



"When you break the big laws, you do not get liberty; you do not even get anarchy. You get the small laws."

—G.K. Chesterton

**05-May-17**

## **The Law Continues**

One of the final thoughts of [Moses](#) before he went up Mount Nebo to die and before Israel crossed the River Jordan into the Promised Land is contained in [Deuteronomy 29:29](#): "The secret things belong to the LORD our [God](#), but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

The *Holman Christian Standard Bible* makes explicit an important connection in this verse: "[T]he revealed things belong to us and our children forever, so that we may follow all the words of this law." Here, the three concepts of "revealed things," "forever," and "law," enjoy a logical connection: God has chosen to reveal His law to people and to their descendants, to the end that they may obey it forever. Unmistakably, the law is not a "passing fancy" with God, here today, gone tomorrow. As long as there are "descendants" around, God's law still stands. The law spans many generations. It follows, then, that the law spans history.

*The Good News Bible* captures well the intention of the verse: "There are some things that the LORD our God has kept secret; but he has revealed his Law, and we and our descendants are to obey it forever." This is the idea

Moses wanted the Israelites to have in mind as they began their new life in the Promised Land. In Canaan and beyond, the law was to continue to be their guide to obedience before God—for as long as Israelites existed.

In spite of God's clear teachings in this and other passages, the idea of dispensations hangs around. *The Oxford Dictionary* defines the theological use of the noun *dispensation* as a "divinely ordained order prevailing at a particular *period* of history" (emphasis ours). A dispensation, therefore, is a period of history, an age, or an epoch.

Most dispensationalists identify one of those historical periods as the Dispensation of Law or similar term. They generally conclude that today, in what many of them call variously the Dispensation of Grace or the New Testament Dispensation, "we and our descendants" do not need to keep the [law of God](#). It is, they say, not part of the present dispensation.

This notion, however, is a clear denial of God's Word. In fact, God's people from the beginning have obeyed that law, and the Scriptures inform us, they will continue to obey it. Here are some examples:

1. Noah knew about clean and unclean animals, as [Genesis 7:1-3](#) indicates. When God gave him the specifications concerning the cargo he was to load onto the ark, he knew exactly what God was talking about—centuries before God gave the law of [clean and unclean meats](#) to Moses, as recorded in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.
2. When Noah disembarked from the ark, he built an altar and offered an offering ([Genesis 8:20](#)). The law concerning offerings, rehearsed most specifically nearly a millennium later in Leviticus 1-5, was no foreign concept to Noah. In fact, [Genesis 8:20](#) specifically alludes to the *burnt* offering, the specifications of which are written in Leviticus 1. Clearly, Noah both knew and obeyed God's law in detail.
3. [Genesis 26:5](#) indicates that Abraham obeyed God's commandments, statutes, and laws. He did this five centuries before God revealed the Ten Commandments to Moses.

4. Looking forward into the Kingdom period, the Millennium, we see that the law will continue to exist at that time: "For out of Zion shall go forth the law." See Isaiah's Millennial prophecy, stated in [Isaiah 2:2-4](#).
5. [Ezekiel 44:9](#) indicates that physical circumcision will be practiced in the Millennium: "Thus says the Lord God: 'No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel.'" While circumcision is a covenant first given to Abraham (Genesis 17), God later attached it to the law (see most specifically [Leviticus 12:3](#), but also [Exodus 12:48](#)). It has not been "done away"; Ezekiel 44 indicates God that will enforce it in the future.

These witnesses testify to the fact that God's people obeyed the law well before the so-called "Dispensation of Law," and will continue to keep it after the so-called "Dispensation of Grace"—yes, on into the Millennium, when [Jesus Christ](#) will [reign on the earth](#).

At heart, dispensationalists believe that God deals *differently* with people during different periods of history. They believe and teach this in spite of His assurance, recorded in [Malachi 3:6](#), that He does *not* change, and as [Hebrews 13:8](#) declares, Christ is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." Our God does not modify His tactics every few hundred or few thousand years due to societal changes or advances in learning or technology. He has had one message from the beginning.

His law is integral to that message, [the gospel](#) of the [Kingdom of God](#) ([Mark 1:14-15](#)). Jesus says plainly, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" ([Matthew 5:17](#)). Through His perfectly law-abiding life, He showed us the way to be prepared to enter His Kingdom, and the apostle John enjoins us in this vein, "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked ([1 John 2:6](#)).

There is no doubt about it: God's "perfect law of liberty," His "royal law" ([James 1:25](#); [2:8](#)), continues to be God's standard of conduct now just as much as ever.

- Charles Whitaker

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## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

### **[Satan's Lies About the Law](#)**

by Charles Whitaker (1944-2021)

Charles Darwin wrote in a letter to Asa Gray (a friend of Darwin's and a proponent of theistic evolution) that he could find no credible evidence for beneficence and intelligent design in evolutionary processes, a process brutally cruel and evil- characterized by Tennyson as nature "red in tooth and claw." Darwin argues for a "designed law" having come together by chance. Nature's laws do not operate on "chance"; Einstein argues that God does not throw dice. Randomness occurs in neither physical nor spiritual laws. The universal consequence for all sin is inevitable death. Webster defines law as an observed regularity of nature, characterized as inevitable, absolute, and certain, totally incompatible with chance. Keeping God's Law is our assurance that the relationship we have with God is genuine. The second lie Satan has foisted upon the "Christian" world is that God's Law (including that 'burdensome' Sabbath) does not pertain to anyone outside of Israel. If the consequences of sin are universal, then God's Law is universal. God's law illumines what sin is, converting ignorant bliss into the horrifying insight that we have all sinned and have earned the death penalty. In effect, God's Law enables sin to kill us; the power of sin is the law. All of the entire creation is under sin longing and yearning for the power of God's deliverance and grace.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

**Was God's Law Nailed to the Cross?**

by Earl L. Henn

Many point to Colossians 2:14 to "prove" that it is no longer necessary to keep God's law, but is this really what the apostle Paul means? Was the law nailed to Christ's cross? What is the "handwriting of requirements" he writes of? Using the immediate context and supporting scriptures, Earl Henn untangles the apostle's intent in this verse.

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