

Responding to God Word: How to Faithfully Interpret the Bible

Men's Bible Study at Park View

A Study of the Old Testament Law

May 17, 2005

Chief Justice Roy Moore recently made national news when he defied orders from a federal court to remove a monument containing the Ten Commandments from the state Supreme Court building in Alabama. His removal from office and the ensuing political debate among Christians across the nation revealed strongly differing opinions about the meaning and role of religious symbols in public life. Perhaps this is an appropriate time to review the meaning of the Old Testament Law for contemporary Christians. This study will focus on the most appropriate way to interpret the old covenant from the perspective of the new covenant revealed in Jesus Christ.

Read Exodus 20:1-17

Which of these commands are repeated in the New Testament?
Which of these are found in our American law codes?

Would you describe these as the commands of God for Christians today? Why or why not?

Taking this passage as "the word of God for us today," how would you interpret these commands for the church? For society?

Some stipulations of the Old Testament have clearly not been renewed in the New Testament.

Part of the Old Covenant is renewed in the New Covenant.

Read II Corinthians 3: 7-18

What does the "ministry that brought death" stand for in these verses? Why would Paul have given it such a designation?

Make a list of contrasts that Paul sees between the old covenant and the new covenant.

Where was the old covenant written? The new covenant?

What does it mean to be transformed into the Lord's likeness?

Only that which is explicitly renewed from the Old Testament law can be considered binding for Christians.

All of the Old Testament law is still the Word of God for us even though it is not still the command of God to us.

Read each Scripture (quoted from the NRSV) below and state whether or not the command applies to Christians today. By what principle of biblical interpretation did you decide? (None of these are stated in the Ten Commandments, but they are considered part of the body of Old Testament law).

Exodus 21: 15 Whoever strikes father or mother shall be put to death.

Exodus 22:18 You shall not permit a female sorcerer to live.

Exodus 22: 25 If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them.

Leviticus 11:26 Every animal that has divided hoofs but is not cleft-footed or does not chew the cud is unclean for you; everyone who touches one of them shall be unclean.

Leviticus 18:22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

Leviticus 19:18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Leviticus 19:27 You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard.

Leviticus 25:35 If any of your kin fall into difficulty and become dependent on you, you shall support them; they shall live with you as though resident aliens.

Leviticus 27:30 All tithes from the land, whether the seed from the ground or the fruit from the tree, are the Lord's; they are holy to the Lord.

Deuteronomy 22:22 If a man is caught lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die.