

An open scroll of the Old Testament, likely the Ten Commandments, is displayed on a wooden stand. The scroll is unrolled, showing two columns of Hebrew text. The scroll is mounted on two wooden rollers with handles. The background is a dark, textured surface. A small informational card is visible on the left side of the scroll.

# What Do Old Testament Laws Mean for Today?

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## **Sample of laws in Leviticus**

- You shall bring your offering of livestock from the herd or from the flock. (Lev 1:2)
- Everything in the waters that has not fins and scales is detestable to you. (Lev 11:12)
- You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Lev 19:18)
- Anyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. (Lev 20:9)
- You shall dwell in booths for seven days. (Lev 23:42)



## **Does Jesus get rid of the Law?**

<sup>17</sup> “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

## **Practice and teach commands**

<sup>19</sup> Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.



## Not under law

- **Declared righteous apart from law:** We are right with God through faith in Jesus, who perfectly obeyed God's law on our behalf.
- **Free from law's covenant curses:** Jesus suffered the curse and canceled our debt.
- **Empowered by Spirit, not law:** The Holy Spirit writes God's law on our heart, giving us the desire and the ability to obey.
- **Old rituals replaced:** Old Covenant signs give way to New Covenant reality of Christ.

## **We uphold and fulfill the law**

- For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law... Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, **we uphold the law.** (Rom 3:28,31)
- “...in order that the righteous requirement of **the law might be fulfilled** in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom 8:4)



## Three kinds of Old Testament laws

- 1. Ritual:** Signs pointing to Christ or picturing spiritual realities. *Today these practices are discontinued but can still teach us.*
- 2. Civil:** Case laws for governing old covenant Israel. *Today no country is the holy nation, but we can learn principles of governance.*
- 3. Moral:** Rules for holy love toward God and neighbor that apply in all times and places. *Today these commands still direct us.*

## Ritual laws fulfilled

- **Tabernacle/temple:** Jesus tabernacled with us and makes us a temple for his Spirit.
- **Priests:** Sinless Jesus is our only high priest. All believers are priests.
- **Sacrifices:** Jesus the Lamb is the final sacrifice. Our bodies are living sacrifices.
- **Special days:** Sabbath, Passover, Firstfruits, Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Booths



## Ritual laws fulfilled

- **Circumcision:** putting off old self through union with Jesus death and resurrection
- **Symbols of separation:** eating only “clean” animals; no consuming blood; no mixed fabrics, no mixed crops or animal breeding; no yoking different animals for plowing
- **Symbols of purity and wholeness:** laws about yeast, mold and mildew, diseases, discharges, childbirth, dead bodies

## Ritual details repealed

- “Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” Thus he declared all foods clean. (Mark 7:19)
- What God has made clean, do not call common. (Acts 10:15)
- You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain. (Galatians 4:10-11)



## **Reality replaces ritual shadows**

They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.... the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities. (Hebrews 8:5, 10:1)

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. (Col 2:16-17)

# Getting hitched

- You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. (Deut 22:10)
- Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? (2 Cor 6:14)
- *The literal requirement of an Old Testament ritual law or civil law might no longer be in effect, but that law may symbolically show us a moral principle that still applies today.*



## **Holy temple of God**

For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.” (2 Cor 6:16-18)

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## Civil case laws

**Safety laws:** railing around roof, mean bulls

**Property:** land, gleaning, Jubilee

**Kingship:** not many horses, no excessive luxury, not many wives, keep and enforce law

**Damage control:** regulations for war, divorce, slavery, limiting evil in a fallen situation

**Deciding guilt:** at least two witnesses, procedure for “he said/she said” accusations

**Penalties:** restitution, exile, execution

## **The new holy nation**

- The holy nation of the old covenant was Israel: one people with one land.
- The holy nation of the new covenant is the church: many peoples living in many lands.
- The church does not govern any particular nation or punish unchurched evildoers.
- The church teaches God's laws to professing Christians and rebukes sin. The church excommunicates (but doesn't execute) blatant sinners who refused to repent.



## **Learning about governance**

- Different peoples, cultures, and eras are not bound by details of God's old covenant civil regulations for the Jewish nation in a mainly rural culture during the era before Christ.
- Laws enforced in Israel didn't always express God's created ideal but limited extreme evil.
- Biblical principles inform good government.
- God will judge all nations.
- Judgment begins with the house of God.

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## Moral laws

- You shall love the Lord your God. (Deut 6:5)
- Love your neighbor as yourself. (Lev 19:18)
- The Ten Commandments (Sabbath revised)
- You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. (Lev 18:22)
- Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out. (Lev 19:31)
- You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo yourselves. (Lev 19:28)

## **What gets washed away?**

Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:9-11)



## **Fulfilling the law**

Love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Rom 13:8-10)

## What can God's moral law do for us?

- **Teacher of sin:** God's law can show us our sinfulness and our desperate need of a Savior, driving us toward Jesus.
- **NOT self-salvation:** God's law cannot help us to earn God's favor or change ourselves.
- **Pattern of love:** God's law shows thankful, saved, Spirit-filled believers the pattern of love toward God and people.



## Demonic lies about laws

1. **Legalism:** Law is a ladder to God. Do good deeds to earn salvation.
2. **Antinomianism:** Law is bad. Ignore moral laws, and do whatever you like.
3. **Ritualism:** Focus on ceremonial details, not on Christ or the Holy Spirit or love.
4. **Civil religion:** Your country is God's holy nation. Force fellow citizens to act like Christians, and ignore church problems.

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## NT Christians and OT laws: The case of 1 Corinthians 5

5:1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. 2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

- **Moral law:** Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife. (Lev 18:8; see also 20: 11; Deut 22:30,27:20; Gen 35:22, 49:4)

## **Punishment**

1Cor 5:3 For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. 4 When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.



## Passover principles

1Cor 5:6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

- **Ritual laws:** apply deeper realities of symbols

## **Avoid unholy “brother”**

1Cor 5:9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—  
10 not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.



# **Church judges insiders. God judges outsiders.**

1Cor 5:12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? 13 God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

- You shall purge the evil from your midst.  
(Deut 13:5, 17:7, 17:12, 21:21, 22:21,22,24)
- Excommunication from church (new covenant holy nation) replaces execution in the civil law of Israel (old covenant holy nation).

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## The law of Christ

- For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but **keeping the commandments** of God. (1 Cor 7:19)
- ...not being outside the law of God but under **the law of Christ**... (1 Cor 9:21)
- Bear one another's burdens, and so **fulfill the law of Christ**. (Galatians 6:2)
- If you really **fulfill the royal law** according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. (James 2:8)

## **Spirit-directed, heartfelt obedience to Jesus' rules**

- I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. (Jeremiah 31:33).
- You are a letter from Christ... written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. (2 Cor 3:3).
- If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (John 14:15)