

**THE LAW OF MOSES**

**AND**

**THE LAW OF CHRIST**

# The Law of Moses and the Law of Christ

## PART ONE

### INTRODUCTION, GENERAL OBSERVATIONS & THE PURPOSE OF THE MOSAIC LAW

#### INTRODUCTION

\*A lot of confusion revolves around the Law of Moses. This is true for unsaved Jewish people, unsaved Gentiles, Jewish believers and Gentile believers. Most unsaved Jewish people believe that they must try to keep the Law in order to get right with God. Many Gentile believers want to express their faith in Jesus with an over emphasis upon Jewish customs and beliefs. Many Jewish believers over emphasize the role and place of their Jewish background to the point of de-emphasizing the need of getting to know Jesus the Messiah. Paul addressed this issue in Phil. 3:4-10.

Phil. 3:4-10 - although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

Paul's desire was to advance in his knowledge of Jesus his Savior, not gain a better understanding of his Jewish heritage.

\*There is confusion about the Law for unbelievers and certain denominations. In many cases whole denominations put themselves under the Law of Moses. They have their church meetings on Saturday, they try to keep the dietary laws without realizing that none of these Laws were ever given to them.

## Here's what we will be studying:

- \*What is the Law of Moses? Of what does it consist?
- \*What is the purpose of the Law of Moses? Why was it given?
- \*What is the character of the Law of Moses? Are there different parts to it, or is it one unified Law?
- \*Is the Mosaic Law operative in our present day? If so, how much of it is, if not, does that mean we are without any Law?
- \*Does the New Testament speak of a new Law that the believer is under as opposed to the Law of Moses?

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

### **1. The Law of Moses was never given so people could try to keep it in order to be saved.**

**Hypothetically, the Law could give life if it was kept perfectly, but no one could keep it, except Jesus. The Law simply doesn't have the ability to save anybody.**

Gal. 2:16 - nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.

Gal. 2:21 - I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.

Gal. 3:10-11 - For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them. Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, The righteous man shall live by faith.

James 2:10 - For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

### **2. The Law of Moses was given to the people of Israel. It was not given to the Church, nor to other Gentile nations.**

Rom. 9:3-4 - For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises,

Deut. 4:7-8 - For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call on Him? Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments

as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?

Ps. 147:19-20 - He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel.  
He has not dealt thus with any nation; And as for His ordinances, they have not known  
them. Praise the Lord!

**It is important to remember this: binding the Mosaic Law upon the Church has caused a multitude of confusion and false teaching within the Body of the Messiah.**

### **3. What is the nature of the Law of Moses?**

**Biblically speaking, the Law was one of the Covenants that God entered into with the people of Israel.**

Ex. 34:27-28 - Then the Lord said to Moses, Write down 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 did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

**The Bible teaches that the Law was one of the Covenants that God entered into with the people of Israel. Some covenants are unconditional, some are conditional. The Mosaic Covenant is conditional. It is also the only covenant that is not called eternal; it was to continue only until the coming of the seed, (Gal. 3:19,16). There is a very close relationship between the Abrahamic and the Mosaic Covenants. the Mosaic Covenant was added alongside the Abrahamic Covenant in order to define the obedience that was required in order to obtain the blessings promised by the Abrahamic Covenant.**

#### **I. What is the Law of Moses? Of what does it consist?**

**The Mosaic Law is more than the 10 commandments. It contains 613 commandments.**

#### **II. What is the purpose of the Law of Moses? Why was it given?**

**The Mosaic Law was given for several reasons. It has many good and valid purposes.**

#### **PURPOSES OF THE LAW OF MOSES:**

##### **1. To reveal the holiness of God**

**In the Law of Moses we see what God accepts and doesn't accept as far as behavior is concerned. When one reads the Law, they discover that God is a very Holy God. God desires that all people know that He is holy and opposed to all sin and evil. The Law clearly sets forth His standards of right and wrong. It doesn't matter if people have a different opinion as to what is right or wrong. If God has spoken on a certain subject and reveals His feelings about it, that's what's important. We are obligated to conform our behavior to His standards. It's not the other way around.**

Lev. 19:1-2 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

1 Pet. 1:15-16 - but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy.

## **2. To reveal and expose the sinfulness of man and sin**

**The Law is like a mirror. It will reveal dirt on someone's face when they look into it, but it doesn't have the ability to cleanse it. As we read the Law, we see our sin and how dreadful it is in the sight of God. But, we are left without a means of cleansing except for the fact of what God did through His Son the Messiah.**

Rom. 3:19-20 - Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Rom. 7:7 - What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."

## **3. To reveal the standards of holiness required of those who desire fellowship with God**

**The Law sets down the standards and principles for those who desire to walk in fellowship with God. Israel was a nation uniquely called by God. In order for them to walk in fellowship with God they needed to walk in a way that was pleasing to Him. The Law lays down many of the standards that would aid them in this.**

Ps. 24:3-4 - Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place?  
He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, And  
has not sworn deceitfully.

#### **4. To make provision for the covering of sin and to make possible restoration back to fellowship**

**In Leviticus chapters 1-7 there are five offerings described. One of the things the Law did was to prove to Israel that they sinned and fell short of God's standards. But, God provided a way for their sins to be covered. The offerings did not take away sin, but they manifested that the person offering them looked forward by faith to a time when one would come and take away their sin. In the meantime the offerings helped them keep sin in check.**

#### **5. To make a distinction between Israel and all other nations**

**Haman was exactly right in his conclusions about Israel's laws. They were different. This was really one of the specific reasons for many of their commandments. Their dietary laws, their clothing laws, their laws about worship, just to name a few, were given to keep them distinct and separate from the other nations. This was God's desire for Israel. One of the places that Israel ran into trouble was when they became relaxed in this and they became like the other nations that were around them.**

Esth. 3:8 - Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of all other people, and they do not observe the king's laws, so it is not in the king's interest to let them remain.

#### **6. To help a person understand they need to be saved**

**It was through Saul's reading of the Law that he discovered his problem with coveting. Before this information, Saul of Tarsus didn't see this major flaw in himself. God can still use His Law in this way. When unsaved people read the Word of God, they will come across verses that will manifest their sinfulness.**

Rom. 7:7-9 - What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, " You shall not covet. But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died.

## **7. The Law was to be a unifying principle for the nation of Israel**

**The Law was designed to bring the people of Israel together under the same umbrella of standards, rules and regulations. When Israel was presented with this, they agreed to do them.**

**This is not unlike what the Word of God should be for the believer. That which is in the Bible is our standard for belief and behavior. It separates us from the world, but, unites us with all other true believers.**

Ex. 19:7-8 So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the Lord had commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, All that the Lord has spoken we will do! And Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord.

## **8. The Law was given to make provision and give direction for Israel to worship God**

**In the Law we find all that Israel needed to know to worship God. The Holy Feast Days were laid out for them in Leviticus 23. Directions for the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the sacrifices were clearly given. Israel was not allowed to worship God as they thought best. It was made known to them by God as to how they were to worship Him and much of that information is contained in the Law.**

## **9. The Law was designed to lead one to Jesus as Messiah**

**Paul explains that the Law was a "tutor." In ancient cultures a tutor was usually a slave who was responsible for watching over a child. He would take them to and from school and check their behavior. They would seek to teach the child right from wrong. In Paul's analogy, the Law did that. It taught the Jewish people about themselves. When the**

**Law is properly used, it will lead a person to the Messiah Jesus.**

Gal. 3:24-25 - Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Messiah, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

## **PART TWO**

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAW AND THE CURRENT FUNCTIONS OF THE LAW**

#### **III. What is the character of the Law? Are there different parts to it, or is it one unified Law?**

**How does Scripture view the Law of Moses? The Bible portrays the Law as a single unified code of standards. There are not several parts to it. It is one Law. There are several kinds of Laws that may be categorized, however that does not do away with the fact of the unity of the Law.**

#### **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAW OF MOSES**

##### **1. The Scriptures view the Mosaic Law as a single unit. All 613 commandments are a single unit that makes up the Law of Moses.**

James 2:10 - For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

Gal. 3:10 - For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.

##### **2. The Law is one unit. A common practice is to divide the Law into three sections: moral, civil and ceremonial commandments.**

**Those who divide up the Law like this feel that a believer is no longer obligated to the civil or the ceremonial aspects of the Law, but they believe that the believer is obligated to keep the moral commandments in the Law of Moses.**

**This is a convenient way to divide them up for the purpose of studying the different kinds of commandments, but the Word of God never separates them this way. One cannot keep one part of the Law and not the rest.**

**IV. Is the Mosaic Law operative in our day? If so, how much of it must be obeyed? If it is not operative, does that mean we are presently without any Law? What is the current status of the Law?**

#### **PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS**

**Doesn't the fact that 9 of the 10 commandments being carried over into the NT prove that at least part of the Law is still in effect? We know that the civil and ceremonial aspects of the Law cannot be followed, but what about the moral aspect?**

**If part of the Mosaic Law (the Moral Law) is to be kept by NT believers, how do we reconcile the Bible's teaching that the Mosaic Law was only given to Israel and not to the other nations, nor to the Church?**

**Since the Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative, does that mean that there is no use for the Law at all? No, the Law still has the power to reveal the holy character of God and the sinfulness of man. There continues to be value in teaching the Law and the Ten Commandments since they are in the Bible and as such are profitable, II Tim. 3:16**

**1. The clear teaching of the NT is that all the Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative as a result of the death of Jesus.**

Rom. 6:14-15 - For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!

Rom. 10:4 - For Messiah is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

**2. NT believers have died in Messiah, therefore making the Law ineffective. Laws of any kind have no binding effect upon someone who is dead. They mean nothing. This is Paul's primary point in the beginning of Romans 7.**

Rom. 7:1-7 - Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband... Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of the Messiah, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. 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. What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."

**It's interesting that Paul uses a commandment that's from the "Moral Law" (You shall not covet.) to prove his point that we are no longer under the Law. If we were still under the "Moral Law" it seems that he would not have used a commandment from the "Moral Law" to prove that we are no longer under the Law.**

**BIBLICAL FACTS ABOUT THE MOSAIC LAW**

**1. The Mosaic Law was never meant to be permanent, but only temporary.**

Gal. 3:19 - Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made.

**But, someone might ask, "What about Matthew 5:17-19?"**

Matt. 5:17-19 - "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

**The Mosaic Law did not end with His life, but with His death.**

**As long as Jesus was still alive, He was under the Law of Moses. His statement in Matt. 5:17-19 was made while He was still alive. When Jesus said, "It is finished," the Mosaic Law became inoperative. When Jesus died, all the Law was accomplished and therefore no longer needed. To repeat, since the Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative, does that mean that there is no use for the Law at all? No, the Law still has the power to reveal the holy character of God and the sinfulness of man. There continues to be value in teaching the Law and the Ten Commandments since they are in the Bible and as such are profitable, II Tim. 3:16**

**2. Jesus being a priest after the order of Melchizedek, required a new Law. He could not function under the Law of Moses as a priest.**

Heb. 7:11-18 - Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of Him, Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek. For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness.

**Jesus, being a priest after the order of Melchizedek, could not function under the Law of Moses, because He was not from the tribe of Levi. Therefore, a new Law was required. As such, there was no longer a need for the Law of Moses to remain in effect.**

**3. The Mosaic Law was the middle wall of partition spoken of by Paul that is now broken down.**

Eph. 2:14-15 - 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, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace.

**The Law of Moses, which has caused enmity between Jewish people and Gentiles has been rendered inoperative. In Christ, Jewish people and Gentiles are one and because of Jesus, there is now peace between both groups. The hostility between Jewish people and Gentiles has been destroyed. This was accomplished by making the Law inoperative.**

**Harold Hoehner- “Since the whole Mosaic Law has been rendered inoperative for Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ, it is a false dichotomy to distinguish between the moral and ceremonial laws making only the ceremonial laws inoperative. Christ is the end of the whole law for believers, Rom. 10:4, and we are no longer under that pedagogue, Gal. 3:25. In fact, we have died to the law, Rom. 7:1-6. Does this mean that there are no laws in the Mosaic law that the believer today is obligated to obey? Only those that have been reiterated in the NT. We are under the new covenant and the old covenant has been done away. We are now under the Law of Christ.”**

**To summarize, the entire Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative. The Law is still in Scripture and can be used as a teaching tool to show God’s standards as well as man’s sinfulness. It can be used to teach many spiritual truths. However it has completely ceased to function as an authority over a believer in Christ.**

**Since the Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative, does that mean we are without any Law? Can we simply do as we please as believers? If the Law of Moses is no longer in effect, what Law is in effect?**

**V. Does the New Testament speak of a new Law that the believer is under as opposed to the Mosaic Law? Yes! It is called the Law of Christ.**

Gal. 6:2 - Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

Rom. 8:2-4 - For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

## **BIBLICAL FACTS ABOUT THE LAW OF CHRIST**

### **1. The Mosaic Law and the Law of Christ contain many similar commands**

**One reason there is so much confusion in the minds of many about the relationship of the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ as found in the New Testament is because many commandments are similar to each other.**

**Nine of the ten commandments are carried over into the Law of Christ from the Law of Moses. However, they were not carried over as a continuation of the Law of Moses, but as the new Law of Christ. That's because the Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative.**

### **2. Our focus should be on the commandments that are found in the Law of Christ**

**The Law of Christ contains all the individual commands of Jesus and the Apostles that are applicable to Christians. They are found in the New Testament. Just as the Law of Moses was only given to a specific group, the Jewish people, the Law of Christ has been given to a specific group of people, true believers is Jesus.**

John 14:15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

John 15:10 - If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

1 John 2:3-4 - And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

1 John 3:24 - And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

1 John 5:3 - For this is the Love of God that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

1 Cor. 9:19-23 - For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

### **Here is an example of the confusion that arises by trying to make the Law of Moses apply to the present day Church. Deut. 22:5**

Deut. 22:5 - A woman shall not wear man's clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman's clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God.

**First, if we are going to try to use Deut. 22:5 to forbid the wearing of pants by women, what else does chapter 22 have to say? In other words, you can't just pull out one verse and neglect the others.**

Deut. 22:5 - A woman shall not wear man's clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman's clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God.

Deut. 22:11 "You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together.

**Second, what kind of clothes were being worn when this command was written? They both wore robes. No one wore pants back then. The point is, wear clothes that are made specifically for your gender.**

**What does the Law of Christ have to say about clothing? What command do we find that will give us some instruction? After all that is what we as believers are under.**

1 Tim. 2:9-10 - Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments; but rather by means of good works, as befits women making a claim to godliness.

1 Pet. 3:3-4 - And let not your adornment be merely external-- braiding the hair, and wearing

gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

**What if a true believer freely chooses to keep parts of the Mosaic Law? Is that ok?**

**He is free to do so, but he must keep several things in mind.**

**There is no salvation by keeping the Law**

**There is no sanctification produced by keeping the Law**

**One must not insist that other believers keep the same Laws**

**In conclusion, the Law is a wonderful thing that God gave to Israel.**

**Many helpful lessons can still be learned from it, even though it has been rendered inoperative. This is true for all believers. It should be read, studied, preached from, used during evangelism and used as a means to see the holiness of our great God. However, we must realize that any attempt to keep the Law of Moses to try to obtain salvation will not work. We must also keep in mind that the Law cannot produce sanctification in the life of a believer.**

**The Law today for believers is the Law of Christ. By His grace and for His glory, we must strive to obey it, then we will be doing what He desires.**