

# The Transition from Law to Grace

The following article contains excerpts from “A Book of Bible Study”,  
Copyright 2014 by Joseph F. Harwood

<https://www.abookofbiblestudy.net/>

[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB](#)

Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount:

“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”  
(Matthew 5:17-18)

Regarding the transition from the Old Covenant of the Mosaic laws to the New Covenant of grace; Jesus made it clear that He had not come to abolish the Law of Moses or the writings of the prophets, but to fulfill them. Further, He said that none of these writings would pass from the Law until everything was accomplished.

What is clear from several New Testament passages is that there are many Old Testament laws that we are no longer required to obey. The most obvious of these is the offering of animal sacrifices for the remission of sins as prescribed in the Law of Moses (See Leviticus 1-7). For a believer in Christ to be told that he was required to offer animal sacrifices to make atonement for the sins he had committed would be the apex of blasphemy. Such a requirement would imply that there was something lacking in the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made of Himself at Calvary, dying on the cross and shedding His blood for the remission of our sins, so that we as His people would be reconciled to God.

It is also obvious that we are no longer required to observe Sabbath days, the various festivals and celebrations, or the dietary restrictions prescribed in the Mosaic Law. Paul wrote about these things in his letter to the Colossians:

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him. Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. (Colossians 2:13-17)

Paul taught in this passage that all of the Old Testament ceremonial laws were only a foreshadowing of things that were to come, and the time of their fulfillment had already taken place with the coming of Christ. Therefore, believers are no longer required to observe the Old Testament laws regarding the observance of feasts, festivals, Sabbaths, or dietary laws. This in no way means that we disregard the Old Testament where the Law of Moses is given, because as Paul taught: "...through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20). It is through the Law that we receive instruction and an understanding of what is sin in the sight of God.

Tithing is yet another example of an Old Testament Law that believers are no longer required to obey. There are in fact new directives on giving for God's people that have been given to us by Jesus Himself and by the Apostle Paul.

Jesus exhorted us to give, and He said that with the same measure we use to give, it will be measured back to us (Luke 6:38). Paul taught the same lesson when he compared our giving with a farmer's sowing of seed. He said that if we sow or give sparingly, then we will reap or receive back only sparingly, but if we sow or give bountifully, then we will receive back for ourselves bountifully (2 Corinthians 9:6).

Paul also taught that we should give as we decide in our own hearts that we want to give, and we are not to give believing that we are compelled or obliged to give some certain amount. This instruction is made clear in II Corinthians 9 where Paul wrote: "Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7).

If we were still required to give a tithe, then we would indeed be “under compulsion” to give that tithe, or ten percent, in order to be obedient to God, but such is not the case. As we see clearly from Paul’s teaching in 2 Corinthians 9:7, we are *not* to give reluctantly, or under compulsion to give a certain amount, but we are instructed to give as we decide in our own hearts.

Nowhere in the New Testament are we as believers commanded, or even encouraged, to tithe our income. In the New Testament we have been given new instructions for our giving, and we have been given new promises of blessings in return for our giving.

Obedience to God’s word was required for the Old Testament saints, and it is without question required for us as believers (John 14:15, 21, 23-24, 15:10, many others). At this point, we must ask ourselves how we know which Old Testament laws we are still required to obey.

The answer to this question is that wherever there is a new directive given in the New Testament on a particular subject, that new teaching “supersedes” what was written earlier in the Mosaic Law, and the new teaching is the one that we are to obey as believers in Christ. Any new teachings and directives given to us in the New Testament on any particular subject reveal that the parallel directive given in the Mosaic Law has come to its fulfillment, and it has passed from the Law, which means that we as believers are no longer required to obey it.

In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus said that He did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it. He fully obeyed its requirements, and He fulfilled all of the prophecies made about the coming Messiah, proving that He was indeed the Christ. According to His Father’s will, Jesus Christ died on Calvary’s cross so that we would not have to fully and without exception or transgression obey the Law in order to obtain salvation.

It is clear from the various New Testament Scripture passages that we have considered here that some commands given in the Mosaic Law have indeed reached their time of fulfillment with the coming of Christ. In place of these old directives we have been given various new directives and teachings in the New Testament. All of these new directives are given to us as a result of what Jesus accomplished for us at Calvary.

We are still, however, required to obey many of the Old Testament laws. The Ten Commandments are still required for us. We do not obtain salvation by obeying these laws, but we are called upon to obey them, as well as any Old Testament directives and precepts that are consistent with New Testament teachings. However, some of these Old Testament requirements have, as evidenced by the Scriptures that we have considered, reached their time of fulfillment and have passed from the Law; they are no longer a requirement for believers.