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The Servant-Master Roles of the Laws of Christ, of Scripture, and of Nature

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This article is the third in a series on a model for theology which is inclusive of revelation in Christ, Scripture, and nature. In this model, Scripture has a unique role that belongs only to Scripture. However, Christ and nature also have roles in faith and practice, as Scripture teaches. According to Scripture and Seventh-day Adventist theology, there is a harmony among the divine revelations in Christ, Scripture, and nature.¹ The thesis of this article is that there are servant-master roles for the laws of Christ, of Scripture, and of nature in Christian faith and practice. The law is a servant of God which rules as a master over those who are without faith in Christ. However, for those who through faith are exalted with Christ, the role of law is transformed. The law, which is a servant of God, functions as a servant rather than as a master of those who have faith. This article surveys the history of the interpretation of Paul's statements about the laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature (part 1). Then it surveys Paul's actual references to the law (part 2), especially in Galatians 3:24–25 (part 3). Finally, this article surveys Ellen G. White's Seventh-day Adventist perspective on the servant-master roles of law (part 4).

Part 1: History of Interpretation

The servant-master roles of the laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature may be presented with advantage against the background of the history of the interpretation of Paul's writings. The history of the interpretation of

¹ See Martin Hanna, "Science and Theology: Focusing the Complementary Lights of Jesus, Scripture, and Nature," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 6/2 (Autumn 1995): 6-51; "Pre-Advent Explosion of Knowledge: Scripture Authority and Plural Revelations," *Issues in Theology and Spiritual Leadership: Journal of the Department of Religion and Theology at Northern Caribbean University*, 1 (1999): 11-35.

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Paul's statements about the laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature will be surveyed here in terms of (1) new law or new relations to law, (2) Jewish views of law, and (3) the laws of nature or the elements of the world.

New Law or New Relations to Law. Thomas Aquinas (a father of Catholic Scholasticism) interprets Paul's statements on law in terms of an old law and a new law. On one hand, human attempts to control sin by the old covenant law are ineffectual. On the other hand, grace accompanied by the giving of the new covenant law in Christ transforms nature and supplies the change of heart needed to act virtuously and to merit eternal life.²

In contrast, Martin Luther (a father of the Protestant Reformation) interprets Paul's statements on law in terms of a new relationship to the law. The law restrains sin and crushes human righteousness. On one hand, the righteousness of Christ frees us from law, since works are inadequate for righteousness, which comes only with justification by faith. On the other hand, the Christian is both righteous and sinner. Thus, while the Christian conscience is free from law, the flesh must be subject to and disciplined by the law.³

Jewish Views of Law. Traditional Protestant views of Paul's teaching on law focus on the issue of legalism. The legalistic enemies of the Reformation were equated with the legalistic enemies of Paul. However, many contemporary scholars conclude that Judaism is wrongly viewed as a legalistic contrast to justification by faith.⁴

Frank Thielman documents a diversity of views in first century Judaism which were not all legalistic. The law was viewed as (1) distinguishing Jews and Gentiles, (2) showing election, (3) punishing the lawless, and (4) waiting for divine intervention in people's hearts, the dwelling of the Spirit among them, the restoration of their fortunes, and the acquittal of the obedi-

²After the Reformation, Aquinas' views continued to enjoy wide reception among Catholics in their responses to Luther (Frank Thielman, *From Plight to Solution. A Jewish Framework for Understanding Paul's View of the Law in Galatians and Romans*. Supplement Novum Testamentum 61 [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989], 15-18). After Aquinas, there have been four major approaches to this issue: (1) justification by faith (Luther, Calvin); (2) Greek philosophy (Tübingen school, Baur); (3) Hellenistic religions (History of Religions School, Deissmann, Reitzenstein, Bousset); (4) Apocalypticism (Schweitzer, Dodd, Cullmann) (C. Marvin Pate, *The End of the Age Has Come: The Theology of Paul* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995], 22-34).

³Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 4-12. There is a great debate over whether a study of Martin Luther is helpful or harmful for an understanding of Paul's view of the law. However, there is unanimity, if often begrudged, in the view that a study of Luther is essential to understanding the scholarly debate about Paul (Westerholm, 3). See Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*. Vols. 26 & 27, ed., J. Pelikan (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1963-64).

⁴Thielman, 24; Westerholm, 34.

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ent. "All of these convictions about law are addressed in Paul's letters. Some of them he affirms, some he reshapes, and some he rejects."⁵

Other scholars emphasize variously Paul's affirmation (E. P. Sanders), reshaping (Hans Schoeps), or rejection of Jewish views on law (Albert Schweitzer).⁶ Some suggest that Paul meant to exclude law as a path to faith (W. G. Kümmel, Krister Stendahl). Others conclude that Paul regards the law as a preparation for faith (Stephen Westerholm).⁷ Some view the

⁵Thielman, 68.

⁶Sanders argues that Paul and Rabbinic Judaism are actually in substantial agreement as to the rule of law but are divided over the role of Jesus Christ. Despite the halakic (law explaining) nature of much Rabbinic literature, the common denominator of Jewish thought is "Covenantal nomism," whereby Israel's place is determined by the covenant. Obedience is a proper response to grace. The covenant is unconditional, divine grace and human merit are compatible, and in judgement, perfect or even 51% righteousness is not required, but only membership in the covenant. E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), xi, xii, 1, 81, 119, 135, 147, 149, 157, 204, 551; "The Covenant as a Soteriological Category and the Nature of Salvation in Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism," in *Jews, Greeks, and Christians: Studies in Honor of W. D. Davies*, ed. R. Hamerton-Kelly, R. Scroggs (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 11-44. Hans Schoeps argues that Paul's view of law is rooted in but goes beyond Judaism, which regards the Torah as law and doctrine, limiting sin, bringing life, impossible of total obedience, given in the presence of angels, and weak because of the flesh. Paul saw the law (*nomos*) as simply law (apart from doctrine), promoting sin and death, given by angels, beyond the power of repentance, and abrogated (as the Jews expected it would be when the Messiah came). Jesus ushered in the expected Messianic age, not only as the suffering servant (expected by the Jews) but as the divine Son of God. National Israel rejected Christ and was replaced by a new Israel including the Gentiles without requiring that they become Jews. Thus the law was a custodian intended to bring the Jews to Christ. Hans Schoeps, *Paul: The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961). Schweitzer relates Paul's polemic against Jewish opponents to the issues of bondage to the rule of elements of the world and to the rule of Jewish Law. Paul's doctrine of redemption is eschatological, mystical, and juridical. It involves deliverance from the rule of angelic powers and from the rule of the law they mediated, which is designed for the natural rather than the supernatural realm. Albert Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1950, 1912); *The Mysticism of the Apostle Paul* (New York: Seabury, 1931); *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1968).

⁷W. G. Kümmel argues that Paul's view of law is evident in that his conscience was not depressed with regard to the law. The "I" in Rom 7 is rhetorical, portraying the lot of humanity. Paul's aim is to defend the law as holy, in spite of its relation to sin. The problem is a contrast between the holy nature of the rule of law and the sinful nature of humanity, even when they think that they have kept the law (Westerholm, 52-58). See W. G. Kümmel, *Römer 7 und das Bild des Menschen im Neuen Testament* (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1974), 36-87, 104-117, 134-160. Stendahl argues that Paul's Jewish and Christian piety is untroubled with regard to law (Phil 3:6; Acts 23:1; 1 Cor 4:4; 2 Cor 1:12; 5:11; 12:7, 10; Gal 4:13). Paul's concerns were his role among Jews and Gentiles and the relations between them. Stendahl notes that the transition from the age of law to the age of faith is a process in every believer. Paul's concern was to place Jews and Gentiles on common ground as equally culpable under law and equally graced with justification. Augustine used Paul to address the Western introspective conscience. Luther used Paul to address how to find a gracious God (K. Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976]). Westerholm argues: (1) Though Paul believes that

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“righteousness of the law” either as good (U. Wilckens), bad (Rudolph Bultmann), or indifferent (E. P. Sanders).⁸ Others propose that in Paul’s writings there is both discontinuity and continuity between law and faith.⁹

law points to Christ and righteousness by faith, he regards Sinaitic law as based on works which are not a perversion of law. (2) Sin has made law inoperative as a means to life. Justification excludes any role for works. (3) Law originates from God and increases sin as a prelude to the revelation of Christ. The plight of Jews and Gentiles without Christ is the same. Law is a preparatory stage in salvation history. Yet, its rule/bondage remain a reality. (4) Christian ethics correspond to the law. Yet, law has no abiding validity. Christians fulfill law but are not obligated by its precepts. Life in the Spirit is contrasted to obligation to law which is a covenantal obligation only on Israel (Westerholm, 106, 142, 176, 199). In brief, Westerholm argues (1) distinction of Scripture and law, (2) law demands impossible works, (3) law increases sin and need for the gospel rather than foreshadows the gospel, (4) obligation to and fulfillment of law are incompatible, (5) law is for Israel not the world. This article suggests that (1) distinction between law and Scripture does not involve disharmony between them (2) law does foreshadow gospel, (3) obligation and fulfillment are compatible, and (4) law is for Israel and the world. Bandstra argues: bondage to law may be expressed in different ways, in the high religious zeal of the devout Pharisee (Phil. 3:3ff.), or among those whose god is their belly (Phil. 3:19), or those who exchange the glory of the immortal God for images (Rom 1:23), or among those who are wise according to the world (1 Cor 1:26, Col. 2:8) (Andrew J. Bandstra, *The Law and the Elements of the World: An Exegetical Study in Aspects of Paul’s Teaching* [Amsterdam: J. H. Kok N. V. Kampen, 1964], 70-71).

⁸For Wilckens, Paul suggests a rule of law in faith which is a works righteousness based on Judaism. This righteousness was neglected by Jews, who concluded that Gentile sin leads to damnation and Jewish sin is countered by covenant. Paul holds that none can be justified by law, for all have sinned. Thus, justification by faith in Christ is needed. Yet, faith is not opposed to works and does not free the believer from obligation to law. Justification delivers from sin’s consequences/condemnation. The inoperative rule of law toward life is replaced by God’s righteousness. Law as God’s will remains, and believers are intended to fulfill it in the Spirit and in love. Cultic/ritual commands are abrogated, but the law is not done away. Judgment by works is valid. Only when evil has worked itself out, either on the doer or on a substitute provided by God, is it done away. Bultmann’s view is in some respects similar to Wilckens’. Law demands obedience which seeks life and security in the Creator. Humanity misunderstands the law’s promise of life and seeks its life and righteousness by doing what law requires. The person who fulfills law is as much in need of grace as the one who does not, for no one can fulfill the law entirely. Christian morality fulfills law as a statement of God’s will. This is not meritorious accomplishment but submission to God. Freedom from law indicates freedom to distinguish the ethical from the ritual/cultic (Westerholm, 70-78). Sanders rejects aspects of Bultmann’s and Wilckens’ views and incorporates elements from others. He argues that: (1) Jewish boasting was not of achievement of righteousness but of covenant privilege (see Wilckens); (2) the Jews did not observe the law in the wrong way, rather they rejected Jesus (see Schoeps); (3) righteousness by obedience to law is a “gain,” but it is loss in comparison to righteousness by faith in Christ (see Westerholm and Wilckens). Sanders rejects Wilckens’ view on universal sin, arguing that Paul is inconsistent (see Räisänen); suggesting that sin’s dominion is the result of transgression (see Romans) and the result of being in the flesh (see Galatians). For Sanders, Paul’s problem is that people are not under the lordship of Christ. Thus, Paul does not reject the law because it cursed Christ, or out of a frustrated search for righteousness by law (see Kümmel), or because the messianic age had come (see Schoeps). Rather, when asked concerning conditions of membership in the body of Christ, he said no to the law (see Luther, Stendahl, and Wilckens); when asked about Christian behavior he said: ful-

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The Laws/Elements of the World. Andrew J. Bandstra has surveyed the interpretation of Paul's references to law in terms of the "elements of the world" (Gal 4:3). Prior to and during the New Testament period, the word element took on a wide variety of specific meanings, such as inherent component, fundamental, basic, power, or force. Scholars have proposed interpretations of the elements of the world as: principles by which the world exists and/or functions, component parts of the world, or personal forces behind the world.¹⁰

First, many scholars have interpreted Paul's references to the laws or elements of the world in terms of principles of one kind or another. These proposed elements include: (1) principles of the world and of Scripture which are weak and even evil apart from their proper spiritual use (Luther); (2) the Mosaic law (Greijdanus), which had an elementary nature correlated with the immature circumstances of humanity prior to Christ (De Wette); (3) the beginnings of Jewish and heathen humanity and religion (Ellicott, Weiss, Meyer); (4) rudimentary instruction in material things (Lightfoot, Moule); (5) the elementary knowledge of the heathen (Ewald); (6) impersonal principles related to harsh slavery rather than positive preparation for

fill the law (see Luther, Wilkins, and Bultmann). E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).

⁹(1) Discontinuity—because justification by faith delivers from the law (Luther); because mystical faith union in Christ elevated the Christian into the new age (Schweitzer); or because Paul's view of faith is a rejection of Rabbinic Judaism (Montefiore); (2) continuity—for Jewish Christians (Stendahl, Gaston) or all Christians (Cranfield and Dunn); and (3) discontinuity and continuity—because of a shift in Paul's theology (Drane), because of irreconcilable contradictions in Paul's theology (Räsänen), or because of the overlap of two ages in Paul's eschatology (Thielman) (Pate, 125-136). These same categories are discussed by C. Thomas Rhyne in *Faith Establishes the Law* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 8-23.

¹⁰Bandstra, 46. "Christians—in baptism—have put off the body of flesh (Col 2:12, 13), and therefore are to put to death their members which are upon the earth (3:5). From such parallel usage, it appears likely that here in Colossians, as in Galatians, the Apostle thinks, not [primarily] of personal spirits, but primarily of law and the flesh as the two basic components of the world" (Ibid, 68-69). See also Herold Weiss, "The Law in the Epistle to the Colossians," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 34 (1972): 294-314. Paul proclaims that these elements shall have passed away (1 Cor 15:24) at the time of the end, and that they have been defeated in Christ (Col 2:15). Nowhere does he speak of believers having died to them. The Apostle does assert that Christians have died to the law (Gal 2:19; Rom 7:4). In light of Paul's reference (in connection with the elements) to questions of food and drink, feast days, new moons, and sabbaths, which are only a shadow of what is to come (Col. 2:16, 17), it seems at least probable that the elements could also include the law (Ibid). Being under the curse of law results from failure to submit to law (cf. Rom 8:7), and service to the elements of the world constitutes submission to cosmic powers (Charles H. Cosgrove, "The Law and the Spirit: An Investigation into the Theology of Galatians," Ph.D. Thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1985, 209). Christ's creation, redemption, headship, and victory over spiritual powers is important (Col 1:16, 20; 2:10, 15). However, the elements are not cosmic beings to the exclusion of law. They "might be reckoned among the fundamental forces inherent in the world." (Bandstra, 68). They include human nature with its philosophy and religious traditions (2:8, 20).

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Christ (Ridderbos); (7) temporal succession as the demonic and tyrannical basis of legal tradition, cosmological principles, or philosophy (Torrance); (8) elements of power and legal ordinances suited to elementary education (Schippers); (9) elementary education in faith (Grant); (10) elementary education and celestial bodies (Knox); (11) outward, external, and visible things (Williams); (12) astrological elements or obedience to law (Berkhof).¹¹

Second, other scholars have interpreted Paul's references to the laws or elements of the world in terms of cosmology. These proposed elements include: (1) the earthly, worldly or material (Neander, Zahn, Kögel); (2) the flesh as the motivating element (Blom); (3) the present material world in contrast with the future spiritual world (Hofmann); (4) material things from a religio-ethical standpoint (Kurze); (5) Epicurean atomism (DeWitt); (6) heavenly bodies as in Stoic reference to signs of the Zodiac (Van Wagenin-gen, Colson).¹²

Third, some scholars have interpreted Paul's references to the laws or elements of the world in terms of personalized cosmology. These proposed elements include: (1) spiritual powers, angels, elemental or astral spirits, gods or demons (many Church Fathers, Klöpffer, Spitta); (2) angelic mediators of Jewish law (Ritschl); (3) personalized heavenly bodies (some Church Fathers, Hilgenfeld, Holsten, Diels); (4) elemental spirits (Spitta, Everling, Hincks); (5) spiritual beings who influence the world (Dieterich); (6) spirits or angels working through the world (Reiche); (7) angels (Percy, Masson, Daniélou); (8) astral and elemental spirits (Haupt, Bultmann, Dieterich, Deissmann, Dibelius, Pfister, Abbott, Jones, Easton, Hatch, Radford, Bauer, Langton, Lietzmann, Lochmeyer, Duncan, Allan, Macgregor, Richardson, Leivestad, Caird, Lump); (9) angelic powers who rule the planetary spheres and mediate the law and hostile powers in opposition to God (Bruce).¹³

Summary. The need for careful study of the servant-master roles of the laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature is evident in the fact that scholars have interpreted Paul's use of the term law in many contradictory ways. These views raise a number of issues, such as: a change in law, and a change in relations to law; legalism and justification by faith; affirmation, reshaping, or rejection of Jewish views on law; whether law is a path to faith; continuity and/or discontinuity of law and faith; righteousness of the law as good, bad or indifferent; and principal, cosmological, or personalized-cosmological views of the elements/laws of the world. Now that the history

¹¹Also elements of the world in contrast to elements of the new creation (Lagererantz), and fundamental principles (Arndt, Gingrich). See Bandstra, 13-23.

¹²Bandstra, 17, 24.

¹³Bandstra, 18-19, 25-29.

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of the interpretation of Paul's view of law has been surveyed, part 2 of this article will describe Paul's actual use of the term law.

Part 2: Paul's Use of the Term Law

The concept of servant-master roles of the laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature is an inclusive concept. It proposes different types of roles for law (servant-master roles) and different categories of laws (laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature). This inclusive concept of the roles of law is supported by Paul's teaching in various epistles. A survey of Paul's actual usage of the term law should "give as much attention to those letters in which the law is not a bone of contention as to those in which it is, and as much attention to Paul's allusive references as to his explicit statements."¹⁴ (Many of Paul's references to law in Galatians will be surveyed in part 3 below).

This article proposes harmonious servant-master roles for the laws of Christ, of Scripture, and of nature. This description of Paul's perspective on law is a simplification of the great diversity among the references to law in his writings. This simplification is warranted in light of the fact that Paul's use of the term law is characterized by unity in diversity.

First, Paul links the word "law" with various genitive nouns to form the following expressions which may imply a diversity of laws: for example, law of faith; law of works (Rom 3:27); law of a husband (7:2); law of God (7:22, 25; 8:7); law of my mind or of sin (7:23, 25); law of sin and death or of the spirit of life in Christ (8: 2); law of righteousness (9:31); law of Moses (1 Cor 9:9); and law of Christ (Gal 6:2). However, Paul aims to show how these laws relate to each other. For example, with regard to the laws of faith and works, on one hand, he writes that we were confined under law until faith was revealed (Gal 3:23). On the other hand, he writes that there is a law of faith (Rom 3:27) and that faith upholds the law (3:31).¹⁵

Second, there are also diverse patterns of use where other terms are parallel with law, indicating a specific law or aspect of law: "the law and the prophets" (Rom 3:21), law as specific commandment(s) (Rom 13:8-10;

¹⁴ Chinedu Adolphus Amadi-Azuogu, *Paul and the Law in the Arguments of Galatians: A Rhetorical and Exegetical Analysis of Galatians 2,14-6,2* (Weinheim, Germany: Beltz Athenäum Verlag, 1996), 11. No distinctions will be made between Paul's use or non-use of the article "the" with the word "law." Paul makes no such distinction in Gal 3:10-13, 17-24; 5:3-4; Rom 2:17-27; 5:13-14; 7; 10:4-5. See Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment: A Pauline Theology of Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 33-34; also Michael Winger, *By What Law? The Meaning of Nomos in the Letters of Paul* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 44-46.

¹⁵ Winger, 43-44. The referents of the uses of law with genitive nouns or to a general category of law is not clear. In at least two places law refers to a law other than Jewish law. In at least three places law does not refer specifically to any law. In at least two places law is generic, law as such (Ibid, 86).

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7:7–13), the letter and spirit of the law (Rom 7:6; 2 Cor 3:5–6). Here a unity in diversity is evident when in Rom 3:21 Paul writes that the righteousness of God has been manifest apart from law, but immediately adds that “the law and the prophets bear witness to it. Of the letter and the spirit of the law, Paul writes: we are discharged from the letter of the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new life of the spirit (Rom 7:6, 14).¹⁶

Third, there are patterns of use which show a diversity of characteristics of law. The law is verbal (10 times); perceived (3 times); a standard for judgment (17 times); a guide (23 times); a controller (31 times); it is tied to a people (17 times); it has a source (6 times); and people put themselves under it (6 times).¹⁷ In each case, connections among these components are found in the immediate context, indicating unity. For example, Paul regards the law as verbal in the revelation of law to Gentiles (written in the heart—Rom 2:14–15) and in the revelation of law to Jews (the oracles/words of God—3:1–2).¹⁸

Fourth, the unity of the law is evident in spite of the tension between Paul’s reference to the law as Jewish¹⁹ and as divine.²⁰ On one hand, Paul

¹⁶ “These passages take us beyond the merely puzzling into major theological issues: the nature of faith, of righteousness, and of the spirit, issues which thus become intertwined with the nature of law.” “Underlying all of these difficulties is a question which Paul himself does not address . . . : what does Paul mean by “law” . . . ?” (Winger, 2; also 32-34).

¹⁷ Winger, 34-40. Winger suggests that “all seven of these components belong together, and together constitute a single meaning of *nómov* as it is used in Paul’s letters.” (40). See Rom 2:12-14, 23, 25, 27; 3:19-20, 27, 31; 4:13-16; 5:13, 20; 6:14-15; 7:1-9, 12, 14, 16, 21-23, 25; 8:2-4, 7; 9:31; 10:4-5; 13:8, 10; 1 Cor 9:8-9, 20; 14:21, 34; 15:56; Gal 2:16, 18-19, 21; 3:2, 5, 10-13, 17-19, 21, 23-24; 4:4-5, 21; 5:3-4, 14, 18, 23; 6:2, 13; Phil 3:5-6, 9 (Winger, 32-64).

¹⁸ Nevertheless, Paul refers to the Gentiles as not having the law (2:14). In a sense the Gentiles have the law of God in nature (2:14-15), and in a sense they do not have the law of God as revealed to the Jews (2:17; 3:1-2). This apparent contradiction may be clarified by consideration of Paul’s references to divine law, Jewish law, and natural law.

¹⁹ In every letter his [Paul’s] first reference to *nómov* is accompanied by a marker that this *nómov* is specifically Jewish” (i.e. Gal 2:14-16) (Winger, 97). We do not have direct evidence for what Jewish law is in its broadest sense, but only for what it includes (Winger, 95). References to Jewish law may be clear (58 times—Rom 2:12-18, 20, 23, 25-27; 3:19, 21, 31; 4:16; 5:13, 20; 7:7, 12, 14; 8:4; 9:31; 10:5; 13:8, 10; 1 Cor 9:8, 20; 14:21, 34; 15:56; Gal 3:12, 17, 19, 21, 23, 24; 4:4, 21; 5:3, 14; 6:13; Phil 3:5, 6, 9), probable (37 times—Rom 3:20, 21, 28; 4:13, 14, 15; 6:14-15; 7:1, 4-9, 16; 8:3; 10:4; Gal 2:16, 19, 21; 3:2, 5, 10, 11, 13, 18; 4:5; 5:4, 18, 23); alternative Jewish law (2 times—Gal 3:21); ambiguous (2 times—Rom 7:2-3) classes of laws, with genitive (15 times—Rom 3:27; 7:2, 22, 23, 25; 8:2, 7; 9:31; 1 Cor 9:9; Gal 6:2); non-Jewish law (4 times—Rom 2:14-15; 5:13; Rom 7:21) (Ibid, 89-90). In 32 references to Jewish law it includes specific legal provisions (Rom 7:7; 13:8, 10; 1 Cor 9:8; Gal 5:14); legal provisions in general (Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12); fore-tellings (Rom 3:21; 1 Cor 14:21, 34); judgments (Rom 3:10-19); narratives (Gal 4:21); and the law at Sinai (Rom 5:13, 20; Gal 3:17, 19, 21). The latter excludes Scripture as a common denominator for the term law by its specific reference to 430 years after the promise. For Paul, law most often refers to Jewish law. In the

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hints at (but does not declare) a sense in which Jewish law is separate from God. For example the Jewish trust in the righteousness of the law is contrasted with the righteousness which is of God by faith of Christ (Phil 3:9; see also discussion of Gal 1:14–16; 2:19; 3:19–20; 4:4–5 in part 3). On the other hand, Paul never says that the words of Jewish law are from man; rather, he cites them as authoritative. God and law are linked in his argument that the doers rather than the hearers of the law are just before God (Rom 2:13), and that God is dishonored and blasphemed by the breaking of the law (2:23–24). Paul also implies that there will be divine judgment according to the law and the gospel (2:15–16). Finally, he explicitly refers to the law as belonging to God: with the mind I serve the law of God (7:25); the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God (8:7).²¹

Fifth, the unity of the law is evident in spite of the tension between Paul's reference to the law as divine as well as natural. Paul's refers to elements/rudiments of the world which are weak and related to observances of days, months, times, and years, as is the law (Col 2:6–23; Rom 6:19; 8:3; Gal 4:3–10). Yet Paul counts "law among the worldly powers and in such close conjunction with the flesh, without denying its divine origin and spiritual character."²² In Paul's writings, the law is divine as well as natural (Rom 1:18–20; 2:10–16).²³

majority of these (63 references), Jewish law is identified with Judaism either directly, negatively, or indirectly (Winger, 95-97).

²⁰ Paul may seem ambivalent about God's relation to Jewish law (Winger, 102). Paul's identification of the law as Jewish may explain in part why Paul often seems to describe the law negatively. Up to Gal 3:13-14, Paul has not given any praise to the law, or described it as from God. The law seems to be the enemy of the gospel. It does not justify (2:16) or bring the Spirit. It reigns over life in the flesh (3:2-3) and is a temporary restrainer (3:23). It is not given a positive role, but promotes personal and relational slavery (4:1ff; 5:16-21), raises superstition and moral sin (4:9-10 and 5:19-21), and allows exaltation in the flesh, i.e., for human religious lords (4:17; 5:12-13). The issue is whether or not this seemingly negative attitude toward law is concerned with the law as Jewish or with the Jewish misconception of the law. Both Midrash and Mishnah involved what might be called the Judaization of the Tanak. That is, in Judaism the Tanak came to be interpreted in order to further and illuminate the self-understanding of the Jews and to preserve their identity.

²¹ Winger, 99-101.

²² Bandstra, 72.

²³ On one hand, Paul regarded the world as the good creation of God which was invaded by sin (Rom 1:20; 5:12-14; 1 Cor 4:9; 8:4, 15ff; 8:5-6; 15:44-49; Eph 1:4; Phil 2:15). On the other hand, Paul uses the term "world" (*cosmos, aion*) to refer to all which stands over against God because of sin (1 Cor 1:20, 21, 27-28; 2:6-8; 3:18-19; 2 Cor 4:4; Gal 1:4; Eph 2:2; 2 Tim 4:10; Tit 2:12; Rom 12:2) and is in need of reconciliation to God in Christ (2 Cor 5:19). See F. W. Danker, "Romans v.12: Sin Under Law," *New Testament Studies* 14 (1967-68): 424-39; T. F. Morris, "Law and the Cause of Sin in the Epistle to the Romans," *Heythrop Journal* 28 (1987): 285-91; L. E. Keck, "The Law and 'The Law of Sin and Death' (Rom 8:1-4): Reflections on the Spirit and Ethics in Paul," in *The Divine Helmsman*, 41-57, ed. J. Crenshaw, S. Sandmel (New York: Ktav, 1980). "Compared with Christ and His new order of things, the . . . [world] is "vain" or "weak" and ineffectual for salvation, even when considered in its tempo-

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In summary, an inclusive concept of servant-master roles of God's laws is supported by the fact that Paul's use of the term law is characterized by unity in diversity. There are different laws, aspects of law, and characteristics of law which are interrelated in a unity of law. For example, Jewish, natural, and divine law may be distinguished but not separated from one another. However, the servant-master roles of the law need to be further clarified. Part 3 of this article examines Paul's epistle to the Galatians in order to clarify the servant-master roles of the laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature.

Part 3: Servant-Master Roles of Christ, Scripture, and Nature

The harmony among the servant-master roles of the laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature may be demonstrated by a study of Galatians 3:24–25. The King James Version uses the word schoolmaster to translate the Greek word *paidagogos* in Gal 3:24.

However, in the ancient world the *paidagogos* was usually a servant who was given authority as master over immature children. Therefore, the translation of *paidagogos* as servant-master illuminates Paul's message in Galatians.²⁴

rary aspect. It is open . . . to the possibility of sin and cannot, by its own resources, overcome sin. But we should not confuse or identify this state of existence with that which is inherently and positively evil" (Bandstra, 52). By reconciliation in Christ, Christians are placed in a new relation over against the world (Gal 6:14) in that they are part of a new creation (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17). However, they continue to make discriminate use of the world (1 Cor 5:10; 7:31) while they wait for the coming world (*aión*) (Eph 1:21; 2:7), which is the liberation of the present world (Rom 8:19ff.). Abraham's seed inherit the world (Rom 4:13), which belongs to Christians, who belong to Christ, who belongs to God (1 Cor 3:22). Paul uses the word flesh in similar ways to his use of the word world. In harmony with Is 31:3, the flesh is weak in contrast to the spirit. We cannot be made perfect in the flesh (Gal 3:3), which leads to death (Rom 6:6). As such, flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50ff.). In Gal 6:14, Paul refers to his crucifixion to the world as a rejection of any attempt to glory in the flesh by circumcision. "Now circumcision was not, for Paul, a 'positive evil'; it was merely 'ineffective,' 'without power,' 'weak,' in terms of attaining salvation. Thus 'world' should here be viewed, not as something positively or structurally evil in itself, but as that sphere of activity that is weak and ineffectual for salvation, and open to the awful possibility of glorying in one's self rather than in God." (Bandstra, 54-55). (This is also evident in the prayer of Jesus that his disciples be in the world but not off the world [John 17:15-16]).

²⁴Norman H. Young, "The Figure of the *Paidagogos* in Art and Literature," *Biblical Archaeologist*, 53 (1990): 80-86; "Paidagogos: The Social Setting of a Pauline Metaphor," *Novum Testamentum*, 29 (1987): 150-176; David T. Gordon, "A Note on *Paidagogos* in Galatians 3:24-25," *New Testament Studies*, 35:1 (1989): 150-154; Anthony T. Hanson, "The Origin of Paul's Use of *Paidagogos* for the Law," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 34 (1988): 71-76; Richard N. Longenecker, "The Pedagogical Nature of the Law in Galatians 3:19-4:7," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 25 (1982): 53-61; J. W. MacGorman, "The Law as *Paidagogos* : A Study in Pauline Analogy," *New Testament Studies*, (1975): 99-111; Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Slaves of God," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 9:1 (1966): 31-49.

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The discussion of Galatians presented in this part of the article may be previewed as follows. First, the law is a *servant* of God which rules as a *master* over those who don't have faith. The law is a *servant-master to bring us to Christ* that we might be justified by faith (Gal 3:24). Scripture "shuts up together" (*sugkleio*) all who are without faith in Christ under sin and under law (3:22–23) and under the elements of the world (nature)(4:3).

Second, after faith is come, we are *no longer under a servant-master* (Gal 3:25). When we have faith in Christ we are liberated from under sin, law, and the elements of the world. Christ is our *master* who humbles Himself to be our *servant*. So His law, as manifest in Scripture and in nature, is our *servant*.

Third, therefore, faith in Christ is not contrary to laws of Scripture or the laws of nature. Faith works by love (Gal 5:6) to fulfill all the law (5:14), which is the law of Christ (6:2; also Rom 3:31). Those who have faith in Christ are sons of God with the authority of Christ—their *master*. However, like Christ, they become *servants* (Gal 6:2, 5, 16; also Rom 1:9; 7:6; 16:18) and fulfill the law of Christ.

The three part discussion previewed above will be further developed under the following headings: (1) Under the Law and the Elements, (2) No Longer Under the Law and the Elements, and (3) Faith Works by Love. This will show that faith in Christ is not contrary to the laws of Scripture or to the natural laws or elements of the world.

Under the Law and the Elements

Many interpreters of Paul perceive the condition of being under the law in totally negative terms. However, Paul presents the concept of being under the law in both negative and positive terms. This is evident in Paul's five diverse but related references to being "under law" in the book of Galatians. (1) According to Gal 3:10–14 (cf. Deut 21:23)—to be under law is to be under the curse of the law because of sin. However, (2) the curse of being "under law as servant-master" can lead to faith and Christ (Gal 3:23–25). (3) Christ came to be under law to redeem those who are under law (4:4–6). (4) The law itself says to those under its curse that they may be free in Christ (4:21–5:1). (5) Those who are led by the Spirit are not under the curse of the law (5:16–24).²⁵

The negative aspect of Paul's discussion of being under law is highlighted in that he not only includes sinners but also the law among the "all things" which are, according to Scripture, shut up under sin (Gal 3:22–23). The law as a slave gives birth only to slaves (4:21–31). Paul does not deny the positive authority of the law to curse sin and sinners (3:23). However,

²⁵L. L. Belleville, "'Under law': Structural Analysis and the Pauline Concept of Law in Galatians 3:21- 4:11," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 26 (1986): 56. In another Epistle Paul actually claims to be under the law to Christ—1 Cor 9:19-23.

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he does deny that the law has the dynamic power to produce life (3:21).²⁶ (Elsewhere, Paul writes positively of the law as “holy, righteous and good” [Rom 7:12]. However, negatively, the law is contrary to a relationship with God [vv. 7–11] *because sin manipulates the law to evoke disobedience* [v. 13] *in those who are in the flesh* [v. 14]). Paul states this negative function of law even more strongly when he writes that the law was added for the sake of transgressions (Gal 3:19). (There is a close parallel here with Rom 5:20: the law entered that the offense might abound).²⁷

Paul uses similar negative and positive language to refer to being under the law and being under the elements of the world. (1) Even Gentiles are under the curse (Gal 3:13–14) and in bondage under the elements of the world (Gal 4:3–9) and under the law (3:23; 5:23–25). (2) Positively, the elements of the world and the law are not sinful; but negatively, they are weak and beggarly (4:3, 9) and “open to and defenseless before sin.”²⁸ (3) Christians have died or been crucified to the elements of the world (Gal 6:14; Col 2:20). Similarly, there is a crucifixion through the law and to the law. Paul testifies: “I through the law am dead to the law that I might live unto God” (Gal 2:19). This is linked with his testimony: “I am crucified with Christ” (2:20).²⁹ (4) Positively, the elements of the world were the guardians and managers of Israel (and by implication the Gentiles) prior to

²⁶ Responsible for the righteousness of those under its rule, it is powerless to make them alive and deliver them from a cosmos shut up under sin; hence its very authority goes into effect to seal their fates” (Cosgrove, 199-200). Law was added because of transgressions and is impotent to give righteousness or life (Gal 3:19-21) (Pate, 137-143). “If the question is put whether the deliverance from the sphere of law [as servant-master] . . . has the same emphatic character as death to the world and death to sin, the answer must be affirmative. But a further question, often overlooked in this context, remains. Is the reality of the law and its meaning in salvation history altogether summed up in this image of the . . . [servant-master]? Or does the apostle here treat the law only in a particular aspect?” (Cosgrove, 192). In referring to a “discontinuity between existence under the [law] . . . and being in Christ,” Paul has in mind a specific function of the law (Cosgrove, 192). His negative statements do not refer to the law but to a function of law. In Galatians Paul argues that: “The Law itself is in need of liberation from the grip of sin so that it can perform its original purpose of fostering friendship between humans and their God” (Pate, 93).

²⁷ Schreiner argues that Paul may not be referring to the restriction of transgressions by the law because of the negative view of law in the remainder of Galatians. Also he may not be referring to the law's function as the definer of sin because the context requires the interpretation of law as cause of sin (Schreiner, 74-81). This article argues that the law is not the cause of sin but the basis of the imputation of sin. In other words, where there is no law sinners could not be held responsible for sin. The terms “under the elements of the world” (4:3), “under a pedagogue” (3:25), and “under guardians and managers” (4:2) are also parallel but are specially discussed in other sections of this article.

²⁸ Bandstra, 55.

²⁹ There is also similarity in (a) crucifixion to and resurrection in the flesh (5:24; 2:20), (b) being under the law and in the flesh (5:16-18), and (c) in righteousness without the law, witnessed by the law (Rom 3:21) and “the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us” (8:4).

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Christ (4:2–3) as was the law (3:24). Also, Christ was made under law to redeem those under bondage to the law and under bondage to the elements of the world (4:1–10).³⁰

(5) The law and the elements of the world are related to observances of days, months, times, and years (Gal 4:9–10; Col 2:6–23; Rom 6:19; 8:3). The semantic links between Gal 4:10 and Gen 1:14 may indicate: (a) deliverance from negative submission to the cosmos (1:4) through (b) crucifixion to the cosmos (6:14), (c) positively, participation in a new creation rule for faith and practice within the cosmos (6:14–15; 2 Cor 5:17).³¹

In brief, the servant-master laws and elements are inclusive of the laws of Scripture and nature. Paul refers to being under the law and the elements in a multiplicity of ways both positive and negative. Positively, the law is a servant-master to bring us to faith in Christ. Negatively, being under the law is equal to being under sin. Finally, there is a close relation between the concepts of (1) being under the law and the elements and (2) being no longer under them. The second concept will be further explored below.

No Longer Under Law and Elements

It is often assumed that Paul's reference to being no longer under the law or the elements indicates a purely negative attitude to the law and the elements. However, this section will provide evidence to show that deliverance from under the law and the elements within Christian faith includes fulfillment of the laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature. This involves a survey of Paul's view of two ages/worlds, and two covenants.

Two Ages/Worlds. The sense in which Christians are no longer under the law or under the elements of the world may be clarified by Paul's discussion of the present age which is passing away and the future age which is coming into existence. Explicit age (aeon) vocabulary occurs in Gal 1:4 concerning deliverance from the present evil age. Later Paul replaces the term "age" with the term "world" (*kosmos*). He writes of bondage under the

³⁰Bandstra, 71. The same holds true for the flesh (as for the world and the law). (1) Jerusalem and her children according to the flesh are in bondage (Gal 5:23, 25). (2) The law is weak through the flesh (Rom 8:3); and the weakness of the flesh causes weakness in judgment and in effort (Rom 6:19; 2 Cor 10:3-4). (3) Christians have put off the flesh (Col 2:11) and been crucified to the flesh (Gal 5:24). (4) humanity was in debt to the flesh (Rom 8:14) (Bandstra, 71). See Winger, 99-101; Bandstra, 55, 70-71; R. Jewett, "The Law and the Coexistence of Jews and Gentiles in Romans," *Interpretation* 39 (1985): 341-356; J. Louis Martyn, "A Law-Observant Mission to Gentiles: The Background of Galatians," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 38 (1985): 307-324; Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976); Hendrikus Boers, "'We Who Are by Inheritance Jews; Not from the Gentile Sinners,'" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111 (1992): 273-81.

³¹Schreiner, 77-81.

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elements of the world (Gal 4:3) from which he is delivered because he is crucified to the world (6:14).³²

In Paul's discussion of the evil age and world there is no suggestion that the law or the old age/world is abolished when the new age/world begins. Paul does not describe the death of Christ so much as destroying the old age as delivering from the present evil age (Gal 1:4) which is under the continuing judgment of God's law. Paul writes: when the fullness of time was come God sent His Son to redeem those who were under the law by replacing the curse of the law with the blessing of the Spirit (Gal 3:13-14; 4:4-6). Far from accomplishing the end of the law, Christ has redeemed those who are under law both before and after His first Advent.

The law continues to have a function in the new age/world within faith which works by love to fulfill the law (Gal 5:14). With the advent of the messianic age/world and its gift of the Spirit, God's people are now capable of obeying the law. Christians are to fulfill the law of Christ (Gal 6:2).³³ That the laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature are harmonious is a central theme which will be further developed in this article. To fulfill the law of Christ is to fulfill the laws of Scripture and nature.

The terms servant-master, guardian, and manager have a temporary sense while the law and the elements of the world minister to one who is an immature child (*nepios*). These functions cease in Christ when human beings become full-fledged sons (*uios*) of God (Gal 3:19-4:7). However, the suggestion that the ability of law to exercise these functions has ended seems to be based on an overly literalistic view of Paul's language. These functions have not come to an absolute temporal limit in salvation history. There has been no end to the function of law as a servant of God. Rather, when a person exercises faith in Christ, the function of law as master comes to an end.³⁴

Deliverance from the age/world that is passing away does not mean that the passing age/world no longer exists or functions. Similarly, deliverance

³²See also 1 Cor 1:20; 2:6, 8; 3:18-19; 7:29-31; 10:11; 2 Cor 4:4; Rom 12:1-2; Eph 1:21; 2:2; Col 2:8. Deliverance from under law includes deliverance from under natural law. Also, apart from Eph 1:21 Paul does not specifically label the future era as the "age to come." He prefers to write of the future kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9; 15:50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Tim 4:1, 18) (Pate, 44). Pate comes close to suggesting that because the OT prophets looked forward to a future era of obedience to the law they were also stating by implication that the law could not be obeyed in their age (Pate, 138-139). The Hebrew language of the OT suggests a contrast between the qualities of the present age (*olam hazzeh*) and the coming age (*olam habbah*). The matching NT (Greek) terms are *ho aion* and *ho aion mellon*.

³³Pate, 141.

³⁴Schreiner, 77-81; Pate, 139-140; Thielman, 76, 78-79; Cosgrove, 197. Belleville emphasizes a contrary perspective. "This is not to say that existence under the law is positive or negative. In Paul's thinking it was merely necessary" (Belleville, 60). She considers a structural parallelism between "under sin" and "under law," a distinction between "Scripture" and "law" (Ibid, 57-59).

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from under the law does not mean that the law no longer exists or functions. Faith does not take the Christian out of the world. It changes the Christian's relation to the world. Faith does not abolish the law. It changes the Christian's relation to the law. Christians make use of the world and the law as their servants even though they are no longer under the world or under the law as under a master. Christ is their Master.

Two Covenants. As with his discussion of two ages or worlds, Paul's discusses a shift from the old to the new covenant. At the same time he discusses a continuing function of the law and the elements of the world in faith and practice. On one hand, the continuity of God's plan of salvation is evident in that Paul links the new covenant Gospel with the Abrahamic Covenant which was introduced before the Advent of Christ. Therefore, in a sense, Old Testament believers were in Christ and New Testament believers are in Abraham. Those who are redeemed by Christ receive the blessing of Abraham (3:13–14) and are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the Old Testament promise (3:29). Hence, there is no tension between the laws and gospel of Old Testament Scripture and the laws and gospel of New Testament Scripture.

On the other hand, the continuity of God's plan of salvation has been questioned by some because Paul seems to write negatively of the Old Testament Mosaic covenant. He refers to the Mosaic covenant as an interim covenant given before the promise of the Abrahamic covenant was fulfilled. He indicated that the Mosaic law is limited (2:16; 3:2–6, 8, 10, 21; 5:16, 18). It is not the apex of God's covenant with his people nor does it repeal the Abrahamic covenant. The covenant and promise which God confirmed before in Abraham cannot be canceled by the law which came 450 years later (3:16–18).³⁵ Also, in Paul's allegory, the two covenants represent the distinction between the earthly and heavenly Jerusalem, flesh and promise, bondage and freedom, flesh and spirit (Gal 4:21–31).³⁶

However, Paul's comment on the mosaic law and covenant do not undermine the continuity of the plan of salvation. Paul's statements may be seen as a response to a misunderstanding of the law and covenant. In Gal

³⁵ Law belongs to the penultimate and is misconstrued if treated as a *source* of the ultimate. Since law contains the promise, law is not abolished by the promise. Christians are not under the curse. "Since the *righteousness* of the law's curse, by which captivity under the law is sealed, is not impugned, the law's relevance for the church as an expression of divine righteousness is in no way precluded" (Cosgrove, 202).

³⁶ The Abrahamic or new covenant was ratified at the death of Christ. However, when Christ destroyed the curse of the law he did not abolish the law itself. Rather he resolved the conflict between promise and law and destroyed the curse of the law in himself. He also destroyed the use of the law as a barrier between Jew and Gentile. Many scholars presume that while the OT is Paul's *sola scriptura*, the gospel is his *regula*; the core of his reading is the gospel (Galatians 1.6ff.). "He has a 'canon within the canon'" (Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*, 162).

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2:15–21 he describes Jewish covenant law in human terms, as the *way of life* of the Jewish people rather than the command of God. He also describes the authority of law as under the authority of the Jews who don't actually keep the law (Rom 2:17–29).³⁷ Among the things that have ceased in Christ is the Jewish “illusion” of separation from Gentiles according to the law. The knowing which arises from faith recognizes that the law was never intended as a means to fulfill the promise of life (Gal 3:21) and that the divisions which this misunderstanding of law fostered have been destroyed “in Christ Jesus” (3:28). “The separatist understanding of the law is awry; God’s purpose for the law was otherwise” (3:19–22).³⁸

Therefore, for Paul the mosaic law and covenant does not actually exist in “*disconnection from the promise*” of salvation by faith (Gal 3:19, 24).³⁹ The Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants are not actually two different ways of salvation, one based on works and the other on faith. Such an understanding of gospel and law is a misunderstanding, because Paul did not see the Mosaic law as contrary to the promises of God (3:21).

The continuity of the plan of salvation is also evident in Paul’s view that Christ fulfills both the Mosaic and the Abrahamic covenants. With Christ the fulfillment of salvation history has arrived, and believers are no longer under the mastery of law. However, this does not indicate that the role of the Mosaic covenant has ceased. The promises made to Abraham as well as the moral absolutes of the Mosaic law are fulfilled in Christ and His Church.

Paul regarded the Christian Church as the true Israel of God because it is the body of Christ, who is the expected Jewish Messiah to whom the rulership of the law pointed. The creation of the people of God is described as fulfillment, in God’s salvation deed in Christ, of the Old Testament promise of a New Covenant.⁴⁰ Paul’s use of the Old Testament indicates that he viewed all God’s covenants as covenants of grace and as fulfilled in Christ and the Church.

Paul views Christians as the eschatologically restored people of God about whom the prophets spoke, and he describes them with key features from the Mosaic covenant. He echoes Jeremiah’s and Ezekiel’s view of a restored Israel with a renewed ability and desire to keep the law of God because it is written in their hearts. In Gal 5:13–14 he uses an Old Testament summary of the law (Lev 19:18). Therefore we should not conclude that the

³⁷Winger, 158, 196, 198-199, 200. Paul usually designates the Mosaic law as law. However, he also uses the term “law” to refer to “principle,” “order,” “rule,” or “power,” “the law of Christ,” “Scripture.”

³⁸Cosgrove, 229-231.

³⁹Cosgrove, 197.

⁴⁰T. J. Deidun’s *New Covenant Morality in Paul* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 32, 43-44, 50.

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Old Testament law cannot be kept and is now in every respect part of a by-gone era.⁴¹

In brief, the law is a servant-master to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith (Gal 3:23–24). Those who have faith in Christ are no longer under the mastery of the law (3:25). However, this does not indicate that the law ceases to be the servant of those who have faith. When we have faith in Christ we are liberated from under sin, law, and the elements of the world. Christ is our master who humbles Himself to be our servant. So His law, as manifest in Scripture and nature, is also our servant.

Faith Works by Love

Paul makes it clear in Galatians that faith in Christ is not contrary to the laws of Scripture or nature. Those who have faith in Christ are sons of God with the authority of Christ—their master. However, like Christ, they become servants (Gal 6:2, 5, 16; also Rom 1:9; 7:6; 16:18) and fulfill the law of Christ. “Paul is always more concerned with discussing concrete moral/ethical issues . . . than with abstract intellectual faith.”⁴²

⁴¹Thielman, 124-139.

⁴²Edwin R. Freed, *The Apostle Paul, Christian Jew: Faithfulness and Law* (New York: University Press of America, 1994), 45. For Freed, faith in Jesus and the faithfulness of Jesus are equivalent in Gal 2:20; 3:22; Rom 3:22, 26; Phil 3:9. Note also “the faith of Abraham,” Rom 4:16. The function of law until faith means until Christ (Ibid, 89, 93, 95). “Faithfulness toward God was Paul’s primary concern . . . [I]f we judge by the amount of space he gives to any one subject, Paul’s main concern, along with faithfulness toward God, is the moral/ethical responsibilities of his readers” (Freed, 43). Paul not only emphasizes faithfulness but relates it to salvation. “Participation in the kingdom of God, whether perceived as a present or future phenomenon . . . depends on right moral conduct, life worthy of the kingdom” (Freed, 44-45). Some of Freed’s extreme statements may be qualified with profit by the words added in brackets below. “Any suggestion of faith [apart from faithfulness] as a requirement for entrance into the kingdom is entirely absent from the reported teachings of Jesus and in the letters of Paul [Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9-10; Gal 5:16-21].” “The justification or forgiveness of past sins of converts on the basis of the faithfulness of Jesus . . . through God’s grace and the reception of the Holy Spirit [apart from faithfulness] do not assure participation in the kingdom of God, whether perceived as a present or future phenomenon. That depends on right moral conduct, life worthy of the kingdom” (Ibid). “Paul’s primary concern is faithfulness toward God, with a simultaneous concern that Christian converts live moral/ethical lives under the power of the Holy Spirit. That dual concern is the central message in all Paul’s letters. And, according to Paul, moral/ethical probity is necessary for justified converts in order to gain ultimate salvation in the future” (Freed, preface; also 35). However, Paul does not suggest that human faithfulness merits salvation. “Conversion to Christianity through justification or forgiveness of past sins meant a change with respect to *pistis* [faithfulness]” (Freed, 30). It is James (2:14-26), not Paul who makes an antithesis of faith and works. For Paul, faith is the ‘obedience of faith’ which trusts in God rather than in self and works of the law. Paul’s interpretation of Abraham as father of those justified by faith is contrasted to the interpretation of Abraham as father of those justified by works as reflected in the Epistle of James. Nevertheless, for Freed, “the right or wrong conduct of a person always puts that person in a right or wrong relationship with God. As with Judaism, Paul never separates faithfulness from morality/ethics. In every letter he

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In Galatians, Paul links true faith and love with a proper appreciation for law. He writes: faith works by love (Gal 5:6) to fulfill all the law (5:14), which is the law of Christ (6:2; also Rom 3:31). The law of Christ need not be conceived as different from the law that led to Christ (3:24). Gal 2:17–18 may be interpreted as follows: If when we seek to be justified with Christ we are found to be sinners [according to law], is Christ the minister of sin? God forbid! Rather, if I build again the things [sinful actions] which I had destroyed [in Christ] I make myself a transgressor.⁴³

Paul's linking of faith and obedience to law is also indicated in the concept of faithfulness. This concept is presented in his discussion of Abraham's faith. Those who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham because the just shall live by faith (Gal 3:6–11). Human faith may be viewed in terms of its source in God's faithfulness as well as in terms of its fruit in a life of faith. On one hand, "through Jesus" is parallel with "through faith." This is because the promise to Abraham concerns his seed Christ (3:14–19). On the other hand, the promise through "the faithfulness of Jesus" is given to those who "exercise faith" (3:22). The faithfulness of Jesus is the faith Paul preached (1:23) and the faith Paul lived. He testifies: I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God (2:20).

Both the faithfulness of Jesus and our faith in Him seem included in the following text from Galatians. "But before faith . . . we were shut up unto faith . . . [and] unto Christ [unto faith = unto Christ], that we might be justified by faith [faith in Christ or the faith of Christ] . . . After faith is come . . . we are children of God by [exercising] faith in Jesus [Gal 3:23–26]. Faith in Jesus allows us to participate in His faithfulness/righteousness. Christians are "justified . . . by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ" (2:16).

That the life of faithfulness involves obedience to the law is evident in Paul's linking of faith, love, and law. He writes: we wait for the hope of righteousness by faith which works by love and "fulfills the law" (Gal 5:5, 6, 14). For Paul, "love is the *total* formal content of the demand that is addressed to the members of the new holy People *as such*."⁴⁴ On one hand, love belongs to a sphere in which law is in a sense irrelevant, first, because the law does not prohibit love; second, because the Christian now lives no longer on the basis of human work but in the power of the Spirit of love.

is concerned with the moral lives of the people to whom he is writing" (Freed, 43). Paul is not concerned with the problem of faith *versus* faithfulness, but rather with the source of faith and faithfulness. It is not necessary to assume that Paul makes a demarcation between OT and NT or between promise and law, and between law covenant and gospel testament. Since, for Paul, the law is not based on promise, and since both law and promise are contained in Scripture. Paul does not use Scripture against Scripture.

⁴³Thielman, 140-143.

⁴⁴Deidun, 103.

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Thus Paul writes that circumcision or uncircumcision avails nothing, but faith that works by love (5:6).⁴⁵

On the other hand, Paul links faith, love, and law through the Spirit. He writes: we wait for the hope of righteousness by faith which works by love and fulfills the law (Gal 5:5 6, 14). This faith is a fruit of the Spirit (5:22). Paul's understanding of *agapê* corresponds exactly with the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel's understanding of the outworking of the Spirit in the New Covenant (Ezek 36:27).⁴⁶ To be led by the Spirit (Gal 5:18) is to allow God to deploy His love in our actions (5:22). The coming of faith that works by love "does not mean that the *demand* expressed in the Law is laid aside. On the contrary, it is only in the economy of faith that the Law as the expression of God's eternally valid demand is brought to fulfillment" (5:14).⁴⁷ The 'fruit' of the Spirit, far from rendering superfluous or inappropriate the external word of God's law, *needs* it for its germination *and growth*.⁴⁸ The

⁴⁵Deidun, 118-119, 123-126.

⁴⁶Deidun, 135.

⁴⁷Deidun, 153. While it is clear that love is the supreme formal norm of all Christian activity, "Is it the only norm—and, if so, in what sense? Is the Christian subject to moral precepts which are so *obviously* specifications or explications of the love demand but nonetheless unconditionally binding? Does Paul intend any of his directives to have the force of precept? Does the 'free impulse of love' now replace or make redundant the dictates of the Christian's native moral conscience? What part, if any, does external law (ie. Obligations formulated or imposed by an external authority) play in the lives of those who now have God's 'law' written in their hearts (cf. Jer 31, 33), and his Spirit given them so that they are impelled by God to obey (cf. Ez. 36, 27)? . . . Is 'liberation from external law' a correct and adequate description of what Paul sees as the essential effect of the New Covenant and the distinctive feature of New Covenant morality?" (Deidun, 150-151). The claim of the law is not tied to the authority of the law in itself. Yet, "the Christian can always look to the Mosaic Law as the privileged historical expression of God's claim upon man" (Deidun, 154). "The Christian does not 'live by' a code of law . . . if by that is meant that he draws life from its observance[;] . . . that his love is contained within the limits of prescription[;] . . . that he avoids evil not because it is evil but merely because it is prohibited by law[;] that he seeks security in it and 'boasts' of his observance before God" (Deidun, 155). "But [this is] far from justifying the view that the Christian is no longer liable to the claim of particular precepts . . . or that the Christian who holds himself bound by such precepts . . . has thereby relapsed into 'unauthentic existence'" (Deidun, 155). "This intimate relationship between external commandment and inner imperative gives to Paul's injunctions a peculiar urgency and validity. As binding ethical demands, they no doubt deserve the name 'law'. Yet they are not *merely* demands, but authoritative *declarations* of what the Spirit is intent on effecting — and is already effecting — in the core of the believer's personality." (Deidun, 187).

⁴⁸Deidun, 210. "The immediacy of God's saving activity in the hearts of believers dominates his [Paul's] thought and constitutes for him a 'hermeneutical key' by which both to penetrate the mystery of Christ and to interpret the Old Testament prophecies and their fulfillment in the new People of God" (Deidun, 84). It is not true that for Paul "law, as a rule, does not enter upon the scene except to repress an existing disorder" (Lyonnet, "Liberty and Law," 251). "There is overwhelming evidence in the Letters that, for Paul, law enters upon the scene at the very beginning, and stays there, independently of any existing situation, for he sees the external demand as a *normal* and *integral* (we do not say 'supplementary' or 'complementary')

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faith from hearing God's word (Rom 10:17) describes the *permanent* dialectic of Christian existence.⁴⁹

In summary, this section has provided evidence that deliverance from under law within Christian faith includes fulfillment of the laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature. Paul describes a continuing role for law in the new age/world, and the new covenant of Christ. Faith works by love and fulfills the law of Christ, which includes the laws of Scripture and nature. The law, which is a servant of God, rules as master over those who are without faith in Christ. However, for those who gain the mastery through faith in Christ, these same laws function as their servant. Part 4 of this article will demonstrate that the interpretation of Paul presented above is in harmony with the Seventh-day Adventist perspective represented in the writings of Ellen White.

Part 4: Ellen White's Seventh-day Adventist Perspective

In this part of this article Seventh-day Adventist theology as represented in the writings of Ellen White will be surveyed. White's writings are

part of Christian experience *as such*, and hence of New Covenant morality *as such*" (Deidun, 191). "God's gift and God's demand confront the Christian *both* in the *verbum internum* of the Spirit's impulse *and* in the *verbum externum* of the Apostles' *paraklêsis*, for both of these belong integrally to the one Gospel" (Ibid, 210).

⁴⁹Deidun, 211. "So within the gospel there is a *dialectical* relationship between the *verbum externum* (whether as *kerygma* or *paraklêsis*) and God's inner activity. The *verbum externum* makes possible God's inner intervention, and this in turn makes possible the reception of the *verbum externum*. For God's inner self-communication takes place *through* his confronting man in the word of the Gospel" (Ibid, 213-214). The hearing of faith opens the way to God's "interior intervention" in the heart of believers and continues to articulate the moral implications of God's "interior activity," and, "through appeal to the Christian's free self-engagement, 'calls forth the fruit of justification' which it produces: and this it does as a necessary and normal function of the Gospel." The interplay of God's external and internal activity "enters permanently into the relationship between God and man in the Christian economy" (Deidun, 213-214). Paul did not think "of the Spirit as normally supplying the Christian with *ad hoc* guidance in the manifold ethical decisions required of him in the concrete circumstances of daily living" (Deidun, 219). Rather, Paul himself exhorts the believers as to the type of lifestyle which is in harmony with the Spirit (Gal 5). Neither is love the sole ethical norm that Christians follow. "Love, in itself, is not a sufficiently articulated ethical norm for guiding the Christian in the manifold and often complex circumstances of daily life—even though it is true that all the Christian is required to do is to love" (Deidun, 220-221). "So the Christian who loves will, for that very reason, take the external law with a high degree of seriousness, for it has not only the negative rôle of mapping out the lower confines of love's demand, but also the highly positive one of continuously highlighting the implications of that demand. For from considering it an anachronism or an unfortunate necessity, genuine Christian love will look to it as a personal invitation to obedience and a way of pleasing the beloved" (Deidun, 223). Finally, neither is the imitation of Christ a sufficient norm. "Paul knew *many* other norms, which can only be reduced to the 'imitation of Christ' (if at all) by dint of rather long and complicated theological reasoning" (Deidun, 222). Christ is the subject of this faith that works by love (2:15-21). (Deidun, 118-119, 123-126).

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regarded by SDAs as a lesser light under the authority of the greater light of Scripture and the supreme light of Jesus. The purpose of this survey is to show whether SDA theology is faithful to Paul's presentation of the servant-master roles of Christ, Scripture, and nature.⁵⁰ The subsequent sections will survey Ellen White's perspective in terms of (1) laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature, (2) being under law until faith in Christ, and (3) the law within faith in Christ.

Laws of Christ, Scripture, and Nature. Ellen White distinguishes between but does not separate Christ and law. "Christ presented the principles of the law of God" (Evan 230).⁵¹ "This whole sermon [on the mount] was an exposition of the law" (ST Jan 10, 1900).⁵² "The glory of the law is Christ" (2 MR 232).⁵³ "Christ, the angel whom God had appointed to go before his chosen people, gave to Moses statutes and requirements necessary to a living religion and to govern the people of God" (SARSH May 6, 1875).⁵⁴

Scripture, according to White, is God's law.⁵⁵ "The written word, [is] the law of God" (GC 268).⁵⁶ "Everyone should understand the Scriptures. 'What saith the law?'" (18 MR 174). "It is your privilege to search the Scriptures for yourself. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not

⁵⁰Everett N. Dick, *Founders of the Message* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1938). On the metaphor of light see Ellen G. White, "An Open Letter," *Review and Herald* (January 20, 1903): 15, in *Colporteur Ministry* (Mountain View, CA.: Pacific Press, 1953), 125; Roger Coon, *A Gift of Light* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1983); William Clyde Sands, "Nature as a Biblical Hermeneutic Device: The Role and Use of Light in the Experience and Writings of Ellen G. White," M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1989.

⁵¹*Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1946).

⁵²*Signs of the Times*.

⁵³*Manuscript Releases* (Silver Springs, MA.: Ellen G. White Estate).

⁵⁴*Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*.

⁵⁵The doctrine of the Jews, who accept only the Old Testament, is not unto salvation, since they reject the Saviour whose life and ministry was a fulfillment of the law and the prophecies. And the doctrine of those who discard the Old Testament is not unto salvation, because it rejects that which is direct testimony of Christ" (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1952-1957], 5:1094). "We should dwell on the law and the gospel, showing the relation of Christ to the great standard of righteousness. . . . the relation of Christ to the law" (ARSH Feb 4, 1890). In the Old Testament the very same principles were revealed as those which Christ gave in his sermon on the mount. The scribes and Pharisees knew so little of these principles through every-day practice, that Christ's sermon on the mount was as a new revelation to them, and sounded like heresy to their ears. They had misinterpreted the Scripture, and regarded the maxims and sayings of men that had passed to them from rabbi to rabbi, as having the sanctity of inspiration. But the commands of men were not like the divine commands, and better suited their carnal hearts. Jesus, who had instituted the law, knew just how far these professedly pious teachers had departed from the law, and how far they had made it void by their traditions. They had worshiped God in vain, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (ARSH Dec 25, 1894; see also *Welfare Ministry*, 48; ST Jun 5, 1901).

⁵⁶*Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA.: Pacific Press, 1911), 268.

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according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.’ We must be acquainted with the Scriptures ourselves” (LHU 114).⁵⁷

This relationship between Christ and law is inclusive of the ceremonial laws of Scripture. “Christ was the angel who . . . gave Moses the ceremonies and ordinances of the Jewish law to be repeated to the people” (SARSH Apr 29, 1875). “Christ was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy” (ARSH May 23, 1899). “Let not one declaim against the law of God, and let not one rail out against the sacrificial offerings. If men were abiding in Christ, if they had a knowledge of His relation to the law, they could not make a raid against the law. Christ Himself was the One who devised the system of the Jewish economy” (EGW 1888 Materials 782–783).⁵⁸

In addition, laws of nature are also identified by White as God’s law.⁵⁹ In fact, she identifies natural law, Scripture law, and the moral law as God’s law. “Every law governing the human system is to be strictly regarded; for it is as truly a law of God as is the word of Holy Writ; and every willful de-

⁵⁷*Lift Him Up* (Hagerstown, MD.: Review and Herald, 1988). “[Christ] pointed to the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority, and we should do the same. The Bible is to be presented as the word of the infinite God, as the end of all controversy and the foundation of all faith” (*Christ’s Object Lessons* [Washington, DC.: Review and Herald, 1952], 39-40). “God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority—not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord’ in its support” (GC 595). “Scripture Interprets Scripture. All things written in the law and in the prophets are true, and they carry the proof of it in themselves. Nothing is gained by endeavoring to prove by argument the divine origin of the Bible. It is its own expositor. It carries its own keys; Scripture unlocks Scripture”—Ms 40, 1895, p. 2 (2 MR 96).

⁵⁸*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987).

⁵⁹Human knowledge of both material and spiritual things is partial and imperfect; therefore many are unable to harmonize their views of science with Scripture statements. Many accept mere theories and speculations as scientific facts, and they think that God’s word is to be tested by the teachings of “science falsely so called.” 1 Timothy 6:20. The Creator and His works are beyond their comprehension; and because they cannot explain these by natural laws, Bible history is regarded as unreliable” (Mar 135). However, “To make Natural law plain, and to urge obedience to it, is a work that accompanies the third angel’s message” (*Counsels on Health [Mt. View, CA: Pacific Press, 1995]*, 21). “The health reform is one branch of the great work which is to fit a people for the coming of the Lord. It is as closely connected with the third angel’s message as the hand is with the body. The law of ten commandments has been lightly regarded by man; yet the Lord will not come to punish the transgressors of that law without first sending them a message of warning. Men and women cannot violate Natural law by indulging depraved appetite and lustful passions, without violating the law of God” (CTBH 9; see 3 T 161; 3 T 51; MLT 162; CH 22; CH 68-69). “By hurtful indulgences these are working against their own highest interest and happiness in this life, and are, in so doing, disqualifying themselves to obtain the future life (HR Oct 1, 1871; see also 3 T 161).

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violation from obedience to this law is as certainly sin as a violation of the moral law. All nature expresses the law of God, but in our physical structure Jehovah has written His law with His own finger upon every thrilling nerve, upon every living fiber, and upon every organ of the body. We shall suffer loss and defeat, if we step out of nature's path, which God Himself has marked out, into one of our own devising" (Tem 213–214).⁶⁰

The importance of obedience to God's natural law is outlined as follows. "As the Supreme Ruler of the universe, God has ordained laws for the government not only of all living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything, whether great or small, animate or inanimate, is under fixed laws which cannot be disregarded. There are no exceptions to this rule; for nothing that the divine hand has made has been forgotten by the divine mind" (1 SM 216).⁶¹ "The harmony of creation depends upon the perfect conformity of all beings, of everything, animate and inanimate, to the law of the Creator" (PP 52).⁶²

For White, on one hand, zeal for the law disconnected from Christ is valueless. "Paul was very confident in an hereditary piety; but his confidence was founded on falsehood. It was faith out of Christ, for he trusted in forms and ceremonies. His zeal for the law was disconnected from Christ and was valueless. His boast was that he was blameless in his performance of the deeds of the law; but the Christ who made the law of any value he refused" (1 SM 346).

On the other hand, for White, "the most fatal delusion of the Christian world in this generation is, that in pouring contempt on the law of God they think they are exalting Christ. What a position! In so doing, they array Christ against Christ. It was Christ who spoke the law from Sinai. It was Christ who gave the law to Moses, engraven on tables of stone. It was his Father's law; and Christ says, 'I and my Father are one.' The Pharisees held the reverse of the modern-position, but were in just as great an error. They rejected Christ, but exalted the law. And it makes little difference which position we take, so long as we ignore the true one,—that faith in Christ must be accompanied by obedience to the law of God" (SARSH Sep 27, 1881).

Under Law Until Faith in Christ. White's interpretation of Gal 3:24 identifies the law which brings human beings to Christ as inclusive of the moral law. She writes: "'The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith' (Gal 3:24). In this Scripture, the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law. The law reveals sin to us, and causes us to feel our need of Christ and to flee

⁶⁰*Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain view CA.: Pacific Press, 1885-1909).

⁶¹*Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1958).

⁶²*Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, CA.: Pacific Press, 1913).

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unto Him for pardon and peace by exercising repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 SM 234).⁶³

The ceremonial laws are also described as object lessons pointing to Christ. Note the following comment on the teaching of Christ. “He brought his hearers down through the types and shadows of the ceremonial law to Christ,—to his crucifixion, his priesthood, and the sanctuary of his ministry,—the great object that had cast its shadow backward into the Jewish age” (3 SOP 409).⁶⁴

White’s view of Jesus’ attitude toward the ceremonial and the moral law is beautifully summarized in the following quote. “Jesus would convince his enemies that his teachings and miracles did not supplant the law, detract from its dignity, or lessen its claims. His works were in strict accordance with both the moral and the ceremonial law” (SARSH Apr 29, 1875).

The Law Within Faith in Christ. According to White, the law is not only a servant-master to bring us to Christ. It also has a role to play within faith in Christ. Her perspective may be outlined in terms of the following headings: (1) Christians and Law, (2) Is the Law Void?, (3) Christ’s Cross Establishes Law, (4) Christ’s Cross Enables Obedience to Law, (5) Christ’s Righteousness and Law, (6) The Law of Love.

Christians and Law. For White, to be “no longer under law” does not mean that the Christian is lawless. Rather, the true Christian “has learned to be obedient to all the commandments of God, through Jesus Christ, who is made to him wisdom, sanctification, and righteousness” (ST Dec 28, 1891). “That so-called faith in Christ which professes to release men from the obligation of obedience to God, is not faith, but presumption” (SC 61).⁶⁵ We should “exalt the law of Christ’s kingdom by giving to it willing obedience” (FCE 511).⁶⁶ “That law is still the believer’s rule of life, the sinner’s condemnation” (SFLP 323–324). “No man can be saved unless he comes un-

⁶³These testimonies of the Spirit of God, the fruits of the Spirit of God, have no weight unless they are stamped with your ideas of the law in Galatians. I am afraid of you and I am afraid of your interpretation of any Scripture which has revealed itself in such an unChristlike spirit . . . [M]y prayer is that I may be as far from your understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures as it is possible for me to be. I am afraid of any application of Scripture that needs such a spirit and bears such fruit as you have manifested. One thing is certain, I shall never come into harmony with such a spirit as long as God gives me my reason” (13 MR 54). “Now, brethren, I have nothing to say, no burden in regard to the law in Galatians. This matter looks to me of minor consequence in comparison with the spirit you have brought into your faith. It is exactly of the same piece that was manifested by the Jews in reference to the work and mission of Jesus Christ. The most convincing testimony that we can bear to others that we have the truth is the spirit which attends the advocacy of that truth” (13 MR 54–55).

⁶⁴*Spirit of Prophecy* (Battle Creek, MI.: Review and Herald, 1884).

⁶⁵*Steps to Christ* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1908).

⁶⁶*Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923).

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der the rule of Christ. . . . It is our salvation to make His law our rule, His life our pattern, His glory our chief aim” (ST Nov 15, 1899).

This message is especially relevant just before the return of Christ. “God has brought out a people in these last days and has given to them a knowledge of his law. Christ has shed a flood of light upon their pathway, revealing himself as the invisible leader of Israel in both the Old and in the New Testament. Christ has made his people the depositaries of his law. They are to keep and to teach the commandments of God, and to show their binding obligations upon men. Christ has promised that to those who obey his commandments he will be as a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, guiding them in and lighting them along the pathway cast up for the ransomed of the Lord, that they may enter in at the gate of the eternal city” (ST Jan 24, 1895).

Is the Law Void? There are many who conclude that the law, which was a servant-master to bring us to Christ, has been abolished or made void now that Christ has come. White does not support such a conclusion.⁶⁷ She writes: “Adam and Eve became sinners because of transgression, and now the Lord has given to the world His only begotten Son—that He might abolish the law? that law that Adam transgressed? Do you read it thus? I do not” (9 MR 235).

In addition, “we have a work to do in the world . . . The law of God is made void. God calls upon us to stand in defense of this law” (ARSH Jul 23, 1901). “It was for the recovery of the law that Christ . . . lived out the law of God . . . This must also be our experience” (ST Jan 16, 1896).⁶⁸ While “the law of God will be almost universally made void in the world, there will be a remnant of the righteous that will be obedient to God’s requirements. . . . It is the people who make void the law, who place themselves on the side of the dragon, and persecute those who vindicate God’s precepts” (ST Apr 22, 1889).

Christ’s Cross Establishes Law. Quite contrary to the idea that the cross of Christ abolishes the law, White proposes that the cross establishes the law of God. With regard to the teaching of Paul, White writes: “The question was asked why such an immense sacrifice was required, and then he went back to the types, and down through the Old-Testament Scripture,

⁶⁷There are many who try to blend these two systems, using the texts that speak of the ceremonial law to prove that the moral law has been abolished; but this is a perversion of the Scriptures. The distinction between the two systems is broad and clear. The ceremonial system was made up of symbols pointing to Christ, to His sacrifice and His priesthood. This ritual law, with its sacrifices and ordinances, was to be performed by the Hebrews until type met antitype in the death of Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Then all the sacrificial offerings were to cease. It is this law that Christ ‘took . . . out of the way, nailing it to His cross.’ Colossians 2:14” (PP 365).

⁶⁸See ARSH Apr 29, 1902.

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revealing Christ in the law, and they were *converted to Christ and to the law*" (6 STMW 55, emphasis mine).

White's perspective is evident in the following quotes. "The divine Son of God was the only sacrifice of sufficient value to fully satisfy the claims of God's perfect law" (LHU 24). "What means it that the divine Victim hangs there in dying agony?—It means that not one jot or tittle of the law could be set aside to save the transgressor of law" (ARSH Jul 5, 1892). "The death of Christ is an unanswerable argument that demonstrates the unchangeable character of the law of God. If God could have changed one precept of his law, then Christ need not have died" (ST Sep 23, 1889).⁶⁹ The transgression of God's law made the death of Christ essential to save man and yet maintain the dignity and honor of the law (FILB 104),⁷⁰ and its "high claims."⁷¹

"Men may talk of the law as a yoke of bondage; but the question of vital interest is, If you are found disobedient to God, can they pay a ransom for your soul? I beg of you, do not take the word of man that the law is abolished, for that law is as immutable as the throne of God. If the law could have been altered to meet man in his fallen condition, Christ need never have died. The cross of Christ is an unanswerable argument demonstrating the changeless character of the law. The very fact that Christ died establishes the law" (ST May 27, 1889).⁷²

Christ's Cross Enables Obedience to Law. For White, not only does the cross establish the law, it also enables believers to obey the law of God. "Christ came to our world and died a shameful death . . . to bring us into harmony with the law of Heaven" (ST June 2, 1890). "Think you that men,

⁶⁹Let us study God's law in connection with the work of Christ. Man broke the law. Christ came to this earth to make an atonement for transgression" (ST Jul 31, 1901). "The law cannot release the sinner from the consequence of his transgression, but Christ himself pays the penalty the sinner has incurred by his disobedience" (ST Jul 18, 1878).

⁷⁰*The Faith I Live By*. "More could not be done than has been done to demonstrate the immutability of God's law. Christ did not die to abolish the law or to detract in the slightest degree from its influence or power. He died to exalt the law and make it honorable" (ST Apr 14, 1898). "God has a standard of righteousness by which he measures character. This standard is his holy law, which is given to us as a rule of life. We are called upon to comply with its requirements, and when we do this, we honor both God and Jesus Christ; for God gave the law, and Christ died to magnify it, and make it honorable" (ST Sep 24, 1896). "Jesus had come to 'magnify the law, and make it honorable.' He was not to lessen its dignity, but to exalt it" (*Desire of Ages* [Mountain View, CA.: Pacific Press, 1898], 206).

⁷¹Christ is our hope. Those who trust in Him are cleansed. The grace of Christ and the government of God walk together in perfect harmony. When Jesus became man's substitute, mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. The cross of Calvary bears witness to the high claims of God's law" (ST Jul 31, 1901).

⁷²Not one precept of the law could be altered to meet man in his fallen condition; therefore Christ gave His life in man's behalf, to suffer in his stead the penalty of disobedience. This was the only way in which man could be saved, the only way in which it could be demonstrated that it is possible for man to keep the law" (ST Jun 13, 1900).

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redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, will be received into glory who break the precepts of that law which Christ came to magnify and make honorable by his death upon the cross?" (ST Apr 28, 1890).

White views this conclusion as necessary in order to avoid the implication that Christ is encouraging sin. "Was such an infinite sacrifice made by the Son of God for the purpose of perpetuating sin?—No; it was not possible" (ST Dec 28, 1891). "Christ did not die to encourage man in rebellion against God, but to provide a way whereby he might keep the whole law. His garment of spotless righteousness clothes the repenting, believing sinner. He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (ST Jul 31, 1901).⁷³

White's view of the enabling power of the cross is very evident in the following quote. "It is the work of redemption to exalt that law, and Christ's great sacrifice was made in order that man might be a doer of that law. The law shows us our sins, as a mirror shows us that our face is not clean. The mirror has no power to cleanse the face; that is not its office. So it is with the law. It points out our defects, and condemns us, but it has no power to save us. We must come to Christ for pardon. He will take our guilt upon his own soul, and will justify us before God. And not only will he free us from sin, but he will give us power to render obedience to God's will" (ST Sep 24, 1896).

Christ's Righteousness and Law. Closely related to White's concept of the enabling power of Christ's cross, is her concept of Christ's righteousness and the law. "Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God was 'manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.' Sin is defined to be 'the transgression of the law.' But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. . . . By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ . . . we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then, as the Lord looks upon us, He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness

⁷³This do, and thou shalt live,' Christ said. In His teaching He ever presented the law as a divine unity, showing that it is impossible to keep one precept and break another; for the same principle runs through all. Man's destiny will be determined by his obedience to the whole law" (LHU 154). "Sin is the transgression of the law. Christ was manifest in our world to take away transgression and sin, and to substitute the pure robes of His righteousness for the covering of fig leaves. The law of God stands vindicated by the suffering and death of the only begotten Son of the infinite God" (21 MR 194). "We are to look into the great mirror of God's law and see if our characters are condemned therein. If condemnation is resting upon us, we need not despair, for he has provided a way whereby we may not perish, but have pardon and life" (ST Mar 10, 1890).

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and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah (MLT 311).⁷⁴

The connection between Christ's righteousness and law is evident in many statements by White. "Our standard has been too low, and may the Lord help us that we may come as we are, and learn of his righteousness, that through his power we may be enabled to keep the commandments of God" (ARSH Jul 19, 1892).⁷⁵ "That law Christ, by His example, taught men to obey. The righteousness of the law is seen in His life" (SJ 61).⁷⁶ "The holy law itself rejoiced in Christ's righteousness. The living representation of the law, Christ, could look around on a nation of witnesses, and say, 'Which of you convinceth Me of sin?'" (21 MR 38). "Placing the righteousness of Christ in the law distinctly reveals God in His true character and reveals the law as holy, just, and good, glorious indeed when seen in its true character" (12 MR 190). "What exalted ideas of the law of God do we obtain as we behold Jesus fulfilling every precept, and representing the character of God before the world! It was by fulfilling the law that Christ made known the Father to the world" (ST Jan 2, 1896).

The Law of Love. Like the apostle Paul, White identifies God's law as a law of love. "Love is the law of Christ's kingdom" (MLT, 52). "Those who love God with all the heart, will love the law of his kingdom. . . . The law of God is to be lived out" (ARSH Aug 13, 1895). "The love of God

⁷⁴*My Life Today* (Washington: Review and Herald, 1952). "The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26 (DA 762; see also ARSH May 8, 1900).

⁷⁵Christ never reproved the Jews for keeping the law of God On the contrary, He ever upheld the law in all its completeness" (SJ 70).

⁷⁶By His own obedience to the law, Christ testified to its immutable character and proved that through His grace it could be perfectly obeyed by every son and daughter of Adam. On the mount He declared that not the smallest iota should pass from the law till all things should be accomplished—all things that concern the human race, all that relates to the plan of redemption. He does not teach that the law is ever to be abrogated, but He fixes the eye upon the utmost verge of man's horizon and assures us that until this point is reached the law will retain its authority so that none may suppose it was His mission to abolish the precepts of the law. So long as heaven and earth continue, the holy principles of God's law will remain. His righteousness, "like the great mountains" (Psalm 36:6), will continue, a source of blessing, sending forth streams to refresh the earth" (TFMB 49). "Those who truly follow Christ will keep God's commandments as he kept them" (ST Mar 4, 1897). "The law which Christ gave from the mount, and which he exemplified in his sinless life, is far-reaching in its character. It condemns every evil action, and demands perfect obedience" (ST Mar 4, 1897).

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dwells in their hearts, as it dwelt in the heart of Christ, leading them to obey God's holy law" (ST Mar 3, 1898). "Kindness fulfills the law of Christ" (EGW 1888 Mat 1790).⁷⁷

For White, "obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, 'I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.' Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship" (SC 60–61).

White comments specifically on Paul's discussion of love in the book of Galatians. "The injunction of the apostle Paul is: 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.' Keeping the commandments of God requires of us good works, self-denial, self-sacrifice, and devotion for the good of others, not that our good works alone can save us, but that we surely cannot be saved without good works. After we have done all that we are capable of doing, we are then to say: We have done no more than our duty, and at best are unprofitable servants, unworthy of the smallest favor from God. Christ must be our righteousness and the crown of our rejoicing" (3 T 526).

Many other quotes from White emphasize the relation between law and love. "We have full faith in the Scripture that says, 'God is love;' and yet many have shamefully perverted this word, and have fallen into dangerous error because of a false interpretation of its meaning. God's holy law is the only standard by which we can estimate divine affection" (ARSH Jun 17, 1890). "That law Christ came to magnify and make honorable. He showed that it is based upon the broad foundation of love to God and men, and that obedience to its precepts comprises the whole duty of man" (SFLP 323–324).⁷⁸ "Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it

⁷⁷Our spiritual strength and blessing will be proportionate to the labor of love and good works which we perform" (*That I May Know Him* [Washington, DC.: Review and Herald, 1964], 334).

⁷⁸The quote continues: "In his own life he gave men a perfect example of obedience to the law of God. In his sermon on the mount he showed how its requirements extend beyond the outward acts, and take cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart. That law, obeyed, will lead men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Ibid)."Christ said to his disciples, 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.' What a startling declaration was this! It made manifest the insufficiency of legal or natural religion, and showed the need of moral renovation and the necessity of di-

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is “the transgression of the law;” it is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government” (GC 493).

Conclusion

The material presented in this article may be briefly summarized. Part 1 introduced the issue of servant-master roles of the laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature against the background of various interpretations of the writings of Paul. There are a multitude of conflicting interpretations of Paul’s references to law in terms of: changed laws or changed relations to law; legalism or justification by faith; affirmation, reshaping, or rejection of Jewish perspectives; whether or not law is a path to faith; continuity, and/or discontinuity of law and faith; righteousness of the law as good, bad or indifferent; and principal, cosmological, and/or personalized-cosmological interpretations of the laws or the elements of the world.

Part 2 supported the inclusive view of servant-master roles of Christ, Scripture, and nature by documenting the unity in diversity of Paul’s use of the word “law.” Paul refers to various sources and realms of law. However, a unified view is evident in his linking of the divine nature of the law with Jewish law and natural law. A unified view of law also lies behind the concepts of being under the law and being no longer under the law.

Part 3 of this article presented a study of Gal 3:24–25 which elucidates the thesis that (1) the laws of Scripture and nature function as a master to bring us to faith in Christ; (2) those who have faith in Christ are not under the master rule of these laws; and yet (3) there is a servant role for these laws within Christian faith and practice. Paul’s discussion of law includes the natural laws (general revelation) and the laws of Scripture (special revelation). Therefore, both the interpretation of the cosmos by special revelation and the revelation in the cosmos itself plays a role within Christian faith.

Legalists, like the lawless, are under the condemnation of the “servant-master” law because they wrongly reduce the law to commandments, separate themselves from others by the law, or believe that the law gives life. Those who think that the law is contrary to Christ also misinterpret the law. Thus they are under the law while they claim to be in Christ. To be free

vine enlightenment. The Jewish nation had occupied the highest position; they had built walls great and high to inclose themselves from association with the heathen world; they had represented themselves as the special, loyal people who were favored of God. But Christ presented their religion as devoid of saving faith. . . . “[T]he only true faith is that which works by love and purifies the soul. It is as leaven that transforms human character. The truth brought into the soul temple cleanses it of moral defilement; but where there is no change in the characters of those who profess to believe it, it is evident that it is not taken into the soul temple, and is simply no truth to those who advocate it. Such are under a deception” (ARSH Apr 30, 1895).

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from under law involves a proper hearing and doing of the law. Those who walk in the Spirit are not under the law. They fulfill the law by works of love. Love is not an alternative ethic to that of law. It is the ethic of the law properly understood.

Part 4 of this article demonstrated that Ellen White's SDA theology is in harmony with the thesis of this article. Like Paul she links the law with God's unique revelations in Christ, Scripture, and nature. She also emphasizes their unique roles to bring us to Christ and within Christian faith and practice. Her perspective may be further summarized in her own words concerning the roles of the laws of Christ, Scripture, and nature.

Concerning Christ and Scripture, on one hand she writes: "The Bible and the Bible only is the foundation of our faith" (Letter 131, 1898; 4 EGW *Bio* 374).⁷⁹ On the other hand: "[Christ] was, in life and teaching, the gospel, *the foundation of all pure doctrine*" (TIMKH 97). The apparent contradiction involved in Christ and Scripture as foundations for faith is resolved as follows: "The gospel is glorious because it is made up of His righteousness. It is Christ enfolded, and Christ is the gospel embodied. . . . Every text [of Scripture] is a diamond, touched and irradiated by the divine rays" (7 SDABC 907, 921; Ed 132).⁸⁰

Similarly with regard to nature and Scripture she writes: "Every law governing the human system is to be strictly regarded; for it is as truly a law of God as is the word of Holy Writ; and every willful deviation from obedience to this law is as certainly sin as a violation of the moral law. All nature expresses the law of God, but in our physical structure Jehovah has written His law with His own finger upon every thrilling nerve, upon every living fiber, and upon every organ of the body. We shall suffer loss and defeat, if we step out of nature's path, which God Himself has marked out, into one of our own devising" (Tem 213–214).⁸¹

Scripture is in a sense the *only* rule of faith and practice. Scripture's *unique* role in faith and practice belongs *only* to Scripture. However, Scripture teaches that Christ and nature are also *unique* divine revelations which have unique roles in faith and practice. The roles of Christ, Scripture, and nature are described by Paul and Ellen White as servant-master roles to bring us to faith in Christ. Before faith in Christ, the law is a servant of God which rules as master over human beings. After human beings come to faith in Christ the law no longer rules over them. They have been exalted by faith to become sons and daughters of God. Therefore the law is their servant as it is the servant of Christ.

Jesus expressed this perspective concerning his laws in His discussion of Sabbath law. He said: the Sabbath was made for man. Man was not made

⁷⁹Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White* (Washington, D.C. : Review and Herald, 1981-1986).

⁸⁰*Education* (Mountain View, CA.: Pacific Press, 1952).

⁸¹*Temperance*(Mt. View, CA: Pacific Press, 1949) .

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for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of man is Lord or Master of the Sabbath law (Mk 2:27–28). Those who are without faith in Christ are under the mastery of law (Gal 4:1). However, the law's ultimate purpose is not to be the master of humanity (4:7). Rather it is the servant of humanity. Humanity was not created to be a servant to God's law. Rather, the law is intended for the benefit of humanity. It is Jesus, rather than the law, who is Master (1:10). If we submit to the Master of the law then the law which is His servant is our servant also.

To paraphrase what Paul wrote in his epistle to the Galatians: "The heir as long as he is a child, does not differ from a slave [to law], though he is actually master of all [including law]. He is under [bondage to] guardians and stewards [laws] until the time appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements [including laws] of the world. But when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law [laws of Scripture and nature], to redeem those who were under law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Therefore you are no longer a slave [to law] but a [lawful] son [of God]" (Gal 4:1–7).