

Ceremonial and Civil Law the **discontinuity** between OLD and NEW. But realizing the Moral Law of God is an expression of His character and is a necessary guide into the knowledge of His will, and will always abide with us until all is fulfilled in the Messianic Age of salvation.

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

The Moral Law then, being an expression of God's character, is the exhortation to our obedience, not as rule or condition for salvation, but as a gracious response to what God has done in Christ to save us. The New Covenant is still a covenant with the element of obedience, whereby the truly redeemed covenant people of God express their obedience as a grateful response to God for His saving acts. However, now the believer is empowered by union with Christ *through* the Holy Spirit in order to achieve what we were powerless to do under the Law, because of the weakness of the flesh. And even though perfect obedience is still something beyond our grasp, God's purpose now in our sanctification is being fulfilled according to His gracious work of the Holy Spirit in our lives as we seek to glorify and enjoy Him all of our days. All of this we do, having all our sins cancelled and forgiven and the Law no longer looms over us with a guilty condemnation, but rather we live in the newness and freedom of forgiven sins.

Romans 8:1-4 - 1 **There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.** 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 **For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,** 4 in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. NASB

This then, is the **effectual** and **eternal** blessing of the New Covenant we now live under because of God's free grace to us, and because of Christ's finished work.

Lutheran, Reformed, and Dispensational Views

Lutheran and Reformed Christians have long held distinctions between Law and Gospel as a fundamental element in their worship. They have taught that the Law continues to serve a vital purpose for both sinner and saint and that the Gospel frees any person from the condemnation of the Law and grants eternal salvation to those who believe. Both Lutheran and Reformed traditions have upheld that there are three uses of the Law in the New Covenant age.

Lutheran view – From the Lutheran *Formula of Concord*.

1. **Curb** - that "thereby outward discipline might be maintained against wild, disobedient men [and that wild and intractable men might be restrained, as though by certain bars]"
2. **Mirror** - that "men thereby may be led to the knowledge of their sins"
3. **Guide** - that "after they are regenerate. . .they might. . .have a fixed rule according to which they are to regulate and direct their whole life"

Reformed view - In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the Reformer John Calvin likewise distinguished three uses in the Law. Calvin wrote: "That the whole matter may be made clearer, let us take a succinct view of the office and use of the Moral Law. Now this office and use seems to me to consist of three parts."

1. **Mirror** - By "exhibiting the righteousness of God, — in other words, the righteousness which alone is acceptable to God, — it admonishes every one of his own unrighteousness, certiorates, convicts, and finally condemns him."