

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 the 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 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, when just a babe, was instructed in the “*sacred writings*” which were “*able*” to make him “*wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ.*” Paul claims these same 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*). Through the law comes the knowledge of sin (*Romans 7:7*). There it is standing as a schoolmaster connecting my sin with the specific precept I violated, constantly reminding me of my need for the promised Saviour. Now that the “*faith has come*” as revealed in the New Testament through the gospel of Christ, the Christian understands 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 he or she is no longer under it as our tutor. The Christian is under “*law to Christ*” (*1 Corinthians 9:21*). The new law in Christ is what the Christian lives under in submission, 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 in Christ under the new covenant.

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*” the

Old Law in the sense of looking lightly upon it, but His aim was 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*” (*Matthew 5:18*). He fulfilled its minute details perfectly, accomplishing what the law and the prophets promised (*Luke 24:44*). He canceled the debt we owed by “*nailing it to the cross,*” wiping clean our indebtedness (*Colossians 2:14*).

Therefore, God’s people today do not use the Old Testament Law to establish religious practices, or judge those who do not keep some of its requirements, such as keeping the sabbath day holy (*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, good and bad, to help us as we live under a new law, rejoicing in the blessings of the new covenant revealed in the New Testament.

The Christian must have high regard for the Old Testament, without making it current law under Christ!