

START WITH A STORY:

LESSON THEME:

INTRODUCTION: "How do you know when to apply Old Testament law and when not to,"

LESSON: There is much confusion about how a believer should approach the Old Testament. Some actually neglect the reading of the Old Testament entirely.

DID YOU KNOW: The Old Testament is referenced quite a lot in the New Testament. Consider this:

- In the first 12 chapters of **Matthew**, the Old Testament is quoted 21x.
- In the first 12 chapters of the book of **Acts**, the Old Testament is quoted 19x.
- In the first 12 chapters of the book of **Romans**, the Old Testament is quoted 41x.
- In the first 12 chapters of the book of **Hebrews**, the Old Testament is quoted 43+x.

(And, of course, everything else they said was from the New Testament, you'll notice. :-P)

The pattern is consistent throughout the entire New Testament. New Testament writers make scores of comments concerning Old Testament events and teachings. Our Lord Jesus and all the apostles quoted extensively out of the Old Testament. An excellent understanding of the New Testament requires an excellent understanding of the Old.

1. OLD TESTAMENT LAWS - Concerning Old Testament laws and ordinances, Jesus Christ said in **Matthew 5:7-19**: *"Think **not** that I am come **to destroy the law, or the prophets**: I am not come to destroy, **but to fulfill**. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, **till all be fulfilled**. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."*

God's Word says in **Galatians 3:24** that the law was our '**schoolmaster**' bringing us unto Christ and **Colossians 2:17** records that it was a '**shadow**' of the New Testament Christ to come. So then the Old Testament law was a **shadow** (*silhouette*) and a **schoolmaster** to bring us unto Jesus Christ **who came to fulfill the law and not destroy it**.

EXAMPLE: Exodus 12:21-27 – God delivered the Israelites out of Egypt's bondage and in order to accomplish this feat, the Death angel was employed to slay the first born of all Egypt. All were instructed to apply the blood of the sacrificed Passover lamb to the lintel and the two side posts of the door of their house. If they did, the Death angel would pass them over and the first born in the home would be spared.

In this concept of the law being a '**shadow**' of the Christ to come, Egypt's bondage draws a parallel to a life under the power of sin. The Jews were delivered when the blood of the lamb was applied, just as the blood of Christ washes away the repentant and surrendered person's sins. When the Death angel passes over Egypt, he must leave unharmed those under the blood-covering, just as Satan must leave unharmed those who have the blood of Christ applied to the lintel and doorposts of their hearts.

The above paragraph is an example of the **shadow** concept. The following paragraph is an example of fulfillment.

2. OLD TESTAMENT LAW FULFILLED - The Old Testament Passover sacrifice is commanded by God in **Exodus 12:14** to be observed forever. **The Passover sacrifice was a shadow of the crucifixion of Christ** and we do in fact observe the fulfillment of this Old Testament law when we observe the Lord's Supper, also known as "*communion*." Jesus Christ is called "Jesus Christ our Passover," in **1 Corinthians 5:7**, and "*the Lamb of God*,"

*which taketh away the sin of the world," in John 1:29. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Passover. He is the Passover blood of salvation. **He did not destroy the law; He simply fulfilled it.** All blood sacrifices, for instance, have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, not destroyed.*

This principle of fulfillment is clearly displayed in the believer's everyday life. Those who are born again through Christ Jesus are free from the ordinances of the law through faith. God's Word says the curse of the law is death. **Romans 7:5-6:** *"For when we were in the flesh, the **motions** (effects/affliction) of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."*

*ILL – THE STRANGE MARRIAGE - See **Romans 7:1-13** – A fascinating illustration is given regarding the power of sin in that of a marriage union. The marriage is only dissolved when one of the two dies. You DID know that marriage is a permanent thing, right? The trouble in my generation is, from tattoos to marriages, the Thought-to-Permanence ratio is very shallow.*

Christ is the solution, in that initially, we are 'born' into a marriage to SIN. It has power over us. It holds us in bondage. It is the master, and we are enslaved to its power... The only way out is death, because that is where sin, when it is finished, ends up. The LAW exposes our unholy union. The LAW reveals our horrible destination.

However, the GOSPEL MESSAGE is that Christ died FIRST... Fulfilling the Law. Dying in our place. Freeing us not only from the power of the tyrant, SIN... but also freeing us UP to a union to Christ.

There are churches meeting all across America, filled with Adulterous Christians who are claiming to be married to Jesus AND, yet, they are still sporting the wedding band of their first marriage to SIN. How can we view this as anything but Adultery and Polygamy?!?

And Romans 8:1-4: *"There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That **the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us**, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*

The concept of the curse of the law is not destroyed, but **fulfilled in Christ**. Believers die to the evils of this life through the principle of mortification, which simply means putting to death the carnal nature, as stated in **Romans, 6:3, 4 and 6:** *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*

Verse 6 adds, *"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."*

So then the Old Testament law is a **schoolmaster** and **shadow** of the coming New Testament Christ, who would come to fulfill the law and not destroy it.

3. HOW MUCH OF THE LAW APPLIES TO THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH? - In **Acts 15**, the Bible tells of a heated dispute in the church concerning a matter of the law: **CIRCUMCISION**. Some said that unless Gentile converts to Christ were circumcised, they could not be saved. *(As an aside, please note that obeying or disobeying God's commandments has spiritual as well as physical ramifications. Circumcision, which has been fulfilled in Christ through the spiritual circumcision of the heart (**Romans 2**), is certainly not a requirement for salvation, but has very real benefits to the flesh. For its physical benefits the world would be well advised to obey.)* Because of the seriousness of the issue, Paul, Barnabas and others were sent to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem to settle the

issue. After the matter was weighed before the Lord, the conclusion was penned in **Acts 15:28-29**: *"For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."*

Concerning Gentile believers, what was carried over from Old Testament law and not fulfilled in Christ are the four things listed:

1. abstaining from meats offered unto idols,
2. from blood,
3. from things strangled
4. and from fornication, which is any manner of illicit sex.

The ordinances and observations of the law have been fulfilled in Christ through a believer's faith. Even laws such as *"thou shalt not kill"* and *"thou shalt not steal,"* for example, **have been fulfilled in Christ because if one is walking in the spirit of Christ, he will not kill or steal.** **1 John 3:9**: *"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."*

Even God-given dietary laws are fulfilled, and not destroyed, in the life of a confessing believer because foods declared unclean can be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer (**1 Timothy 4:4-5**). But, be it known that the unregenerated, which represent well over 90% of the world's population, have no such Christly power. If they disobey God's dietary commandments, they will reap their sowing as science clearly defines.

Speaking of Dietary Laws, imbibing' in alcohol, which is clearly against Scriptures, isn't 'excused' for the modern Christian simply because, *"Christ fulfilled the law, so It's ok now."* Why not? Because it is clearly taught against.

The New Testament book of **1 Timothy 1:8-10** reads: *"But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that **the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;**"*

Note that the law is not for the servants of the Lord Jesus for whom the law is fulfilled through faith. But the law is for those who reject His grace, which is well over 90% of the world's population.

God's commandments are perfect and always deliver spiritual and physical benefits. God's dietary laws, health laws, spiritual laws, social laws, and more are always perfect science. His observations and insights are, of course, supernatural and fully illuminating. For example, God, who created our bodies, gives explicit instruction about what we should put in our stomachs. Medical science clearly certifies that the forbidden or unclean foods outlawed in the Old Testament are definitely detrimental to man, shaving years off his life span. A wise man will take heed to God's commandments simply because they are right. The born-again people can sanctify their food with God's Word and prayer, but the vast majority of the world cannot. It should be noted that many confessing Christians lightly approach this issue when it is quite a supernatural feat to transform a pork chop into a lamb chop through faith. Vain repetition won't get the job done. Here is a grocery item tid-bit - to believers - when spending your own money, take home the foods our God has endorsed.

4. "HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN TO APPLY OLD TESTAMENT LAW AND WHEN NOT TO," – For example, what is God's position on tattoos and body piercing. These two deeds, which are forbidden in the Bible, are now known to be a major contributor to the deadly epidemic of Hepatitis C, which is sweeping the world. Tattoos and body piercing will show up with many more physical curses to which the world is presently oblivious.

There is a yardstick in the scriptures that a believer must use when checking his or her motivation to do any particular thing. **1 Corinthians 10:31**: *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, **do all to the glory of God.**"*

If my motivation is to bring glory to God and if it's according to the fullness of His Word, I can proceed with confidence. If I cannot do it in the confidence that meets the standard of **1 Corinthians 10:31**, then I should not do it.

Typically, the motivation to get a tattoo or a body part pierced is not to bring glory unto God, but it is simply walking in a vain show (*Does this make me appear more interesting?*). Now top that off with the fact that God directly commands against it. The fulfillment of the law through the faith in Christ concept, explained earlier, will not work here. **WHY NOT?**

From Tattoos to Marriage, my modern generation's Thought-To-Permanance ration is pretty shallow. The current creed is, "It's my body, I can do with it what I want. Only God can judge me." – God said, "*Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*"... we're bought with a price. *How is God going to judge?!? To which way will be His ruling?*

Because, both the SPIRIT of the law is violated, as well as the LETTER of the law become openly scorned. If you have already had the procedure done and are concerned about it, ask the Lord to forgive you for the error, then call for your elder or pastor to anoint you with oil and pray the prayer of faith as commanded in **James 5:14-16**, and God will give you clear direction and healing.

In recapping:

1. The law is a schoolmaster bringing us unto Christ, and it is also a **shadow** of the coming Christ.
2. Jesus Christ came to **fulfill** the law, **not destroy** it.
3. For believers, the law is fulfilled through faith in Christ Jesus, providing he or she is **walking uprightly** in Christ. (*Romans 8*)
4. But, by enlarge, the world population decidedly lives under the curse of the law.
5. God's commandments have **spiritual** as well as **physical ramifications**.
6. God's laws are always **perfect** science.
7. Those who **obey** will reap the **benefits**.