

Moses, Jesus or Both?

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One of the sharpest points of contention among religionists that purport to believe in the Bible concerns which part of the Bible is currently authoritative. Judaism continues to reject Jesus and the New Testament, honoring only the Old Testament given through Moses as its Bible. Most of nominal Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, attempts to combine elements of both Old and New Covenants in their doctrine and practice. Which, if either, is the correct approach?

The Old Testament and the New Testament are two distinct bodies of religious law (John 17). They were given to different groups of people for different purposes. The Law of Moses, based on the Ten Commandments, was given only to the Jews (Deu. 5:1-2). The New Testament, based on the Gospel plan of salvation, is universal – it is to be proclaimed to all nations, to all creation (Mat. 28:18-19; Mark 15:15-16). The Old Testament was never intended to be God's permanent or final covenant with man. It foretold its own replacement with a New Covenant (Jer. 31:31). This prophecy was fulfilled with the revelation of the Gospel of Christ, God's New Covenant (Heb. 1:1-2; 8:6-13). This Gospel is God's final arrangement or Covenant for man, for it is to be preached until the end of the world (Mat. 28:18-20). The Law of Moses was given by God to reveal what sin is (Rom. 7:7), but its animal sacrifices were insufficient to cleanse men of their sins (Heb. 10:4). It served as a “schoolmaster” or “tutor” concerning Christ until He came (Gal. 3:24). Now that Christ has come, toward Whom the Old Testament pointed, men are no longer under it (Gal. 3:19, 25).

When did its authority cease? Colossians 2:14 says that at the time Jesus was nailed to the cross, the Law was also figuratively “nailed to the cross” and taken out of the way. Speaking of the Old and New Testaments, the Bible says, “He [God] taketh away the first that he may establish the second (Heb. 10:9). Despite the plainness of such Scriptures, some find it difficult to accept the idea that the Old Testament (especially the Ten Commandments) is not now binding upon men. However, the Bible so teaches. Paul says that we have been delivered or discharged from the Law and then he defines what Law, by quoting one of the Ten Commandments, “Thou shalt not covet” (Rom, 7:6-7).

Some teach that all the Law of Moses except the Ten Commandments has been fulfilled and done away. However, the Bible allows no such a distinction. To some who wanted to bind

only a certain part of the Law, Paul warned that such a course obligates one to keep the Law *in its entirety* Gal. 5:3). The only parts of the Old Testament that are binding upon men since Christ died are those parts that are retained in the New Testament. But even these are to be kept, not because they are in the Ten Commandments, but because Christ commands them and we are subject to His New Testament.

Keen students of the Bible can easily find nine of the Ten Commandments restated in the New Testament, although not in the same words. Usually, their force is deepened, as in the command concerning adultery. Not only is the overt act forbidden, but also the lustful heart that produces the act (Mat. 5:28). Further, all nine of these great principles that are continued in the New Testament, were also in effect *before* God wrote them on the tables of stone. It was a sin to commit murder from the beginning (Gen. 4:8-12). Such principles have always been true and will always be in force because they are inherent in the nature of God and man's relationship to Him. The one command of the Ten Commandments that is not restated in the Gospel is the Sabbath law. The Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, was the day which the Jews were required to observe weekly. In the New Testament, the first day of the week, the day on which Jesus Christ was raised from the dead (Luke 24:1-3), is the special day on which His people are to worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).

It is a matter of exceeding importance that we understand that men are not now responsible for any of the Law of Moses. All who have lived since Jesus died on the cross will be judged by the words of Jesus, not of Moses (John 12:48). We are to heed the Son of God, not Moses and the prophets (Mat. 17:3-8). God now speaks to us through His Son, not through Moses (Heb. 1:1-2). Jesus, not Moses, has "all authority in Heaven and on earth" (Mat, 28:18). Many religious practices continue to be justified on the basis that such things were permitted in the Old Testament (e.g., use of instrumental music, burning of incense, infant church membership, et al.). However, the Scriptures make it clear that no man has the right to justify any religious doctrine or practice by an appeal to the Old Testament. Indeed, Paul says that those who do so have "fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

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