

Facts about the Law of Moses

A failure to distinguish between the Old Law and the New Law has given birth to numerous false doctrines over the years. God expects students of His word to, "Rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Consider several facts relating to the Law of Moses.

Exclusive for Israel – God explicitly stated in numerous places that the Law given to Moses at Mt. Sinai was specifically for the nation of Israel (Ex. 19:3-8; 34:10; Deut. 4:1-8, 34; Judg. 2:20). Israel was the world's first and only true theocracy: a nation ruled and governed by God Himself (1 Sam. 8:1-22). God alone was responsible for choosing the people He would govern, appointing the land where they would dwell, and giving the Law they were to keep. The Law of Moses was intended to separate Israel from among other nations and make them holy before God (Lev. 11:44-45; 20:26).

Could not permanently fix man's sin problem – Although God promised redemption and forgiveness to those who kept the Law of Moses, the New Testament authors repeatedly point out that the Old Law was incapable of making men truly righteous in God's sight: "If righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died in vain" (Gal. 2:21). The Hebrews writer admits, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). The promises of forgiveness under the Law of Moses demanded a better Sacrifice than anything man could provide (Rom. 8:3-4).

Pointed to Christ – Jesus flatly said concerning the Old Testament: "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39). The Lord once began at Moses and all the Prophets and, "Expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27). Early Christians, "Vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ" (Acts 18:28). If we do not see something of Christ in the Law of Moses, we have missed the point entirely (Gal. 3:21-26).

Nailed to the cross – Jesus stated that He did not come to destroy the Law of Moses, but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17-18). He promised that His sacrifice on the cross would inaugurate a New Covenant under which the remission of sins would be freely available (Matt. 26:28). Paul calls the Law of Moses a, "Handwriting of requirements that was against us, contrary to us," and goes on to say that Jesus, "Has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col. 2:14). The Law of Moses ended in its entirety when Jesus died (cf. Matt. 27:51; Heb. 8:6-13). No one can be saved by keeping the Law of Moses today (Acts 13:38-41).

Still profitable for our learning – Although the Law of Moses was fulfilled in Christ and nailed to His cross, it remains an important teaching tool for the people of God. Paul says concerning the Law of Moses that, "Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might

have hope” (Rom. 15:4). Christians need to study the Old Law because many important principles and lessons are found therein. The book of James alone contains several references to Old Testament heroes of faith (James 2:21-25; 5:11, 17). Christians would be bewildered by these examples if we never studied the Old Testament Scriptures.

May God help more people to handle His word accurately.

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