

# Should We Follow the Old Testament Today?

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When the children of Israel came to Mt. Sinai in the third month after they left Egypt (Exodus 19:1), Jehovah gave them a law. That law is known in the Bible as the Law of Moses. In comparison to the new covenant that Jesus gave us, the one that God gave at Sinai is sometimes called the first (Hebrews 10:9) or the first covenant (Hebrews 8:7).

Should we seek to keep/follow/obey the law of the Old Testament today? This is a question that has sparked many discussions, some of them quite emotional. Many are quick to affirm that we should follow the old law since it is the word of the living God. It is, indeed, His Word. That is not the question. The question is, is that law, the Law of Moses, still binding on mankind today?

I personally do not know of any religious group today that makes an effort to follow the law of the Old Testament 100% of the time. Such people might exist, but I have never encountered them or heard tell of such folks. Do you know anyone that is executing people for not resting on the seventh day? (Saturday). Yet, that is what the Law of Moses commanded (Exodus 35:1-2; Exodus 31:15). Do you know of any people of our time that have with great haste fled to a city of refuge, such as Kedesh in Galilee? (Joshua 20:7-8). Yet, that is what God commanded in the old law for an Israelite that unintentionally killed another person.

There are, however, many sincere people, who are convinced that we all ought to keep the old law. Such people, whether they admit such or not, do not really want to follow ALL of the Old Testament, but just some portion(s) of it. Some advocate the teaching that giving tithes is mandatory, because it was part of the old law. Others say that we must keep the Sabbath, because it was part of that law. Still others claim that women are unclean for a certain period of time after giving birth to a child. Why? Because Leviticus 12 says so. And what about eating pork? It is not right, according to some. Why? Because such is forbidden by Leviticus 11:7. What about using mechanical instruments of music in worship? Such is okay, according to some. Their reasoning? It is right there in the Bible—in the Old Testament (e.g., Psalm 150). Other examples could be given, but you get the point. Many run to the old law to justify things they teach or practice. But none are consistent enough to go back and keep every aspect of the Old Testament law. They pick and choose what they want out of the old law and disregard other aspects of it.

Some helpful facts to keep in mind when it comes to the old law include:

- That law was given only to the nation of Israel (Exodus 20:1-3; Deuteronomy 5:1-15).
- It included more than just the Ten Commandments. Per the counting of the Jews themselves, more than 600 different laws were part of it.
- The law of Moses, law of God, and law of the Lord are one and the same (Luke 2:21-24).
- The old law was temporary. By God's plan, it was to be in effect only till the seed should come. The seed is the Christ (Galatians 3:16, Galatians 3:19).
- When Jesus died on the cross, He abolished the old law, nailing it to His cross (Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:14).
- One that would try to get into or remain in good

standing with the Lord by keeping the old law would be obligated to keep ALL of it (Galatians 5:2-3). In view of this, picking and choosing from its precepts would be forbidden.

The covenant of the Christ which we follow is a better covenant with better promises (Hebrews 8:6). Why go back to something that is not as good?! Remember, Jesus, not Moses, has the words of eternal life (John 6:68). We are to hear King Jesus because He has all authority (Matthew 28:18). We hear Him by following His gospel, not the old law. In view of these clear facts should we follow the Old Testament today? No. Not today, not tomorrow, not ever.

– Roger Campbell