Galatians 2:16 – Paul is rebuking Peter for his hypocrisy in isolating himself from Gentiles when in the presence of Jewish brethren (likely Judaizing false teachers). Paul exposes him and concludes they would not be justified by “the works of the law”. He is speaking of the Law of Moses. In chapters 3 and 4 Paul will address (in shorter form than Romans) why we are not under the LOM anymore. Namely, it accomplished its purpose.
 - d. Galatians 3:11 – *But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.”* Again, look at the context. In vs. 10 Paul deals with those who are under the curse (of the law). This is a quote from Deuteronomy 27:26 – the LOM. He proceeds to explain that Christ has redeemed us from that curse. He nailed the Old Law to the cross – Ephesians 2:14-16, Colossians 2:14. This is not about no need to obey any law, but specifically the LOM OR any law through which one THINKS he can earn his salvation.
 - e. Galatians 5:4 – *you who seek to be justified by law, you have fallen from grace.* Paul is concluding his discourse about the LOM being fulfilled and taken out of the way. That is the law he is warning them to not turn to. Do NOT abandon the gospel of Christ to follow after ANY other gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).

Much more could be said about this. But it is my hope that in this lesson we have seen that while our salvation is a product of God's grace, He has given us a law (through the gospel) that we MUST abide by. Keeping the law of God/Christ is not an option. Hebrews 5:9 – Jesus became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. Our eternity depends on our willingness to submit to Him. What about you? Have you submitted to God?