



# The Law of Moses

How to Read the Bible

## The Genre of Law

### ○ Introductory Comments:

- The OT contains over 600 commandments that the Israelites were expected to keep as evidence of the loyalty to God.
- The Law was written around 1440 BC.
- Only four of the thirty-nine books of the OT contain these laws: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
- The OT law is called by the Jews “The Torah.”
- The OT law is an unified whole.



## Form

- The Decalogue: The Ten Commandments are the crux of the law. They represent the heart of the content of the Law. Some suggest that all other elements of the law are an exposition of the Ten Commandments.
- Apodictic Law: These are direct commands that usually begin with, “Thou shall” or “Thou shall not.”
- Casuistic Law: This is case law. These set a specific situation from which apodictic law proceeds. Many times casuistic law provides multiple scenarios and options for penalties.

## Function

The Old Testament law is a covenant.

- A covenant is a means of establishing, expressing, and defining a relationship between two parties. The word occurs 238 times in the OT. There are covenants established to protect water wells, boundaries, and legal negotiations.
- An OT covenant had six parts to it: preamble, prologue, stipulations, witnesses, sanctions, and a document clause.
- The OT law provides the stipulations for the relationship between God and Israel.



# Function

- The Old Covenant is not the testament/covenant for believers today.
  - The OT law was written for the contractual relationship between God and Israel.
  - The New Testament believer is never envisioned in the covenant, nor is he encouraged to live by it.
- Some stipulations of the Old Covenant have clearly not been renewed in the New Covenant.
  - All ritual law ended at the cross of Jesus Christ. God Himself tore the veil of the Holy of Holies to denote the ending of the priestly system.
  - All civil law is restricted to the citizens of ancient Israel of which no one currently is included.

## Function

- Part of the Old Covenant is reiterated in the New Testament.
  - The moral law of God which predated the Mosaic covenant is still in effect post-Mosaic covenant.
  - Many of moral laws are more fuller explained within the NT commands.
  - Only that which is explicitly reiterated from the Old Testament law can be considered part of the New Testament “law of Christ.”
- All of the Old Testament law is still the Word of God *for* us even though it is not still the command of God *to* us.



## Case Study #1

### Deuteronomy 22:8 - What can we learn?

#### ☐ Key Questions:

- ☐ What did the text mean to the original readers?
- ☐ What does the text teach us about ourselves (humanity)?
- ☐ What does the text teach us about God?
- ☐ What does the text teach us about our relationship with God?
- ☐ What does the text teach us about our relationship with each other?
- ☐ What does the text teach us about justice?
- ☐ To which of the TC's does this refer?

## Case Study #2

### **Deut 15:12-17 - What can we learn?**

#### ☐ Key Questions:

- ☐ What did the text mean to the original readers?
- ☐ What does the text teach us about ourselves (humanity)?
- ☐ What does the text teach us about God?
- ☐ What does the text teach us about our relationship with God?
- ☐ What does the text teach us about our relationship with each other?
- ☐ What does the text teach us about justice?
- ☐ To which of the TC's does this refer?



## Case Study

- Slavery on the OT is not similar to contemporary slavery models.
- God loved slaves.
- In the OT slaves could be better off as slaves, than as free men.
- The slave owner did not really own slaves. The slave was not considered property.
- Slavery provides an important picture of the NT concept of redemption and bond-service.

## Do's and Don'ts for Reading the OT Law

- Do see the Old Testament law as God's fully inspired word *for* you.
- Don't see the Old Testament law as God's direct command *to* you.
- Do see the Old Testament law as the basis for the Old Covenant, and therefore for Israel's history.
- Don't see the Old Testament law as binding on Christians in the New Testament except where specifically renewed.



## Do's and Don'ts for Reading the OT Law

- Do see God's justice, love, and high standards revealed in the Old Testament law.
- Don't forget to see that God's mercy is made equal to the severity of the standards.
- Do see the Old Testament law as a generous gift to Israel, bringing much blessing when obeyed.
- Don't see the Old Testament law as a grouping of arbitrary, annoying regulations limiting people's freedom.

## Do's and Don'ts for Reading the OT Law

- Don't see the Old Testament law as complete. It is not technically comprehensive.
- Do see the Old Testament law as a paradigm--- providing examples for the full range of expected behavior.
- Don't expect the Old Testament law to be cited frequently by the prophets or the New Testament.
- Do remember that the *essence* of the Law (Ten Commandments and the two chief laws) is repeated in the prophets and renewed in the New Testament.