

Introduction:

1. I have often made this statement: “If you understand the difference between the Old and New Testaments, then you understand something that three-fourths of the preachers don’t understand.”
 - a. The longer I preach the more I am convinced of the truthfulness of that statement.
 - b. If three-fourths of the preachers don’t understand, then what of the average person in the pew? The truth is, few people accept the truth that the Law of Moses has been done away.
2. The premise of the study before us is that the New Testament is our authority today. (By “authority,” we mean that which governs and guides us.) By implication, this premise says that we are not under the authority of Old Testament Law. (The Old Law does not govern and guide us.)
 - a. The Old Testament Law of Moses was given for a different time and for a different people.
 - b. Christians are not now, nor have they ever been, under the Law of Moses.
 - c. The Old Testament Law was given only for the people of Israel, and then it was only valid for them up until the time of the cross.
3. When religious people who are not well studied in Bible teaching hear the proposition just stated, they often respond by going to Matthew 5:17-18.
 - a. They argue from this text that we are under the Law. They believe we are under the Law of Moses and they attempt to prove it by this verse. (Remember, we said that a majority of people believe that the Old Testament Law of Moses is binding on men today.)
 - b. However, Matthew 5:17-18 is of no help to those who believe the Law is binding on men today. It does not say what they need it to say. Jesus tells us that He did not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. To destroy would mean that the Law was bad and needed to be stamped out. He did not come to destroy it, but to *fulfill* it. Note that He says that no part of the Law would pass away *until all is fulfilled*.
 - c. The implication of His words is not that the Law would never pass away, but that it would pass away only when all is fulfilled. So, rather than this verse supporting the idea that the Law is in effect today, it supports the truth that it is no longer in effect. It is no longer in effect because Jesus came to fulfill it; when He fulfilled it, it indeed did pass away. Let us see the proof.

The Lesson:**I. The Old Testament Law of Moses has been replaced by the New Testament gospel.**

- A. We need to begin by defining our terms. John 1:17 defines terms for us.
 1. Moses gave one thing—the Law. Virtually every time we see this term in the New Testament, it refers to that which Moses gave. The few exceptions are evident by the context.
 2. Jesus gave something different than what Moses gave. He gave a system of *grace and truth*. He did not give the same thing that Moses gave.
 3. It has been said that Jesus just came to clarify the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses did not need clarification. Jesus gave something different than the Law. Can you see that?
- B. Romans 6:14 contains a similar contrast (just like we found in John 1:17).
 1. Christians are not under the law system given by Moses; they are under the system of grace and truth given by Christ. We are under the gospel.
 2. If we had no other passage to which we might go, we have proven our proposition that we are not under the Law, but are under the New Testament system given by Christ. We could stop right here, but there are other passages to consider.
- C. Romans 7:6 says we have been delivered from the Law. To be delivered is to be set free.
 1. What Law is Paul talking about? It is the Law of Moses given at Sinai, including the Ten Commandments. In Romans 7:7 he quotes the tenth commandment as his example!
 2. Someone says, “If it were true that we are not under the Ten Commandments, then we could steal, murder, etc.” Do we not know that the gospel prohibits these things?
- D. 2 Corinthians 3:6-11 is a powerful argument showing the Old Law has passed away.
 1. The New Covenant is set in contrast to the Old. The Old was written on stones—the Ten Commandments. It is called the ministry of condemnation because it could not save men.
 2. The ministry of the Spirit—the New Covenant—is more glorious because it gives life.
- E. Ephesians 2:14-16 shows that Christ abolished the Law of Commandments and broke down the middle wall of partition (the Law) that separated Jews from Gentiles.

- F. Colossians 2:14-16 is somewhat parallel to Ephesians 2:14-16 as it asserts that the Ordinances of the Law were nailed to the cross. Paul says “Let no one judge you on these things.” Note that he, again, includes one of the Ten Commandments—the Sabbath!
- G. If the Old Testament Law ended at the cross, then when did the New Covenant begin?
 - 1. Some say at the birth of Jesus, others at His baptism, others at His death.
 - 2. What does the Scripture say? Hebrews 9:15-17 shows us that the death of Jesus was necessary for the New Covenant to come into effect (just like a man’s will today).
- H. The cross, then, becomes the dividing point between the two covenants.
 - 1. This is a critical point to understand because we live on this side of the cross; we are under the New Covenant, not the Old. A hundred questions are answered by this truth.
 - 2. One question has to do with salvation. When we teach the Great Commission given by Jesus in Mark 16:16 where the Lord teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation, the cry is, “What about the thief on the cross? He wasn’t baptized!” Did the thief live under the New Covenant? He never heard the Great Commission. We have heard it and are under it! If people understood the change of covenants, they would never ask about the thief.

II. Some additional reasons why the New Testament is our authority today.

- A. With Moses the Lawgiver and Elijah the prophet present what did God say? Matthew 17:5. God said, “This is My beloved Son...Hear Him!” Not Moses, not Elijah!
- B. God speaks through Jesus today, not Moses and the prophets, Hebrews 1:1-2.
- C. Jesus has all authority today, leaving no authority for the Law of Moses, Matthew 28:18.
- D. We will be judged by the words of Jesus, not the words of Moses’ Law, John 12:48.

III. If we are not under the Old Law, then what good are the Old Testament Scriptures today?

- A. They are given for our learning, Romans 15:4. In them we see the development of God’s plan to redeem us. We learn about God’s nature and how we can trust in Him and have hope. Without the Old Testament Scriptures we would know nothing of the creation, Israel’s history, etc. We learn all these things, but we are not under the Law given at Sinai!
- B. They are given as an example to us, 1 Corinthians 10:11. We learn not to rebel against God!
- C. The Old Testament prophecies give us assurance that God’s word is true, 2 Peter 1:21.
- D. They validate the truth about who Jesus is, as they testify of Him, John 5:39
- E. The Old Testament Scriptures are of great value to us in so many, many ways, but we are not under the Law of Moses that was given at Mt. Sinai!

IV. It is time for Truth or Consequences!

- A. We either accept the Truth that we are not under the Law or suffer the Consequences.
- B. Consequence #1: You are under a curse to keep the whole Law, Galatians 3:10.
 - 1. People treat the Old Testament Law like they are going through the cafeteria line. They take “a little of this and a little of that and none of that over there.”
 - 2. But you can’t do that. It is all or nothing, Galatians 5:3. If you are under any part of the Law of Moses, then you are a debtor to keep the whole Law!
- C. Consequence #2: You are fallen from grace, Galatians 5:4. Some say you can’t fall from grace, but Paul shows that it had already happened to some. To whom? Those who were trying to be justified by the Law—just like people are doing today!
- D. Consequence #3: You can’t be saved; you can’t be justified by the Law, Galatians 2:16.
- E. Consequence #4: Jesus Christ died for nothing—if you can be right with God through Moses’ Law—then the death of Christ was pointless, Galatians 2:21. If men could be saved by the Old Law, then God was cruel and wicked to send His Son to die on the cross for nothing. The Jews already had the Law of Moses—if it could save, then why did Jesus have to die?

Conclusion:

- 1. Some people argue that this distinction between the Law and the Gospel is “Just a technical matter that no one really cares about!” Are you kidding? God cares! This is what the whole books of Hebrews and Galatians are about, and half of Romans and 2 Corinthians!
- 2. This lesson has answered an important question. But maybe it also raises questions. Please submit those questions to me and I will answer them in an upcoming lesson.
- 3. But for now, have you obeyed the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you obeyed the gospel? You need to.