

## "The Law"

When you open your Bible, you see the words Old Testament and New Testament. Well what does that mean? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're going to explore the difference between the old covenant and the new.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We're interested in the truth of God's word and in being good students who are approved of God. We want to serve Him to the best of our ability. We believe that you want to be that kind of servant too, and so you study your Bible diligently. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

The Bible is an exciting book and it reveals sacred history from the very beginning down to the present time. Through the Bible we can understand clearly all the wonderful things that God has done to bless us and give us eternal life through Jesus Christ. When you open the Bible and turn to the table of contents at the very front, you'll notice that there is an Old Testament and a New Testament. Well the Old Testament was specifically written to Israel, while the New Testament was written to both Jews and Gentiles. The Old Testament reveals the will of God for the Jews, while the New Testament reveals God's will for those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Paul urged Timothy in 2 Timothy 2 and verse 15 (as the King James Version says) to "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Paul wanted Timothy to do his best to be an accurate and diligent student who handled the word of God properly. To do so meant that he would be approved by God. To fail to do so would lead him to be ashamed. We too need to be diligent students who handle the Bible properly by distinguishing what God says and to whom He says it, how He says it, when, and why. Good students recognize God's laws and teachings apply authoritatively to those to whom it was given.

Now you might want to study more about these things, and so we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Galatians 3:19 to 27, and explore what God says about the Law.

Our reading today comes from Paul's epistle to the Galatians, chapter 3, verses 19 to 27. "Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. Now a mediator is not for one *party only*; whereas God is *only* one. Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." There Paul is saying we're no longer under that tutor, the law. Let's pray together. Father, we're grateful for your word which

teaches us and helps us to understand not only things in the beginning, but things of our own time. Help us Father to be obedient to Your will in all things. In Jesus name, Amen!

Sometimes people say, "You folks in the church of Christ don't believe in the Old Testament." Well if they mean we don't believe the Old Testament is God's inspired word, then nothing could be farther from the truth. We certainly do believe the Old Testament is Scripture and divinely inspired. 2 Timothy 3 verses 16 to 17 says, that "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Now this certainly includes the Old Testament, which is inspired and profitable for us as Christians.

The apostle Paul said in Romans 15 and verse 4, "That whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." There are many inspired truths in the Old Testament necessary for us to know and believe. It's there that we learn about creation, the flood, and God's promise to Abraham. It's there we learn about Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and David. It's there we learn from the prophecies and the prophets about Jesus Christ. More than thirty times Jesus refers back to the historical events and the lessons that are found in the Old Testament. 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 11 says of the things of the Old Testament that they happened as an example for us and "were written for our instruction." So we urge everyone to read and study the Old Testament.

But being a good student of Scripture means understanding the context of what is written. Not every command in Scripture was meant for everyone. While God told Noah to build an ark, He didn't give that instruction to everyone else. While Levites served in the tabernacle and temple, no other Israelite was allowed to serve there. When Moses reviewed the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5, he said to all Israel, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully. The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *with* all those of us alive here today" (Deuteronomy 5 verses 1 to 3). Now from this we learn that the Ten Commandments were given to Israel specifically and that is, its laws were part of a covenant that did not apply to those beforehand.

Now when we come to the New Testament, the writers clearly state that we're no longer under the Law of Moses given at Mt. Sinai. For instance, Paul says in Romans 7 verses 1 to 4, "Or do you not know, brothers—for I'm speaking to those that know the law—that the law is binding on a person as long as he lives? For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies then she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God." Now Christians die to the law of Moses so they can follow Christ. He explained in Romans 7 and verse 6, "But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter."

Paul argued in Galatians 2 verses 19 to 21 "For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, Paul says, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died

for no purpose.” Christians serve Christ and not the Law, because they know Christ can do for them what the Law could never do. Paul told the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia in Acts 13 verses 38 to 39, “Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man [that is, Jesus] forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.” The Law simply cannot free you the way the blood of Jesus Christ can free you. Let’s stay with Jesus!

Now some mistakenly make a distinction between the moral law found in the Ten Commandments and the ceremonial law. They think that while the ceremonial law is no longer in force, the Ten Commandment law still is. However, they’ve missed an important point. The Ten Commandments are part of the covenant that God made with Israel. Exodus 34 verses 27 to 28 reveals this. “And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.’ So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.” Now rather than make unwarranted distinctions in the law, let’s understand that all the law of Moses was part of the covenant that God made with Israel.

What then was God’s will for this covenant law? Well the prophet Jeremiah revealed God’s promise to make a new covenant with Israel in Jeremiah 31:31 to 34. Hebrews 8 verses 6 to 13 quotes the passage and tells us how God compares the old covenant, which includes the Ten Commandments, with this new covenant of Christ. Hebrews says, “But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” Now in speaking of a new covenant, Paul says, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”

The old covenant could not do what the new covenant can do. The new covenant is a better covenant enacted on better promises. Hebrews 10 verse 4 says of the sacrificial system of the old covenant, “For it’s impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” The sacrifices of the old covenant were incapable of removing our sins. And so Jesus Christ our Lord stepped in to give His own body as a sacrifice for our sins. Hebrews 10 verses 8 to 9 explains, “When he said, ‘You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings,’ (these are offered according to the law), and then he added, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will.’ And He does away with the first in order to establish the second.” The Lord Jesus did away with the first covenant and its laws so that He might establish the new covenant. We now have the better covenant enacted on better promises. The old is obsolete. And if you have any relationship with God at all today, it will be through the new covenant ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ. There’s no need to go back to the old covenant as a law for how we are to serve God; it’s obsolete and will not grant you forgiveness.

The Law of Moses was for the Jews, but the gospel is for all people. Jesus wanted to break down a barrier for Gentiles found in the Law, so that all people could come to God. The Bible says in Ephesians 2 verses 13 to 16, "But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off [that is Gentiles] have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both into one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity." As long as the Law stood, there would be a barrier between the Jew and the Gentile. The cross of Christ broke down that barrier and established a whole new relationship to God for both Jew and Gentile.

The authoritative standard for Christians today is not the Law of Moses but the words of Jesus Christ and His apostles. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 28 and verse 18, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." And according to Jesus in Matthew 7 verses 24 to 27, those who are spiritually wise hear His words and do them. Those who are foolish may hear His words but they do not do them. The foolish do as they please. The Lord Jesus said clearly in John 12 and verse 48, that "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." Now whether in matters of morality or matters relating to the church, we must turn to the words of Jesus found in the New Testament to know what God desires from us. Jesus is Lord.

Now if we'd be true disciples of the Lord Jesus, let's remain in His words and not deviate from them either to popular opinions today or to the old covenant written to the Jews. The Lord Jesus said in John 8 and verse 31 and 32, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Now if Jesus is our Lord, let's follow Him and not get sidetracked by human traditions, let's not get sidetracked by the creeds of men, or by the instructions that God gave to the Jews in that old covenant, that old covenant which is now obsolete. Now just as we Americans today, are no longer under British rule, so we as Christians today, are no longer under the rule of ancient Israel. The cross of Christ set us free. Let's continue in the truth so we might be true disciples and remain free. That's the will of the Lord Jesus, and we should make it our will to please Him always. The new covenant is such a great covenant, it's one built upon better promises, one that is mediated by a better mediator, and that's Jesus Himself. And so we can rely on that new covenant to give us the forgiveness of our sins, to give us freedom from sin, and to bless us with the truth and the hope that we have for eternal life. That's why my friend, when you open up your bible, and you see the difference between Old Testament and New Testament, remember that the Old Testament was written to the Jews, and written to them with words that were helpful to them in their setting and in their time. But the New Testament, the New Testament contains the words of Jesus, the words of Jesus that were not only for His day but for all time. You remember that Jesus made the point in Matthew 24 and verse 35, "that heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away." That's why we can have confidence in the words of Jesus. Why we can go to them and know that they are not only for the first century but for the twenty-first century. Oh, won't you come to Jesus, won't you live for Him, won't you study His word, and find out the things which he teaches. Let's pray together. Father, we're so grateful for Your love. And we're so thankful that You have given us Your words by which we may be saved and may find forgiveness. Father, we're thankful that we're under a new covenant which has been enacted on better promises. Father, we pray that

Your Will will be done on earth, just as it's done in heaven. And that our love for You and for one another will grow more and more as days go by. In Jesus name, Amen!

What does it mean to us today that we're under the new covenant found in the New Testament rather than under the old covenant found in the Old Testament? Well when the church began on the day of Pentecost, the church continually devoted itself to the apostles' teaching (Acts 2 and verse 42). And we too need to turn to the pages of the New Testament, to learn about that apostles teaching and to learn how to please the Lord Jesus. We should strive to please Him in every aspect of our lives.

Now since Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for sins, we should follow Him out of love. Jesus purchased the church with His blood, because the church was His focus. And He is the head of the church and the Savior of the body, we need to follow Him (Acts 5 and verse 23). Now if the church means so much to Him, it ought to be utterly important to us. We should look to the New Testament for our morals, for how we worship, for how the church is to function, and for our spiritual lives. We must never, never settle for second best or something less than the truth. And this is why we pattern ourselves after the New Testament and not the Old. That's why we meet each the Lord's day, the first day of the week, that's why we sing without instruments, why we pray, why we study, and why we take the Lord's Supper communion, that's why we give of our means as freewill offerings not tithes, because that's what the New Testament church did to please the Lord. And so we hope that you'll follow the Lord and put Him first.

Now to become a Christian, we ask that you believe in the Lord Jesus, that you repent of your sins, that you confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Now when you're baptized the Lord will wash away your sins, He'll add you to His church, the family of God. And today is the best day to be obedient to the Lord!

Well we hope that today's study about the Law and about Christ has stirred you to consider the way that you live for the Lord and your soul. Think about what God says to us as Christians. If you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, then mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. You can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of the churches in your area online, so we encourage you to go there. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses, and we'd love to send one to you. Now if you get in contact with us, don't worry, we're not here to get your money, we're not here to exploit you. We're here to help you come to know God and to help you to get to heaven.

So, we ask that you please get involved with a church of Christ. Now you might be looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, and we'll be happy to help you find one, so get in contact with us and we'll talk with you about it. Perhaps you'd like to talk to someone about your soul or maybe about your problems. We can help you find somebody in your area that'll be a friend to you and help you to come to know the Lord. Well we'll be back next week, so we ask you to tell a friend about the program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.