



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of Dr. S. Lewis Johnson

Divine Purpose Sermon 14

TRANSCRIPT

Structure of Dispensational Theology (7):

Distinctive Features: Law and Grace - II

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee and praise Thee for the privilege of the study of the word tonight. And we ask again that Thou give us direction and guidance as we try to think through some of the things that have to do with the structure of the word of God. And above all, Lord, we pray that as a result of our studies we may be able to read the word more coherently. May it be easier for us to read chapter after chapter and understand the Scriptures knowing as we do something of the plan of the ages. Give direction to us, deliver us, Lord, from error, enable us to discover that which Thou would have us to know and believe and proclaim from Thy word.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Now some of you, no doubt, have forgotten your outline that I gave you, so I am going to give you a little help tonight and put the outline that we are following up here again for you. This is Law and Grace, and we began by saying a few things about Dispensationalism and the problems of the relationship between the Mosaic Law and the principle of Grace. We made reference to some of the questions that arise concerning Dispensationalism since the dispensations form part of the structure of

Dispensationalism its only natural that some would think that there is some desire to set forth different ways of salvation by the dispensations. We tried to point out that that was not true. We also referred to the question, “Was there no grace during the Age of the Law if we call the present day an Age of Grace?” And we tried to point out that that criticism of Dispensationalism was not justified. As a matter of fact, it’s probably better to call the present age not the Age of Grace anyway although it’s customarily or frequently called that but to call it the Age of the church according to their understanding.

We made reference also to some of the unguarded statements made by Dispensationist. But dispensationalists are not the only ones who have made unguarded statements. Covenant theologians also have made unguarded statements and I gave you an illustration of both of these in our last time together. And then we began our discussion of grace in the Mosaic Law and were discussing the relation of the Mosaic Law to grace. And we came down to discuss the purpose of the Law and said some things regarding the purpose of the Law as the hour concluded. It was added because of transgressions. It was enacted for the ungodly. It was given to bring men to the knowledge of sin. It was given to show the terrible nature of sin. It reveals the vast number of our sins. It was given to establish our guilt that every mouth might be stopped. It was a slave guardian to educate the children or to give guidance to the children of God until sonship came in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, finally, as the hour closed, you won’t remember but I remember, but as the hour closed I made reference to the fact that the Law also bore witness prophetically and typically to the salvation of Christ in the ceremonial system. Because in the ceremonial system it’s obvious that in the offering the priesthood and the covenant of the Mosaic Law which was administered through the priesthood there would be typical references to the coming ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ who would fulfill the types of the Old Testament and thus bring us into the present day in which we are living.

Now, we want to take a look at the nature of grace under the Mosaic Law. This is capital B under Roman I. There were important manifestations of the Divine Grace under the Mosaic Law to be sure. In fact, it might be called an act of grace to be given such a magnificent moral code as the Law of Moses. One could argue that way. One could say it was gracious of God for God to give Israel the Ten Commandments and to give them the sacrificial system, which was designed to portray in great detail aspects of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. And, in fact, one could argue that it was an act of grace to give them the civil law to guide them and to guard them as they made their way toward the time when the Messiah would come. There was certainly grace manifested in the election of the nation Israel. It made available to individual Israelites many privileges and blessings set out in the Old Testament. Grace was displayed in the way God dealt with them. He restored them to the land. He did things for them through the Old Testament history of which I'm sure you are well aware. Many enabling graces were given to them as they lived. But there were many things that were not given to them that are given to the children of God today. For example, there was no permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit and even the most saintly or the saintliest of the men of the Old Testament they did not possess the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit did come to them and did minister in them in indomitable power on occasion for specific tasks. But no permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit was experienced by the saints of the Old Testament. That is very plain from the statements that the Lord Jesus Christ makes in the New Testament. In John chapter 14 in verse 16 and 17, we have one of the statements that is rather important. I'll simply read it for you without a whole lot of comment. I think it makes good sense just as John wrote it. He says, “If you love me you shall keep my commandments and I will ask the Father and he will give you another comforter that he might be with you forever, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot receive because it does not see him nor know him but you know him because he abides with you and shall be in you.”

Now notice the expression “he abides with you and shall be in you.” So from the standpoint of the upper room before our Lord is crucified he says that the Spirit is with them but there will come a time when he shall be in them. Turn back to John chapter 7, we have a similar thing in John Chapter 7, verse 37 through verse 39 where we read, “Now in the last day, the great day of the feast Jesus stood and cried saying, “If any man thirst let him come to me and let be drinking. The one believing in me as the Scripture has said rivers of living water shall flow from his belly.” Now John adds these words, “Now this he spake concerning the Spirit which they were about to receive who had believed in him for the Spirit was not yet because the Jesus was not yet glorified.” So in other words the Holy Spirit had not yet come to them and out of them, therefore, were flowing rivers of living waters because Jesus had not yet been glorified. So it’s evident from these statements that while of the men of the Old Testament had many marvelous manifestations of God’s grace to them there were many things that were kept from them, no permanent indwelling.

He revealed himself as Yahweh to them, the Davidic Covenant was announced during the period of the Law but still there is an antithesis between the Legal Age and the Present Age. John points to it clearly in his words, “For the Law was given through Moses grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.” Think of that for a moment. “The Law was given through Moses. Grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.” Whatever that text means, it means what Calvin says it means at least, namely that “the law looked at by itself and separated from Christ lacks both grace and truth. Further, the truth of the Law lay in the fact that grace and salvation could only come through Christ. They law could not give it.”

Some covenant theologians make much over the grace of the law but if the law is so gracious in nature then why could it not save. We’re saved by grace are we not? So if we look at the Law as a magnificent manifestation of the grace and it was in certain aspects a gracious act of God to give the Law, we must remember that it is not like the

grace manifested through Jesus Christ and through the Cross and through the activity of the Holy Spirit in the present day. The tendency of some to water down the differences between the Old Covenant or Old Testament Age and New Testament Age are not shared by the writers of the New Testament in my opinion.

Now, let's turn to the ministry of Christ and the Mosaic Law and capital A: At His Birth. We'll deal with this rather briefly because I'm sure if you'll just reflect on the life of Christ you'll see the point that one could make. Capital A: At his Birth. Our Lord as you know was born under the Mosaic Law. The Apostle Paul makes that very plain in Galatians chapter 4 in verse 4 when he says, “He came to be under Law,” Galatians 4:4.

Now, you can tell that without even the knowledge of Paul's statement in Galatians because all of the description of the early days of Our Lord, all of those descriptions were bound up with the fulfillment of certain Mosaic requirements; the circumcision of the infant, the offering of certain offerings and, consequently, it doesn't take a whole lot of understanding to see that our Lord Jesus was born under Law and he took his place here as an Israelite who was subject to the Law and, of course, being the Son of God he fulfilled that Law perfectly. Even when John the Baptist said to him at his Baptism it was not fitting for John to baptize our Lord that John should be baptized by Him, Jesus said “suffer it to be so for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” And so as the perfect Jew, the Lord Jesus lived and kept the Law perfectly.

Let's never forget that while Our Lord is the God man a divine Son with a human nature and a divine nature He is possessed of a true human nature apart from sin. Otherwise, he could not really be our substitute on the cross at Calvary. The Christian church has down through the centuries had many, many controversies over the person of Christ. Occasionally, the issue of the deity of Christ, on other occasions the humanity of Christ, and the church through the process of the study of the Scriptures and the debate over these points came to the conclusion manifested in some of the outstanding creeds like the Nicean and the Calcedonian that the Lord Jesus was a divine person possessed of

two natures, a divine nature and a human nature. He fulfilled it perfectly. So you will find those references in the New Testament. Even when he healed the leper he says to the leper, “Go and offer the things that Moses requires in the Law” and required him to do the things that was set forth in Leviticus 13 and 14.

So in his ministry, as in that case, capital B, he was careful to subject himself to the Law and to be thoroughly supportive of that Law in all of his activities; a very interesting question to deal with some of the incidental points that might be raised in connection with it. And the Jewish people raised questions because they didn't fully understand. For example, when Our Lord and his disciples went through the corn fields and took the corn and rubbed the grains together that raised questions about whether they were really being faithful to the Mosaic Law. And if you are interested in the subject you can go to the commentary. It may interest you to know that Jewish interpreters of the gospel who are interested in reclaiming the Lord Jesus as one of them today have spent a great deal of time on that incident because in their desire to claim the Lord Jesus as a Jew of the Jews, well they naturally want to show he was faithful to the teaching of the Old Testament.

Now, of course, their teaching is mingled with tradition and that's part of the problem for them. But you can see that Our Lord by his activities raised questions concerning the Law as it was understood by the traditions of the Jews. In his ministry, he manifested the same subjection to the Law that was manifested by his parents when he was circumcised. When men came to the Lord with questions, he pointed them to the Law. “What good things shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” Jesus would reply “what does the Law say” and then he would cite the Law.

At His Death, capital C. To his dying breath the Lord Jesus kept the Law. I think in our last study I made reference to the fact that the observance of the last Passover and the first Lord's Supper was observed in perfect harmony with the teaching of Moses concerning the Passover not a single thing required by Moses in the observance of the

Passover was neglected by our Lord. So to his dying breath he kept the Law. But when he died, the Scriptures say that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom. You might turn to Matthew chapter 27 in verse 51, here in this passage we read, “And the whole veil of the temple was divided from above to below into two parts and the earth was shaken and the rocks were split.” So when Our Lord died by the fact that the veil of the temple was rent in twain and as I have often commented from the top to bottom not the bottom to the top as if God is saying I am the one who is doing this. The fact that the veil of the temple was rent was simply a typical expression of the fact that the Mosaic Age had come to an end with the fulfillment of it in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, that brings us to our third part of the outline, the church and the Mosaic Law. This is a matter of a great deal of debate still among people who are believing Christians. There is nothing wrong with that providing they don't lose their temper. I do remember my New Testament professor, Professor Everett Harrison, when we were in class one day and he was discussing the Law he said, “One of the days I would like to write a book on the Law,” but he said, “if I write a book on the Law, I am convinced that I will have to finish the book and give it to the publishers and then retire to be a hermit for the rest of my life because of the struggle and the fights and disagreements that have taken place over the nature of the Law.”

I have been reading a couple of books that have to do with the Jewish reclamation of Jesus and, of course, that's one of the big things that stand between Christianity and Judaism, their relationship to the Law of Moses. So it is not only something discussed by Christians, it's discussed by Christian believers and professing Christian unbelievers then it's a matter of controversy between Christian believers and Jewish unbelievers as well. So it is a matter of debate. Several answers have been given to the question, “Is the Christian under the Law?”

First some have argued that the believer is under the moral law but not under the ceremonial law. Now, it's I think, understandable why someone would say this because just think for a moment in the New Testament does the Apostle Paul ever appeal to the Law of the Moses in order to support exhortation that he addresses to the church of Jesus Christ? Well yes the answer is obviously yes. In fact, more than once the apostle appealed to the Mosaic Law to support things that he is saying to professing Christian believers or we can say really is true believers. So it's not surprising then that someone would say perhaps we should say the believer is under the moral law but he is not under the ceremonial law because it does seem evident from reading the Epistle to Hebrews that one cannot say in this age we are required to bring the offering and to recognize the Levitical priesthood as was necessary in the days of Moses.

Now, I'd like to say just a few simple things with reference to this. Obviously we could take up to three hours on this to deal with all of the things that responsible interpreters have said about it. But if this were true then the question would arise, “Would the Christian be under the sanctions of the Law?” You know in the Old Testament when Moses that you ought to do certain things he also says that if you don't do them then you come under certain penalties or certain sanctions. So if we were to say that we are not under the ceremonial law, but we are under the moral law then a legitimate question to ask would be, “If the Christian today is under the moral law is he not under the sanctions of the law?” And thus should we not in the Christian church stone adulterers. So you can see that it not easy to say that the church is under the moral law but it's not under the ceremonial law.

John Austin, one commentator has said, defined law as embodying three essential ideas; command, obligation and sanction. And Daniel Webster, one of the well-known Americans of the last century, said, “A law without a penalty is simply good advice.” In the state of Indiana, incidentally this may amuse you, anyway in the state of Indiana there is still to some extent exist because you know when we go on daylight savings they don't

do it in a couple of states still and I think Indiana is one of them. I don't remember what the other state is it may be Arizona or you might think it would be Arkansas but it's not. But anyway in the state of Indiana, Martha didn't like that because she has part of her family come from Arkansas. But her family comes from the shoe wearing part of the state. [Laughter] In the state of Indiana there was an instructive lesson on exactly this point of the necessity for sanctions. The legislature passed a law against the use of daylight savings time but attached no penalties for breaking the law. And with tongue in cheek the state officials and the legislature left their public clocks on standard time to set the proper example and went to work an hour earlier. The rest of the people set their watches ahead and laughed at the law. In other words, if a law doesn't have sanctions, if it doesn't have any penalties the result is the law is brought into contempt. So when we talk about law and we say we are under law there does have to be penalties or there do have to be sanctions.

Further as one well-known New Testament commentator has said this distinction between the moral and ceremonial law has no meaning involved. The law is a unity in all and is done away as a whole. That's a rather interesting point because there is no place, as far as I know, in the epistolary literature where this distinction is made. In other words, Paul never makes a statement that the Law is divided into three parts. The reason we think the Law is divided into three parts is because if we study the Mosaic Law we note the Ten Commandments and then we note the section in which the civil laws are prominent and then we note that lengthy section in which the ceremonial law and the details of it are spelled out. But so far as Moses and the children of Israel were concerned they didn't have three laws. In fact, they never speak of it in that sense. But they had one law the Law of Moses. And, in fact, James says, “to offend in one point is to offend in all.” And, thus, the law is set forth as a unity for him in the epistle to the Galatians. In the fifth chapter when Paul is talking about justification in the third verse he says, “For I testify again to every man who is being circumcised that he is a debtor to the whole law.”

In other words, if a man thinks that by being circumcised he can be saved, he is making it by doing this, he is putting himself on the whole of the law and thus required to do the whole of the law.

Another point with reference to this is this; some say we are under the law as a rule of a life but not as a way of salvation. Now, notice these things. First of all, Israel was under the Law in Old Testament times. No question about that. Second, the phrase “under the law” could have only two meanings; under the law is a way of salvation or under the law as the rule of life. But in no age has anyone been under the law as a way of salvation. We could agree on that point. Thus, Israel was under the law as a way of life but in Galatians chapter 4, verse 1 through verse 7, Paul argues that Israel is no longer under the law in the way in which they were under the law in Old Testament times. That’s the whole point of Galatians chapter 4, verse 1 through 7; Israel is not under the law in the way in which they were under the law in Old Testament times. Well, they were not under the law for salvation ever. They were under the law as a way of life. Thus, since they were under the Law as a way of life under Old Testament times, they are now no longer the law, we conclude that believers today are not under the law as a way of life. Then in the Old Testament times there was no freedom, there was no sonship, there was not heir ship. Now we have freedom, we have sonship, we have heirship, and we have the permanent presence of the Holy Spirit. At least, four times in the New Testament we are told that the believer is not under law. Well, in those places, we have to analyze what is meant by that from the context. The passages are Romans 6:14 and 15, 1 Corinthians 9:20, Galatians 5:18.

There are three possible ways in which a theological system might be constructed to put Christians under the law. First, we could have pure Judiasm in which the believer would be under the total law with all its elements and penalties. And some today, while not specifically doing that, do come part of the way towards that. That’s one way to be under the law as Israel was under the law. The second possible way would be for a

believer to be put under the moral law and its penalties; that would be moral legalism. And third a system might be devised with the Christian under the moral law striped of its proper penalties. This is what some would like to do today. That, one well-known man has said, “might be called weak and beggarly legalism,” to use Paul’s statement.

Now, we have a little bit of time left and what we are going to do is just turn to four of these passages or three or four of these passages 1 Corinthians 9:20 and 21, Romans 7, 2 Corinthians 3, and Galatians 3 and 4. Now, if you have the Bibles with you and I hope you have, let’s turn first to Romans chapter 7, verse 1 through verse 6. Now I’ll just pick out a few of the things for the sake of time in these passages. I’m sure you’re acquainted with Romans 7:1 through 6 and what you see in Romans 7:1 through 6 is the apostle’s illustration, he uses a marriage illustration in order to show that the believer is not under the Law. He illustrates and then applies the illustration in order to show that the believer has died to the Law and he, therefore, having died for the Law has come from under the power of the Law into a new relationship with Jesus Christ. The apostle begins by saying, “Or do you not know brethren for I speak the ones knowing Law that the Law has dominion over man for as long as he lives for the under the man woman.” That’s an interesting expression isn’t it? For Paul uses this as an adjective that really means under a man for under the male woman is bound to her living husband by law. That is bound to the husband for as long as he lives. “But if the man should die she has been brought to naught from the law of the man.” Consequently, then while the man is living she should be called an adulteress if she should come to be to a different man. Well that’s all very plain to us. But if the man should die she is free from the Law; that is the Law that requires her to be faithful to her husband. So that she is not an adulteress if she comes to be to a different man. Let me put in translated if she is married to a different husband.

So then now, Paul is going to apply the illustration. “So then my brethren you too were put to death to the Law through body of the Messiah in order that you might come

to be to a different person to one raised from the dead.” To put it in our language Paul says, “So then my brethren you died through Christ death for he is your representative, you died in him in order that you might be married to a different person to one raised from the dead.” Now, Paul doesn’t spell out the fact that perhaps he’s thinking about the fact they were married to the first Adam and now they are married to last Adam. He just doesn’t fill out those details. It is unnecessary. He does say, however, why we have been married to Christ. He says, “that we might bring forth fruit to God.” For the natural results of a marriage of a man and a woman is that they have children. They bear fruit. Paul is still speaking illustriously. “For” [to explain] “when we were in the flesh the passions of sins which were through the Law were working in our members to the bringing forth of fruit to death. But now we have been brought to naught from the Law having died to that by which we were being held.” We have died to the Law. We have passed out of the sphere of the Law so that we serve in newness of Spirit and not in oldness of letter.

Now, I don’t see how anything could be any plainer that. If we have any questions about what law he’s talking about in just a few moments he’ll quote one of the commandments, “Thy shalt not covet.” So he’s not talking about the ceremonial law, he’s talking about the Law as a whole inclusive of the ceremonial law and also the commandments. So he illustrates then by a common illustration applies it to the believers and says that believers have died with Christ with a view to marriage, fruit, and union with Christ fruit being only possible from a union with one who is able to produce it. The present infinitive in the word “serve” so that we serve indicates, of course, when a person says he is not under Law but he is under grace and he is united to Christ in this new relationship that doesn’t mean that he can live enlivened. In fact, the kind of freedom that we have in Christ is the freedom of willing people to serve one who has redeemed them. So the idea that we are not under law, therefore, we can live as we please is thoroughly unchristian, thoroughly unapostolic, and thoroughly dishonorable to

the Lord. We have been delivered from the Law in order that we may be married to Christ to serve him and bring forth fruit. So our liberty is not the liberty of license it's the free slavery of the willing heart. So Romans 7:1 through 6 is an important text.

The second passage is 2 Corinthians, chapter 3, I did skip that first one didn't I? That was terrible. I will come back and discuss that in a moment. Let's go on and discuss 2 Corinthians 3:7 through 11, 2 Corinthians chapter 3, verse 7 through verse 11.

The apostle in this passage makes it quite plain that there are advantages that New Covenant ministry had and New Covenants ministry and its advantages are set out by means of three contrasts drawn by the apostle in this section. Verses 7 and 8, for example, he says, “now if the ministry of death engraven in letters with stones came to be in glory so that the children of Israel were not able to gaze upon the face of Moses on account of the glory of his countenance which was being done away. How shall not rather the ministry of the Spirit be in glory?” But notice the ministry in the hands of Moses was ministry that was being done away with. In the ninth verse, “For if by the ministry of condemnation there be glory much more the ministry of righteousness abounds in glory.” So again he draws a contrast between the ministry of Moses and the ministry of the present day. Verse 11, he says, “For if that being brought to naught was through glory how much more were that abide is in glory.” So, I think, you can see from these three contrasts drawn by the apostle that transient, condemning, passing through a phase of glory and nature of the law is being done away with.

Now, if person were to say at this point, “But Paul, perhaps, is talking about the ceremonial law and not the moral law.” Well all one needs to do is to look up in the context he states in verse 3, where he refers to the law concerning which he is talking being manifested that “Yeou are an epistle of Christ administered by us written not in ink but by the spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone but in fleshen tables, the heart.” So you can see that he is specifically using language that was not a reference to the

ceremonial law but what? The Ten Commandments. And it is this that he is talking about in this particular context.

I've often used this illustration for those of you who have heard me maybe once or twice or more you'll pardon because it does bear on this point. I have a very good friend who went through seminary with me. He came from an institution to Dallas Seminary that taught that we were under the moral law but not under the ceremonial law. That's what he had been taught, so it was natural that he had accepted that. He liked his teachers and I knew some of his teachers. Some of them were very fine teachers. That was what he was taught that was their official position. So when he came to the seminary we roomed right next to each other down in the dormitory for one fall and we got into quite a number of discussions. We were very good friends. We still are good friends. But we had a discussion over this question I don't know how many times and, finally, after we had discussed it for about a year it was obvious I couldn't give him any more light that would convince him and he couldn't give me any more light that would convince me and so we hardly ever discussed it anymore because we just knew that our positions were pretty fixed. I knew he was wrong he knew I was wrong.

So in the senior year Professor Harrison gave out an assignment and the assignment and the exegesis of the Epistle to the Romans was you either write a commentary on the Greek text of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans or you write a commentary on Romans 9, 10 and 11 of the Epistle to the Romans. Now, that's an assignment that would be unheard of at a theological seminary today. They probably would give you a little passage like this in order to write but they were giants in the land in those days and so that was the assignment we had. Well, I was family familiar with Romans 1 through 8, so I decided that I would write my commentary on Romans 9, 10 and 11, which I did. And my friend, I didn't know what he had decided but we were friends, I remember about two thirds of the way through the semester, I should say, as we were walking out of the room he walked over to me and he put his arm around my

shoulder and he said, “Louis,” he said, “I discovered something.” And I said “what?” He said, “I’ve discovered that we are not under the Law.” And I remember I said, “Well, praise the Lord, how in the world did you discover the truth?”

And he smiled and he said, “Well I’ll tell you how I did.” He said, “I was doing my commentary on Romans 1 through 8,” and he said “I got all the way to the sixth chapter of the Epistle of the Romans and in the sixth chapter in the fourteenth and fifteenth verses,” he said “you know Paul says there” after all Professor Harrison had been exegeting the Epistle to the Romans but that wasn’t the reason he came to the truth. He said “Paul says, ‘for sin shall not have dominion over you for you are not under law but under grace.’” He said, “Now I didn’t have any problem with that because I simply read that as I’m not under Law but I’m under grace and I am under not under law in the sense of not under the ceremonial law, I’m under grace so I understood it that way.” But he said, “When I came onto Romans chapter 7, and there again the apostle said that we have been brought to naught to the law, we have died to that in which we were held. And he says, “We are not under the law but we are to serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.” He said, “I really didn’t have too much trouble with that until we came to the text that says, ‘What then shall we say is the law sin, God forbid, but I’ve not know sin through the law for I have not known covetness except the law the said that shall not covet.’” And he said, “That is one of the commandments and so I realized that when Paul said we are not under law but we are under grace he was talking about the commandments as well as the ceremonial law and that is how he came to understand that he was not under the Law.” Paul cites one of the Ten Commandments in that context. So we don’t make the statement that when we say we are not under Law, we are just talking about the Moral Law, no we are talking about the Ceremonial Law too and the Civil Law. We are not under the Law as a code, I think, is Paul’s point.

Now, let me say just a brief word concerning Galatians and then we’ll turn over to the passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, and say a word about that. In Galatians chapter 3,

beginning with verse 1 through chapter 4 in verse 6, we have a rather lengthy section in which the apostle deals with the relationship of believers to the law. And what he points out, I think, is rather plain that the believers' deliverance is a deliverance from the Law as a way of life. As I mentioned a moment ago, the logic of the change of the age indicates that this necessarily means that we are not under the law as a rule of life since Israel was never under the law as a rule as a way of salvation, they were under the law as a rule of life. And it is in that sense that Paul says in Galatians 3 through chapter 4 in verse 7, really that we are not under law.

Now, the final passage is 1 Corinthians chapter 9 in verse 20 and 21. Here the apostle writes verse 19, he says, “Although I be free from all men yet as I make myself servant unto all that I might gain the more, and on to the Jews I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews. To them that are under the law as under the law that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without law as without law being not without law to God but under the law to Christ that I might gain them that are without law.”

Now, I submit to you that the Apostle Paul could never done this if he believed that we were under law. If he believed that we were properly under law in this age he could never say, “to them that were without law I came to be as without law.” In other words, if they were really under law and that was a divine requirement the apostle would have to live under law. He could never say what he says here. He says he became as a Jew that he might gain the Jews to them under the law as under the law now I believe I have freedom to observe all of the ritualistic requirements of the Mosaic Law if you like in the present day but it is not required to. As under the law that I might gain them that are under the law to them that are without law as without law. Paul could never say that if he really were under law. That should be very plain to us. Now, he goes on to say, “when I became as without law I was not without law to Christ, but I was in submission

to Him” and in submission to what we would call the New Testament revelation concerning Christ today.

So to sum it then, or perhaps I should say this, we have just a minute, it would be possible for a person to understand 1 Corinthians 9 as a reference to the ceremonial law because surely that was one of the major things Paul was talking about here. But the fact that the apostle says that I act as if I were not under law does not mean that he also, therefore, was saying that he was not, let's put it this way, when he says that he was without law referring to the ceremonial law it does not mean, of course, that he was trying to make any distinction between them. He was making any distinction between them at all but merely saying that, so far as they were concerned, he did act as if he were without law though not without law to God. In other words, he is not trying to make a distinction between parts of the law as if the law could be divided up into different parts.

So to sum it up then, I think, that what the apostle does say is that the believer in the present age has a freedom from the law, from the law as a whole, from the law as the moral law as law, from the ceremonial law from the civil law.

Now, once we have said that we should be careful that we go on to point out, because there is so much misunderstanding concerning this, that when we say we are not under the law, we are not saying or even suggesting that it is possible for a person to be, therefore, licentious in his living. As a matter of fact, I'd like to suggest that to be under the Holy Spirit which is the New Testament counterpart of this is, at least, as higher standard as personally, I think, a higher standard than to live under a code. So to my mind what Paul says in the New Testament is we are not under the law as a code. We are not under the law as a legal code. But since the law is an expression of the nature of God of the moral character of God, we are expected to and do have obligations to observe a moral standard expressed by Old Testament Law. In fact that to my mind is what Paul means when he says in Romans chapter 8 in verse 3 and verse 4, these words, “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh God sending his

own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemns sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”

Therefore, the standard of life for a Christian believer today is life by the Spirit according to the Law of Christ as set forth in the New Testament. In fact, I wrote up three pages this afternoon on my own which I gave as a kind of summary of what my thoughts are concerning this, and at the conclusion of it I have a little note. It is my own personal opinion that a great deal of the difference of viewpoints among believers over our relationship to the Mosaic Law in this age is thematic or to put it in other terms the intensity of the heat generated over the issue of the believer in the law is largely unnecessary. What this really comes down to in my opinion is, shall we observe the Sabbath or not? Nine of the Ten Commandments, most Bible teachers believe, are repeated in the New Testament. The apostle makes definite appeals to the moral character of God as set forth in those commandments, and we are expected in our lives to live in such a way as not to break the Law. But one of those laws is the command to observe the Sabbath and the Sabbath is a Saturday. And, thus, it becomes rather evident, I think, that the New Testament believers did not observe the Sabbath that Israel observed. They met on the first day of the week and they felt freedom to do that and the Christian churches felt freedom to do it because they recognized that we were not under the law as a code but, nevertheless, are responsible through the guidance of the Holy Spirit to keep the moral standards set forth in the Law of Moses.

Well, I don't know whether that makes too much sense to you. I hope it makes some sense to you. It would be nice to deal with it in much more detail because there are many little angles that we might talk about with reference to it. But let me say with regard to what we specifically were dealing with and that is Dispensationalism. In this respect, in my opinion, Dispensationalism is truer to the Pauline teaching than generally

covenantal theology. Now, that doesn't mean that Dispensationalism is true in every thing but in this respect, I think, it is.

Let's bow together in a little prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy word and we thank Thee for these issues that are before us. We pray that as we study them and reflect upon them we may be led into the truth that is pleasing to Thee. Deliver us from any sense of disobedience or failure to sense responsibility to through the Holy Spirit observe the moral law of God as set out in the teaching of Holy Scripture. We remember, Lord, that while we are not under the Law as a code [End of Tape]