

What About the Old Testament?—No. 5

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When Christ died on the cross, the authority of the Old Testament died with Him, being nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). Christ is now our mediator of a better covenant which contains better promises than the first covenant (Heb. 8:6). John well sums up the distinction between the covenants: “For the law was given through Moses: grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Since the death of Christ, no one has been responsible for any part of the law of Moses, and it is both illogical and unscriptural to resort to Old Testament examples or commands for our religious authority.

Another conclusion also follows: **If we seek to bind upon people who have lived since the death of Christ any practice because it is in the Old Testament, we obligate ourselves to be bound by every precept of the Old Testament.** One of the great problems in the first century church was caused by half-converted Jews who sought to bind certain principles of the Law of Moses upon Christians. Almost all of Paul’s letters deal with this heresy. Some of his letters are specifically written to combat it (e.g., Galatians, Hebrews). One of the Old Testament practices the Jews sought to bind upon Christians was circumcision. Paul warns them that if they were circumcised as a religious rite, they would separate themselves from Christ and would fall from God’s grace (Gal. 5:2, 4). In the same context, he says, “Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law” (Gal. 5:3). One cannot pick and choose subjectively what he wants to practice out of the law. Yet, this is still a common practice. Some choose the Sabbath law to be observed but ignore the rest of the law. Others get their authority for a limited priesthood, holy water, and incense-burning from that dead law. Still others justify instrumental music because it was in Moses’ law. Remember Paul’s principle: **If you practice one part of the law, you are a debtor to keep it all.**

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