

What about the Law?

How should Christians view
the Law, the 10
Commandments, and the
Old Testament?

“The Ten Commandments played a significant role in God’s creation of the nation of Israel. It gave them moral guidelines and helped separate this new nation from their neighbors. This was part of the formal agreement (or covenant) God created with his people, but Jesus’ death and resurrection signaled the end of that covenant and all the rules and regulations associated with it.”
— **Andy Stanley, North Point Community Church, Georgia (blog post)**

“(First Century) Church leaders unhitched the church from the worldview, value system, and regulations of the Jewish scriptures. Peter, James, Paul elected to unhitch the Christian faith from their Jewish scriptures, and my friends, we must as well.” — **Sermon excerpt**

Two reactions:

- “The 10 Commandments are a timeless law with timeless truths. How can we say that they are no longer in effect over us?”
- “Everything in the Old Testament is done away with and is of no more value – and its stories are problematic in today’s culture!”

Two reactions:

The Old Testament is
God's revealed word over
some 2,000 years – what
do we do with it?

What is the Old Testament?

Compiled from books of the Hebrew “Bible” as well as additional works not considered “canon”

The Law (Torah) comprises the first five books

The Prophets include books from inspired prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc...)

Historical accounts (Chronicles) and literature/poetry (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, etc.)

- A nation that God chose and redeemed
- A law that God gave to that nation
- The nation’s attempts (and failures) to follow that law
- God’s promises and prophecies regarding that nation and those around it
- How individuals pursued a relationship with God

What about the 10 Commandments?

- Exodus 20:1-17 – the commandments outlined
 - Initial commands of conduct
 - Followed by 10 chapters of additional instructions
- Moses repeats in Deut. 5:6-22
 - Ch. 5:1-5: Who is included in this covenant? (Ex. 34:27-28)
 - Was it separate from the ensuing other commands? V. 27 – “All that the Lord our God will speak to you” (Deut. 12:1)
- Were the 10 Commandments complete? (Leviticus 19:18, see Matthew 22:34)

The 10 Commandments were never intended to stand on their own, apart from the rest of the law

Can I add myself into someone else's agreement?

- Deut. 7:6-8 – A clear distinction between Jew and Gentile
- Acts 15:5-11 – same Spirit, apart from the law!
- How do Christians become heirs to the promise?
Romans 4:5-16

Can we “cherry pick” a law?

- James 2:8-11: Failing in one point violates the whole
- Jesus' caveat to the Sermon on the Mount, v. 17-20
 - “Until all is fulfilled,” Gal. 3:23-24, Romans 10:4

Once a covenant is gone, it's ALL gone!

For when there is a change in the priesthood, **there is necessarily a change in the law as well**. For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. - Hebrews 7:12-14

In speaking of a new covenant, **he makes the first one obsolete**. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. - Hebrews 8:13

What about “Thou shalt not kill?”

- Am I under a law because I keep a part of that law?
- Were Gentiles absolved from moral law because they were not under the Law of Moses? (Romans 2:14-16, Mark 6:18, Genesis 4)
- Our law centers not around a list of commandments, but on the conforming of our character to Christ (Romans 8:29, 1 Peter 1:13-16)
 - Our salvation not centered on “letter of the law” 2 Cor. 3:2-8)
 - We are under a “law” to Christ (Romans 7:25, 1 Cor. 9:21)
 - But it is a law of grace, through the work of the Spirit in our character and heart (Gal. 5:22-23)

Why is this important?

- Where do I go to understand elements of worship? (1 Cor. 11:23-26, Acts 20:6)
- Where do I go to see what days I should observe (Col. 2:17 – not a “Christian Sabbath)
- Where do I go to find the roles and responsibilities in the church? (1 Tim. 3:1-12, Eph. 4:9-12)
- Where do I go to learn how to be saved? (Acts 4:10-12) – **I look to examples not under an old covenant, but in Christ Jesus!**

Next week's lesson:

Of what use is
the law?

For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, “This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: “I will put MY laws upon their heart, And on their mind I will write them,” He then says, “And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

- Hebrews 10:14-17