

## ARE CHRISTIANS UNDER LAW? (#1)

A. “**Conservative**” radio talk show host Ann Coulter is in “hot water” for comments she made in a television interview.

1. She claims to be Christian, but her appearance & attitude wouldn't support it.
2. But the worst thing of all is that she misrepresents truth, & NT Christianity.
  - a. Was she correct in saying that Jewish people could be “perfected” if they became Christians?
    - 1) Yes. Because God's power in the gospel of Christ will perfect anyone who believes & obeys it.

b. But she was incorrect to imply that Christians have **NO** law, or just a “Federal Express” version.

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Rom 6:14 – For sin shall not have dominion over you, *for you are not under law but under grace.* {To what law was Paul referring? A law that allows for no grace, because it offers no true forgiveness.}

John 1:17 – For *the* law was given through Moses, but *grace & truth came through Jesus Christ.* {Does “grace & truth” exclude ALL law?}

Eph 2:8-9 – For *by grace you have been saved through faith,* & that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, & not of works, lest anyone should boast. {Does faith exclude ALL law?}

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[**These** verses are often used to argue that Christians are not under any law today. **They** say, “A Christian shouldn't concern himself over laws.” **This** means you don't need to be that concerned about what you believe or teach on any Bible subject that relates to your soul & salvation.]

## I. WHAT IS LAW?

**A. For some people the word “law” has a negative connotation.**

1. Because “law” involves rules that we must keep or be punished if we don’t keep them.
2. Or because “law” involves accountability to someone in authority.
3. It seems that the word “law” – to some – rarely brings to mind pleasing thoughts.

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**Webster’s:** “all the rules of conduct established & enforced by the authority, legislation or custom of a given community, state or other group.”

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**B. Purpose of Civil Law:**

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**Rom 13:3-4** – For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. **Do** you want to be unafraid of the authority? **Do** what is good, & you will have praise from the same. **4 For** he is God’s minister to you for good. **But** if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

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1. To minister on behalf of God in the civil realm (13:4).
2. To literally terrorize evildoers with the threat of punishment (13:3).
3. To avenge injustice & lawlessness by executing wrath on the offender (13:4).
4. To explain what we may & may not do, or to give us guidance in our lives.
5. Christians are instructed to pray “for kings & all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet & peaceable life in all godliness & reverence” (1 Tim 2:2).

**II. DOES THE NT HAVE LAWS?**

- A. Many maintain that the Lord’s death set us free from any responsibility to law.**

## 1. Law of Christ:

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**Gal 6:2** – Bear one another's burdens, & so **fulfill the LAW of Christ**.

**1 Cor 9:21** – to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but **under LAW toward Christ**), that I might win those who are without law; {What kind of a law is it?}

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## 2. Law of Faith:

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**Rom 3:27** – Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by **the LAW of faith**. {It's a law we must keep that excludes boasting}

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## 3. Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus

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**Rom 8:1-2** – There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For **the LAW of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus** has made me free from the law of sin & death.

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## 4. Perfect Law of Liberty:

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**Jas 1:21-25** – Therefore lay aside all filthiness & overflow of wickedness, & receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be **doers** of the word, & not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word & not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, & immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who **looks into the perfect LAW of liberty** & **continues in it**, & is not a forgetful **hearer** but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

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## 5. Royal Law:

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**Jas 2:8-12** – If you really **fulfill the royal LAW** according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; 9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, & are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, & yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak & so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. {Someone may say, "But those are OT laws!" **Think of them as simply Divine laws. God puts His laws into every covenant.**}

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[Christians are NOT free from responsibility to law!]

**B. There** are many, many NT passages that prove **Christians are under law today.**

1. **God is a Lawgiver** (**Jas 4:11-12**)
2. **Sin is lawlessness** (**1 John 3:4**)
3. **Jesus' teachings are commands** (**Matt 28:20**)
4. **We are blessed if we do them** (**Rev 22:14**)
5. **It is the Father's will** (**Matt 7:21; LK 6:46; Eph 5:17**)

6. **The apostles were given keys or authority to bind the law of Christ** (Matt 16:19, 18:18)
7. **The apostles gave commandments to the churches** (Acts 15:24-29)
8. **Paul wrote down commandments from the Lord** (1 Cor 14:37)
9. **Evangelists are to command & teach the apostles' doctrine, which came from Christ via the Holy Spirit** (1 Tim 4:11; Jn 16:13; 1 Pet 1:12).

[The idea that there is no law in the NT, which we are obligated to hear, look into, do, continue in, & fulfill, is to fall under the devilish spell of those who are extremely ignorant of NT teaching – or, the false teacher.]

### III. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF LAW?

A. **Inasmuch** as spiritual Law originated with God, there can only be good to result from it.

1. **Law Identifies Sin** – that which will separate us from God & cause us to die eternally.

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Rom 3:20 – *by [the] law is the knowledge of sin* (Rom 7:13; 1 Tim 1:9-10)

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a. Would anyone want to come before the judgment seat of Christ in ignorance?

2. **Law Gives Guidance** – the knowledge we need to properly & effectively live our lives.

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Jer 10:23 – *O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps* (cf. Prov 14:12)

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John 8:31-32 – *If you abide [continue] in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, & the truth shall make you free.*

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3. **Law Brings Peace & Unity** – the greatest conditions that can exist on this earth.

a. The early Christians were together in “one accord” (unanimously) when the apostles were teaching the Law of Christ (Acts 2:46).

[Those people who claim to be “Christians”, but who have the idea that Christians are not under law – *they cannot share in any of the blessing OF God’s law: knowledge of sin, guidance in righteousness, peace & unity.*]

#### IV. WHO MUST KEEP THE LAW OF CHRIST?

A. **God** has never given a law & not told someone they must keep it (or be accountable to it).

B. **What** about the Law of Christ? Who must keep His laws?

1. A person might assume, “*Well, only the Jews had to keep the Law of Moses, so I assume that only Christians have to keep the law of Christ.*”
2. Yes, a Christian must keep the law of Christ, & that entails a lifetime of dedicating oneself to learning, spiritual growth & self discipline.

(Matt 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 1 Pet 2:2; 1 Cor 8:7; Rom 15:1; Eph 4:11-13; Heb 5:12-14; 2 Pet 1:5-11; 2 Thess 3:6, 14)

3. But also, **everyone** must keep the law of Christ, because **everyone** is accountable to it.

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**1 Pet 4:17-18** – For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; & if it begins with us first, ***what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?*** 18 Now “If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly & the sinner appear?”

**John 12:48** – He who rejects Me, & does not receive My words, has that which judges him — ***the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.***

**Acts 17:30-31** – Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which ***He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained.*** He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

**2 Cor 5:10** – For ***we must all appear [made manifest] before the judgment seat of Christ,*** that ***each one*** may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

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#### CLOSING

A. **John** revealed that all the dead would be judged according to their works & by the law that was in effect when they lived (**Rev 20:11-13**).

1. There is only one law in effect (**Rom 3:27; Eph 4:5**).

B. **Who** is accountable to the Law of Christ? **Every** person of a responsible age.