

The End of the Law

In Romans, Paul says that Christ is “the end of the law” (10:4). What does he mean?

Perhaps he means that Christ is the goal or fulfillment of the law, the one to whom the law was pointing all along and the one who accomplishes the purposes of God that the law was intended to produce. Or he might mean that the coming of Christ marks a termination of the law in God’s plan. But if that is the case, then in what sense has Christ put an end to the law? Has the law been terminated simply as a means to being made right with God, or has it also been done away with as an adequate expression of God’s will?

And what law or laws are we talking about? Is the Mosaic law as a whole to be disregarded by Christians, since God’s will can now be discerned through a transformed and renewed mind (12:2)? Or are Christians released only from keeping certain laws, ones that are pertinent to Jewish identity (such as dietary and Sabbath regulations)? Are some laws generic and timeless (13:9), and if so, how do we know which ones these are?

For a survey of how these and other questions have been answered, see Veronica Koperski, *What Are They Saying about Paul and the Law?* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001).