

# the law and jesus

The Law and Jesus: Understanding Their Relationship in Christian Thought

**the law and jesus** have been topics of profound discussion and reflection within Christian theology for centuries. Exploring how Jesus related to the Mosaic Law offers rich insights into the foundations of Christian ethics, salvation, and spiritual life. This relationship isn't just a historical curiosity; it continues to influence faith practice, moral reasoning, and religious identity today.

## The Mosaic Law: A Brief Overview

Before diving into the connection between Jesus and the law, it's important to grasp what the law refers to in the biblical context. The Mosaic Law, often called the Torah or the Law of Moses, consists of commandments and instructions given to the Israelites in the Old Testament. These laws cover a wide array of aspects such as moral behavior, ceremonial practices, civil laws, and dietary restrictions.

## Purpose of the Law in Ancient Israel

The law was more than a set of rules; it served as a covenant between God and His people. It was designed to:

- Define holiness and righteousness
- Set Israel apart as God's chosen nation
- Guide social justice and community living
- Provide a framework for worship and sacrifice

Through these laws, the Israelites could understand what it meant to live in accordance with God's will.

## Jesus' Relationship to the Mosaic Law

When we examine the New Testament, it becomes clear that Jesus did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. This nuanced stance highlights both continuity and transformation in how the law is understood.

## Jesus' Teaching on the Law

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses the law directly. He says, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17). This statement sets the tone for His approach:

- **Fulfillment, not negation:** Jesus fulfills the law by

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the relationship between Jesus and the Old Testament Law?**

Jesus taught that He came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). He emphasized the spirit and intent behind the Law rather than just the letter, focusing on love, mercy, and justice.

### **How did Jesus interpret the Ten Commandments?**

Jesus reaffirmed the Ten Commandments but deepened their meaning by emphasizing internal attitudes. For example, He taught that anger is akin to murder and lust to adultery, thus highlighting the importance of inner purity.

### **Did Jesus oppose the Jewish Law?**

No, Jesus did not oppose the Jewish Law. Instead, He critiqued the legalistic and hypocritical application of the Law by some religious leaders, urging people to understand its true purpose and to live out its principles sincerely.

### **How does the New Testament describe Jesus' fulfillment of the Law?**

The New Testament describes Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law through His life, death, and resurrection, which provide salvation and a new covenant. Through Him, believers are empowered to live righteously not just by the Law but by faith and the Spirit.

### **What role does the Law play for Christians in relation to Jesus?**

For Christians, the Law serves as a moral guide that reveals sin and points to the need for Jesus' grace. While believers are not justified by the Law, they are called to uphold its ethical teachings empowered by the Holy Spirit.

# How did Jesus' teachings influence the understanding of the Law in early Christianity?

Jesus' teachings led early Christians to view the Law in light of His fulfillment and the coming of the Spirit. This resulted in a shift from strict legalism to a focus on faith, love, and the transformation of the heart, forming the basis of Christian ethics.

## Additional Resources

The Law and Jesus: An Analytical Exploration of Their Interplay in Religious and Historical Contexts

**the law and jesus** have been subjects of scholarly inquiry and theological debate for centuries. This relationship is pivotal to understanding Christian doctrine, Jewish traditions, and the broader historical narrative of the first century CE. The intersection of Mosaic Law and the teachings of Jesus Christ presents a complex dynamic that has influenced religious thought, legal philosophy, and cultural developments worldwide. This article delves into the nuances of this interplay, examining scriptural interpretations, historical contexts, and theological implications without advocating any particular religious stance.

## Historical Context of the Law in Judeo-Christian Traditions

To comprehend the significance of the law and Jesus, it is essential first to understand the nature of the law within Jewish tradition. The law, often referred to as the Torah or Mosaic Law, comprises commandments and regulations believed to be divinely revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai. These laws governed religious rituals, civil matters, morality, and social conduct among the ancient Israelites.

By the time of Jesus, Second Temple Judaism had developed various interpretations of the law, with groups such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes each upholding distinct views. These interpretations influenced the religious atmosphere into which Jesus was born and began his ministry. The law was not merely a legal code but a framework shaping identity, worship, and ethical behavior.

## Jesus' Relationship with the Mosaic Law

The New Testament presents Jesus' teachings as both affirming and reinterpreting the law. Several Gospel passages highlight Jesus asserting

that he did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). This statement has been extensively analyzed to understand whether Jesus advocated for strict adherence to the Mosaic Law or proposed a transformative approach.

Jesus' critiques of the religious authorities often centered on their legalistic interpretations and practices. For example, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus emphasizes the spirit of the law over its letter, focusing on internal attitudes like anger, lust, and hypocrisy rather than mere external compliance. This approach suggests a shift from ritualistic observance to ethical and compassionate living.

## Key Themes in Jesus' Teaching Regarding the Law

- **Love as the Fulfillment of the Law:** Jesus distilled the commandments into two overarching principles—love of God and love of neighbor (Mark 12:30-31). This summarization reframes the law's complexity into relational ethics.
- **Mercy Over Sacrifice:** Echoing prophetic voices like Hosea and Micah, Jesus prioritizes mercy and justice over ritual sacrifice (Matthew 9:13).
- **Critique of Legalism:** Jesus challenged the Pharisaic emphasis on strict rule-keeping detached from compassion, exemplified by his healing on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6).
- **Inclusivity and the Law:** His ministry expanded the law's scope to include marginalized groups, breaking social and religious boundaries.

## Theological Implications and Interpretations

The distinction between law and grace in Christian theology stems largely from Jesus' reinterpretation of the law. Pauline epistles, for instance, emphasize salvation through faith in Christ rather than adherence to the law (Romans 3:28). This theological development created significant doctrinal divides between Christianity and Judaism.

## Comparative Perspectives: Judaism and Christianity on the Law

In Judaism, the Torah remains central, guiding religious life and identity.

Observance of the law is viewed as a covenantal obligation. Conversely, mainstream Christianity often interprets Jesus' teachings as inaugurating a new covenant, wherein the law's demands are fulfilled through Christ's life and resurrection.

This divergence affects contemporary interfaith dialogues and religious practices. While some Christian denominations continue to value the moral aspects of the Mosaic Law, others consider it superseded by the gospel message. Conversely, Jewish thought generally rejects the notion of the law being abrogated, emphasizing continuity and observance.

## Modern Legal and Ethical Reflections

Beyond theology, the law and Jesus' teachings have influenced Western legal systems and ethical frameworks. Concepts like justice, mercy, and the inherent dignity of individuals resonate with the principles found in Jesus' reinterpretation of the law.

Scholars note that Jesus' emphasis on intent and internal disposition prefigures modern considerations in legal philosophy, where motive and ethical reasoning inform jurisprudence. Additionally, his challenges to rigid legalism invite ongoing discussions about balancing rule-based systems with compassion and equity.

## Contemporary Debates and Scholarly Perspectives

The relationship between the law and Jesus remains a fertile ground for academic inquiry. Some scholars argue that Jesus operated entirely within the Jewish legal tradition, seeking reform rather than revolution. Others assert that his message constituted a radical break, laying the groundwork for a new religious paradigm.

Furthermore, historical-critical methods examine how early Christian communities constructed narratives about Jesus and the law to address their specific theological and social challenges. This approach reveals the complexity of interpreting ancient texts and their evolving meanings.

## Pros and Cons of Different Interpretative Approaches

- 1. Literalist Interpretation:** Pros include clear guidance and preservation of tradition; cons involve potential rigidity and exclusion.
- 2. Contextual-Historical Interpretation:** Pros emphasize understanding Jesus within his time and culture; cons may lead to relativizing key

doctrines.

3. **Theological Reinterpretation:** Pros support faith development and relevance; cons risk detaching from original texts.

## Conclusion: The Ongoing Relevance of the Law and Jesus

Exploring the law and Jesus unveils a dynamic interaction that continues to shape religious beliefs, ethical thought, and cultural identities. Whether approached from a theological, historical, or legal perspective, this relationship challenges adherents and scholars alike to grapple with questions of authority, tradition, and moral responsibility. The nuanced dialogue between adherence to law and the call to transformative love remains a vital conversation across faith communities and academic disciplines.

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**the law and jesus:** *Five Views on Law and Gospel* Greg L. Bahnsen, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Douglas J. Moo, Wayne G. Strickland, Willem A. VanGemeren, 2010-09-21 An introduction to a complex theological issue that impacts our daily lives as believers in Christ: What is the relevance of the Old Testament Law to our understanding of the Gospel and how it should be lived? This book explores five major approaches to this important biblical topic as they've developed in Protestant circles: Non-Theonomic Reformed View - the law is the perfection of righteousness in Jesus Christ. Theonomic Reformed View - the goodness of the law is dependent on how it's used and does not offer a way to salvation. Heavily focused on Paul's discussion of the Law. Law as Gracious Guidance View - emphasizes the contrasts between the Mosaic law and the Gospel of grace, while still asserting the Law's value. Dispensational View - approaches the Law from a historical perspective to help us understand its presentation, treatment, and recipients. Modified Lutheran View - the Law of Christ as the fulfillment of the Law of Moses. This book allows each contributor to not only present the case for his view, but also to critique and respond to the critiques of the other contributors, allowing you to compare their beliefs in an open forum setting to see where they overlap and where they differ. The Counterpoints series presents a comparison and critique of scholarly views on topics important to Christians that are both fair-minded and respectful of the biblical text. Each volume is a one-stop reference that allows readers to evaluate the different positions on a specific issue and form their own, educated opinion.

**the law and jesus: The Doctrine of the Law and Grace unfolded; or, a Discourse touching the law and grace, etc** John Bunyan, 1708

**the law and jesus:** *The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded* John Bunyan, 1736

**the law and jesus: If One Uses It Lawfully** Matthew E. Ferris, 2018-05-16 Are the Ten Commandments the standard for Christian living? There are many viewpoints on the place of the Mosaic Law today. Some affirm that while we are not saved through keeping the law, it remains our standard for living, a pattern to be followed. Others say we are free from the law. This brief examination of the law affirms all of God's revelation as Christian Scripture, but acknowledges covenantal differences in God's dealings with believers. The progress of salvation history, and our identification with Christ, has altered our relationship to the Mosaic Law. Using the Law "lawfully" requires us to recognize the way in which the New Testament, and chiefly the Apostle Paul, treats the law. Paul presents the believer as having died to the law, and serving now in the new way of the Spirit, a way that does not depend on the Mosaic law. The pattern for the New Testament believer remains Jesus himself. While keeping all of God's law, he went beyond its requirement to demonstrate a love for sinners that the law did not know.

**the law and jesus: The Law of Jesus Christ** Samuel C. Phillips, 2013-12 In regard to the meaning of the word CHANGE, can a law be changed, yet not replaced with another law? If a man changes his name, does he not simultaneously replace his changed name with another name? Thus if, according to Hebrews 7:12, the Law of Moses was changed, would not the changed law also have been simultaneously replaced with another law by the Lord God? If not, as is commonly believed by church leaders today claiming that the New Testament does not constitute a law, how then could God be charging Christians with sin, in light of the fact that sin is the transgression of the law? (1 John 3:4.) Also, if not, what then did the apostle Paul mean when, in addressing Christian believers, he said, For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified? (Romans 2:13.) The doers of which law? The Law of Moses that he said the Lord Jesus Christ abolished (Ephesians 2:13-15), and also which all Christians are not under, as he said in Romans 6:14? Or was he referring to the law of Christ, under which he said he was (1 Corinthians 9:21), and which he urged the Christian believers to all fulfil? (Galatians 6:2.) What is this law of Christ? How is it defined? How is it fulfilled or kept? How is it violated? How are violators punished? In this book we show in-depth from the Holy Bible that, contrary to the pervasive view in the church today, the Law of Moses was not merely fulfilled and terminated by Christ Jesus, but instead replaced; and that Christians are, in fact, under a law and will be judged by this particular law. We also clearly show what this law entails; how it is violated, and how violators are punished. (Years ago visited by an angel, before sometime later [also in a dream] meeting the Lord God, on the side of a mountain [see *By What Authority*, page 195], Sam Phillips was called away from a successful fine art career to be a prophet to the church now mired in spiritual deception and disobedience to God.)

**the law and jesus: Jesus in the Courtroom** John W. Mauck, JD, 2017-07-04 Have you ever thought of Jesus as a lawyer? It may sound odd, but at times in His ministry, Jesus wore his lawyer hat. When he defended the adulterous woman, when he argued from Scripture that the disciples were fine to pick grain on the Sabbath, and in other instances, Jesus insightfully applied to uphold justice and promote goodwill. The legal aspects of Jesus' ministry have long been obscured or misunderstood, particularly his interactions with and attitude toward the law and lawyers. Jesus' desire in his day and ours is to use the law to secure the rights of people to hear the gospel and to set humanity free. In other words, to be the best citizens we can be, we need to follow in the footsteps of the greatest citizen who ever lived. *Jesus in the Courtroom* covers topics like: Why we should care about the law Strategic involvement with the law How God has used the law to expand His kingdom What can happen when we partner with legal professionals How citizenship is part of discipleship Christian citizenship in matters like adoption, abortion, minimum wage, foster care, and schools We are citizens of two kingdoms, but many of us duck and run when it comes to civil life. For anyone who cares about their community—parents, teachers, pastors, you name it—engagement with our legal system can play a huge role in the health of our communities and in cultivating a context where the gospel can flourish. *Jesus in the Courtroom* will help us understand not only why we have failed to appreciate the legal aspect of Jesus' life, but also to understand and cooperate with

his legal ministry to us and through us. If we are going to be faithful “citizen disciples” in this challenging new world, we need to look anew at how Jesus taught, thought, and interacted with the legal establishment of his day.

**the law and jesus: JESUS AND THE LAW** Roger K. Holcomb, 2024-09-26 IN the Episcopal order of worship the priest sometimes introduces the Mosaic Law. The words given to Moses that the word (bold) is worth thinking about. We do well not to take the Law lightly. It will take guts to look and not get bold enough in another way as having personal integrity to be accountable of yourself and be healthy and true. There was a song in the 60s by the birds “Turn, Turn, Turn” out of the book of Ecclesiastes 3:8 It says, A time to everything, time to Love, time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. If you have Love, the five commandments of God give us, and the other five Commandments are to God. Keeping these Commandments will help you in your daily life.

**the law and jesus: Jesus fulfils the law, by one of the Society of friends** One of the Society of friends (pseud.), 1882

**the law and jesus: Not Under the Law** E. Cameron, 2018-04-09 Are you struggling to gain God's approval by keeping rules and regulations? Jesus didn't come to give you a long list of rules that you couldn't keep. He came to set you free. When Jesus died on the cross, He took the full penalty for our sins on Himself. He paid the full price required by the Old Testament Law and set us free from its condemnation. Now, Jesus calls us to live by a new law. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death, said Paul. (Romans 8:2) As believers, we are free to walk in the Spirit, living in obedience to God's Word. Benefits: \* Learn how Jesus fulfilled the law and freed us from its requirements \* Discover how to walk in the Spirit \* Cultivate a heart of love and mercy toward others \* Learn how to deal with differences among believers \* Purpose to serve God out of a heart of love, not duty Features: \* 21 chapters on how Jesus fulfilled the Law and how He wants us to live today \* Prayer starters and application questions included \* Perfect for Bible study groups or personal growth

**the law and jesus: Jesus Fulfils the Law** Anonymous, 2019-12-10 In Jesus Fulfils the Law, the anonymous author presents a profound theological exploration of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Mosaic Law, intertwining scriptural exegesis with a reflective literary style. This work delves into the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies through Christ's life and teachings, meticulously aligning key events with established Judaic laws and customs. The author employs a blend of narrative and doctrinal analysis, creating a textual tapestry that invites readers to comprehend the transformative role of Jesus within the broader context of Jewish tradition and Christian theology. The anonymity of the author serves as a fascinating aspect of this text, suggesting a universal appeal and an intention to emphasize the message rather than personal identity. This choice may be rooted in the author's desire to present a timeless truth accessible to all believers, reflecting an era in which early Christians grappled with their faith's roots in Judaism. The work likely draws from a rich background steeped in both scriptural knowledge and a desire to bridge the gap between disparate interpretations of holy law. Jesus Fulfils the Law is not just a theological discourse; it is an invitation for readers to deepen their understanding of Christ's significance in religious history. Scholars, theologians, and lay readers alike will find this text to be a compelling resource that challenges preconceived notions and encourages a re-examination of faith in the light of biblical revelation.

**the law and jesus: Jesus and the Law of Moses** Bennett Harvie Branscomb, 1930

**the law and jesus: A Chance Encounter with the Law** Kurt Hedstrom, 2011 Have you ever wondered why the Law of Moses was given To The children of Israel, especially if true salvation could only come through Christ? Have you ever been confused regarding the status of the Old Testament laws in the new covenant? If God's law commands that an adulteress be stoned, why did Jesus not condemn the woman caught in the act of adultery? These are only a few of the questions that haunt Christians that attempt to rectify the old covenant with the new. Jesus himself proclaimed that he did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. Follow Kurt, a seeker for truth, who finds himself immersed in a conversation with the Law of Moses in A Chance Encounter with the Law.



Kurt is anxious to ask the toughest questions, pointing out seeming inconsistencies within the Scriptures. However, with faith that all Scripture is inspired, Kurt is answered with patience, insight, and wisdom. Join along in this intense dialog where Kurt gleans an in-depth understanding from the Scriptures concerning: Salvation the details of the new and old covenants the true purpose of the law the blessings promised to believers that seek the truth Common misconceptions in doctrines like the new birth, The indwelling of the Spirit, and much more... Kurt Hedstrom received a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Michigan Technological University in 1977, and he worked in that field For The next twenty-six years. After giving his life To The Lord in 1988, he began to passionately pursue scriptural truth. In 2003, he left the workforce for a period of time to devote himself solely To The study of God's Word. From 2003 to 2010, he worked with tireless diligence on the fruit that would become this book. He and his wife, Joan, live in Lakeland, Florida, with their four boys.

**the law and jesus:** The Law of Faith Joseph Fitz Randolph, 1914

**the law and jesus:** **The Law of Moses** Roderick O. Ford, 2017-01-18 The Law of Moses: Commentaries on the New and Old Testament Law is a simple yet thought-provoking analysis of the Mosaic legal code found in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It carefully analyzes the Old Testament Law as the foundation of the New Testament Gospel, and it places them within the context of parables and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. The Law of Moses is especially useful for those persons who are familiar with the New Testament and the teachings of Christ but who have not yet studied the deeper meanings of the Old Testament Law. This book is also a great Bible-study companion that is practical and useful for knowledgeable and experienced Christians, Muslims, and Jews, including lawyers, pastors, and theologians.

**the law and jesus:** Delighting in the Law of the Lord Jerram Barrs, 2013-09-30 Our culture has a few catch phrases: Be who you want to be; Do what makes you happy. We are told to do our own thing and follow our own rules, which often makes the Bible appear to be oppressively restrictive and hopelessly outdated, even to Christians! Responding to the misdirection of our society and misperceptions the church has of God's law, Professor Jerram Barrs helps readers recognize the beauty in and purpose of God's rules for living healthy, productive, and fulfilling lives. From the Old Testament to the New, Barrs demonstrates how God's commands to his people were intended to protect them from sin and direct them in godliness. Rejecting the idea that we can earn God's favor through good works, Barrs nevertheless highlights how God's commands should spur us to obedience and ultimately remind us of grace.

**the law and jesus:** **Jesus and the Law** Lola S. Richey, 2023-01-07 Jesus and the Law returns to the moral teaching of the Sovereign LORD God found in the Old Testament. Jesus is the Word of God. The teaching of Jesus is the teaching of His Holy Father – the Sovereign LORD God of heaven and earth. Come discover why the moral teaching of the Law is eternal and everlasting from the Sovereign LORD God and His Son Jesus.

**the law and jesus:** Jesus' Attitude Towards the Law William R. G. Loader, 1997

**the law and jesus:** *Laying Down the Law* Keith Augustus Burton, 2013 The Pharisees piled up a mountain of human made rules in their attempt to keep the law. But their fixation on the legal code ended up pushing them further away from the righteousness they sought to attain. In contrast, some modern Christians have abandoned the law in their pursuit of righteousness, declaring themselves liberated from outdated, unessential rules. So what role should God's law have in the Christians life? What part does it play in the work of salvation? How does it relate to grace? In *Laying Down the Law* Keith Augustus Burton explores the law of God through the perspective of Jesus Christ. With each chapter he reveals the role of the law, clarifies common misunderstandings, and challenges traditional assumptions about the function of the law. Through Bible verses, personal stories, and insights into the culture and worldview of biblical times, you'll discover what the law reveals about God's character and His loving plan for us. Book jacket.

**the law and jesus:** Jesus Demonstrates the Law of Attraction Joshua Ray, Where does the concept of law of attraction come from? Did Jesus demonstrate the law of attraction? Is it a biblical

**the law and jesus:** Jesus & The Law J C Matthews, 2020-12-18 In order to understand the role of law within the New Testament it is critical and of the utmost importance to understand Jesus' perspective and relationship to the law. Many believe that Jesus came to do away with the Old Testament Law and usher in a New Law or Commandment. If this New Commandment really new or is it in substance and expression of the old. In this book, we will examine Jesus' perspective of the Old Testament Law and His perspective of its use or purpose in the New Testament. We will also examine and distinguish between what religiously has become understood as being God's Law and how it is distinguished from God's Law.

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