

## Is the Gospel against the Law?

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What is the relationship of the law with the gospel? Are the gospel and the law opposed to each other? Many so called Christian churches teach that the law of God is abolished and is not applicable to New Covenant Christianity. What did Jesus teach and what does the New Testament say regarding the observance of the law of God?

Jesus calls the first of his disciples and goes to Galilee to preach the gospel.

**Matthew 4:23** “Jesus went throughout all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, [preaching the gospel](#) of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of disease and sickness among the people.” NET

While preaching the gospel to the people large crowds followed Him Jesus told them the parable of the sower who went and planted crops in his field. According to the story the sower later found weeds in his field that were planted by an enemy.

**Matthew 13:41-43** “As the poisonous weeds are collected and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather from his kingdom [everything that causes sin as well as all lawbreakers](#). 42 They will **throw them into the fiery furnace**, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then *the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father*. The one who has ears had better listen!” NET

Later his disciples asked him the meaning of this parable. In the parable Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man, he mentioned a class of people whom he referred to as weeds. In his explanation of the parable of the sower Jesus clearly states that all people who break God's law are going to be thrown in into the fiery furnace of hell to be destroyed. It is that class whom he likens to weeds and contrasts them with the righteous who obey God's law and will shine forever in the Kingdom of God. The Greek verb for Law is “Nomia”. When the Greek prefix 'a' (alpha), is put in front of a word it means 'anti'. The word Anomia means anti-law . This Greek word, 'Anomia', is used a number of times in the New Testament. Again Jesus says:

**Matthew 7:21-23** “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the kingdom of heaven—only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day, many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many powerful deeds in your name?’ 23 Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you. [Go away from me, you lawbreakers! \[anomia\]](#)’ NET

A large group of professed Christians is foretold here. They are the ones who stand out the front and preach, those who are foremost in the work, the most active members in the church. People who have so called deliverance ministries and perform miracles, These ones organise the camps, bible studies and church functions, who hold church office, talented singers etc. These are the very ones who stand before the judgment bar of Christ and ask why they are lost. They are lost because they would not obey God's law.

And in his definition of sin the Apostle John says that sin is '*Anomia*' ie the transgression of the law.

**I John 3:4** "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the [transgression of the law](#) [Gk: anomia]" KJV

**Romans 6:23** “For the payoff of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” NET

Sin is the transgression of the law of God and the payoff for sin is death. Therefore people who transgress the law of God are destined to eternal death.

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The gospel is not against the law. Rather the disobeyed law of God is the reason for the gospel. The gospel was designed by God to rescue us from the consequences of the evil and wickedness in the world caused by the violation of God's law.

**Romans 8:3-4** "For God achieved what the law could not do because it was weakened through the flesh. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the righteous requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." NET

What was the law powerless to do? It was powerless to transform humanity into godly beings because of the sinful nature of man. To overcome this obstacle God sent his own son - Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul in the above verse is discussing the incarnation of the Son of God. He states that Christ became a man for two purposes. One was to be a sin offering to pay the death penalty for sin so that all humanity can have their debt to God paid in full. The second reason for the incarnation is so that the righteous requirements of God's law might be fully met in us if we live according to the Spirit of God and not according to the desires of our sinful natures. According to Paul, Christians who live a spirit filled life will obey the law of God.

**Hebrews 10:14-17** "For by one offering he has perfected for all time those who are made holy. 15 And the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us, for after saying, 16 ***"This is the covenant that I will establish with them after those days, says the Lord. I will put my laws [nomia] on their hearts and I will inscribe them on their minds,"*** 17 then he says, ***"Their sins and their lawless [anomia] deeds I will remember no longer."*** NET

This passage of scripture quoted in the New Testament book of Hebrews is taken from the prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament. The laws spoken of are the laws of God. Speaking of the New Covenant the bible says that God will write His laws onto the hearts and minds of His New Covenant people who encompass all humanity who accept the gospel. Those people who consent to this process God will remove the record of their lawless deeds. The Law cannot save us but it is an educator and a standard of Christian conduct.

**Hebrews 1:9** "YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS... [Gk: anomia]." NASB

The author of the book of Hebrews when speaking about the attitude of Jesus towards the transgression of the law we are told that it is something that Jesus hates. This is why the gospel is about the deliverance from the breaking of God's law and its consequences. The purpose of the gospel is to rescue God's people from sins guilt sins power and sins presence.

**Titus 2:11-14** "For the **grace of God** has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness [Gk: Anomia] and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." ESV

The apostle Paul talks about the purpose of salvation and the result that God desires his grace to perform in the hearts and minds of professed Christians. God's grace teaches us to live godly lives, to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions. God's grace is certainly not given to allow us to disregard God's law but quite the opposite. Christ gave himself as a sacrifice to redeem us from all 'anomia' all lawlessness. A saved person will not willfully disregard the law of God. They will also be zealous for good works.

**2 Cor 6:14-16** "Do not become partners with those who do not believe, for what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness [anomia], or what fellowship does light have with darkness? 15 And what agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share in common with an unbeliever? 16 And what mutual agreement does the temple of God have with idols?" NET

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Paul warns Christians about the danger of being in partnership with unbelievers. He then makes a comparison between the two. Paul's comparison goes like this:

Righteousness	<i>Lawlessness</i>
Light	Darkness
Christ	Beliar [Satan]
Believer	Unbeliever
Temple of God	Idols

Paul's attitude towards transgressing God's law is strong. Transgression of God's Law is the opposite of righteousness and is likened to darkness, Satan, unbelievers and idols.

**2 Thess 2:3,7-8** "Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not arrive until the rebellion comes and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction... For the hidden power of lawlessness is already at work.... 8 and then the lawless [anomia] one will be revealed, whom the Lord will destroy by the breath of his mouth and wipe out by the manifestation of his arrival." NET

Here Paul warns about the then future anti-Christ whom Jesus will destroy on 'that day', the 'day of the Lord' when he returns the second time. This agent of satan is called the Anomia one - the lawless one. To be against God's law is to be on the side of Satan and the antichrist.

**Matthew 24:12-13** "and because lawlessness [anomia] will increase so much, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the person who endures to the end will be saved." NET

Christ here is referring to the condition of the church. Because transgression of the law is abounding, the love of many will grow cold. Paul tells us that love is the fulfilling of the law (Romans 13: 10). This means that law breaking is contagious. To avoid this contamination we must stand firm in the strength of God alone. Jesus made it quite clear that violators of God's law are condemned people. Those people who believe that God's law need not be obeyed are referred to as Antinomians.

### The Rich Young Man

**Matt 19:16-21** "Now someone came up to him and said, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to gain eternal life?" 17 He said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." 18 "Which ones?" he asked. Jesus replied, "Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, 19 honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself." NET

Here Jesus clearly says that obedience to the ten commandments are a condition of salvation to eternal life. Jesus is not teaching that the law saves us. But that law breakers are excluded from the salvation that Jesus freely gives us. Salvation is a free gift from God to man that cannot be earned. But wilful lawbreakers will not be granted eternal life.

**Antinomianism:** An ethical system that denies the binding nature of any supposedly absolute or external laws on individual behavior. Some antinomianists argue that Christians need not preach or practice the laws of the OT because Christ's merits have freed Christians from the law. Others, like the early Gnostics, teach that spiritual perfection comes about through the attainment of a special knowledge rather than by obedience to law. Generally, Christian theology has rejected antinomianism on the basis that although Christians are not saved through keeping the law, we still have a responsibility to live uprightly, that is, in obedience to God's law of love in service to one another (Gal 5:13-14) as we walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16) who continually works to transform us into the image of Christ the Creator (Col 3:1, 7-10).

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**Antinomianism:** The false teaching that since faith alone is necessary for salvation, one is free from the moral obligations of the law. The word antinomianism is not used in the Bible, but the idea is spoken of. Paul appears to have been accused of being an antinomian (see Rom. 3:8; 6:1, 15). While it is true that obedience to the law will never earn salvation for anyone (Eph. 2:8-9), it is equally true that those who are saved are expected to live a life full of good works (see, for example, Matt. 7:16-20; Eph. 2:10; Col. 1:10; Jas. 2:14-26). Since we have been freed from the dominion of sin through faith in Jesus, we have also been freed to practice the righteousness demanded by God (Rom. 6:12-22).

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The Greek word Anomia means anti-law (see Word No. Strong's # 458)

Strong's #458: anomia (pronounced an-om-ee'-ah)

from 459; illegality, i.e. violation of law or (genitive case) wickedness:--iniquity, X transgress(-ion of) the law, unrighteousness.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon: anomia

- 1) the condition of without law
  - 1a) because ignorant of it
  - 1b) because of violating it
- 2) contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness

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