

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Christian and The Old Testament

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The fact we refer to things written in the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms, as the “Old Testament,” assumes we recognize something coming along as “new”. The New Testament reveals unto us the gospel of Christ through which all men can be saved (*Romans 1:16-17*). Calling ourselves Christians, being disciples of Christ who saved us from our sins, how should we regard the Old Testament?

First, we must recognize that the Old Testament is God-inspired Scripture which points to Christ for salvation. Timothy was instructed from a babe the “sacred writings” which are “able” to make him “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ.” These sacred writings were “given by inspiration of God” (*2 Timothy 3:15-17*). Paul also referred to the “law” as a “tutor to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith” (*Galatians 3:24*). Now that “faith has come” as revealed in the New Testament through the gospel of Christ, the Christian understands that he or she is “no longer under a tutor” (*Galatians 3:25*). This does not mean that

the Christian is not under “law”, just because we are no longer under it as our tutor, for the Christian is under “law to Christ” (*1 Corinthians 9:21*). The new law in Christ is what the Christian lives under, not the old law of Moses.

The Old Testament promised that the day would come when God would establish a “new covenant” different from the one given to the Israelites when God delivered them from Egyptian bondage (*Jeremiah 31:31*). The covenant given to the Israelites from Mt. Horeb (*Deuteronomy 5:2*) contained the ten commandments written on tables of stone (*Deuteronomy 9:9*). Under the new covenant, God “would remember their sin no more” (*Jeremiah 31:34*). This blessing is one of the “better promises” found in the new covenant of which Jesus is a mediator (*Hebrews 8:6*) Through Him the first covenant from Horeb was made “old” (*Hebrews 8:13*). What the Old Testament promised under the old covenant, the New Testament reveals that it has been fulfilled under the new covenant in Christ.

Jesus was born under the old law and came to earth to fulfill it (*Galatians 4:4, Matthew 5:17*). His mission was not to “abolish” it, in the sense of disregarding it or looking lightly upon it, but to accomplish its demands and complete it. Jesus said “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all be accomplished.” He fulfilled it not only by keeping the law perfectly, but accomplishing what the law and the prophets promised (*Luke 24:44*) Having satisfying its requirements, he perfectly fulfilled the law “nailing it to the cross” and “taking it out of the way” (*Colossians 2:14*). This is why God’s people today do not use the old law revealed in the Old Testament to establish religious practices (*Colossians 2:16*).

What is revealed in the Old Testament is not the Christian’s standard for righteousness today, for it has accomplished its end in Christ (*Romans 10:4*). But it does contain things “for our learning” (*Romans 15:4*). We have many examples revealed in the Old Testament, both good and bad, to help us as we live under a new law, rejoicing in the blessings of a new covenant as revealed in the New Testament.