



THE OLD TESTAMENT

Seeing the Big Picture

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Part 5B: The Wilderness Period, cont'd

It was after the exodus, and during the wandering in the desert wilderness, that God took the next step toward making the Israelites a nation. He gave them the Mosaic Law to provide a common form of government and the appropriate way to worship Him. He *defined* them as a nation.

GOD GAVE THE MOSAIC LAW TO THE ISRAELITES

A. The Mosaic law

1. The Mosaic Law is described throughout the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy).
2. It is a conditional covenant (Exod. 19:5-6; Deut. 28:1-6; 15-19, notice the word "if").
3. A conditional covenant is a binding agreement between two parties, where both have an obligation spelled out in the covenant. The Mosaic Law is between God and the Israelites.
4. Covenant conditions: If Israel obeyed God they would be blessed materially, if they disobeyed, they would be cursed materially (Deut. 28:1-6, 15-19).
5. The Mosaic Covenant contains 613 laws, including the 10 Commandments.

B. FOUR PURPOSES OF THE MOSAIC LAW

1. Purpose #1: To elect Israel as the "great nation" (part of the Abrahamic Covenant).
2. Purpose #2: To give the world a true understanding of who God is (i.e., to correct the Babel misconception of God).
3. Purpose #3: To contrast the sinfulness of man to God's holiness.
4. Purpose #4: To show man's need for a Redeemer.

C. THREE TYPES OF MOSAIC LAW

1. Ceremonial Laws: Involved worship, offering, and feast practices.
2. Civil laws: Involved regulations for daily living, and punishments for crimes.
3. Moral Laws: The Ten Commandments based on loving God (Exod. 20:3-11; Mark 12:30), and loving others (Exod. 20:12-17, Mark 12:31).

DOES THE MOSAIC LAW APPLY TODAY?

D. NO, IT HAS BEEN SUPERSEDED BY THE NEW COVENANT (TESTAMENT)

1. Only 5 of the 39 OT Books, and a few verses in the NT, contain these laws. Most of the OT Law is found in Exodus 20→ Deut. 33.
2. Some laws such as murder and lying still seem to apply.
3. Some laws such as wearing clothes with blended fabric of wool and linen (Deut. 22:11) don't seem to apply.

4. But doesn't the Bible say they all apply (Josh. 1:8; Matt. 5:18)?
5. It's confusing. Why do some laws seem to apply to Christians today and others do not? How can we make the distinction?

E. THE ANSWER

1. Point #1: In OT days, God promised that a new covenant ("contract") would come. (Jer. 31:31-32).
2. Point #2: The new covenant made the old covenant obsolete. (Heb. 8:13; Matt. 5:17; Luke 22:19-20; Rom. 6:14).
3. Point #3: Only those aspects of the old covenant that are carried into the new covenant are valid.
4. Point #4: The new covenant, like the old covenant, is based on faith (Hab. 2:4; Gal. 2:16).
5. Point #5: The new covenant contains timeless absolute moral truths (transferable principles) from the old covenant, such as murder is still wrong, stealing is still wrong, adultery is still wrong, lying is still wrong. See the following table.

Principles of the Ten Commandments	Old Testament	New Testament
Love God with all your heart, soul, and strength:	Deut. 6:5	Mark 12:30
1. Worship God only.	Exod. 20:3; Deut. 5:7	Matt. 4:10
2. Do not make and worship idols.	Exod. 20:4-6; Deut. 5:8-10	Luke 16:13
3. Use God's name in ways that honor him.	Exod. 20:7; Deut. 5:11	Matt. 5:34
4. Rest on the Sabbath day and think about God.	Exod. 20:8; Deut. 5:12-15	Mark 2:27-28
Love others as you love yourself:	Lev. 19:18	Mark 12:31
5. Respect and obey your parents.	Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16	Eph. 6:1-3
6. Protect and respect human life.	Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17	1 John 3:15
7. Be true to your husband or wife.	Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18	Matt. 5:28
8. Do not take what belongs to others.	Exod. 20:15; Deut. 5:19	Eph. 4:28
9. Do not lie about others.	Exod. 20:16; Deut. 5:20	Jas. 3:9-10
10. Be satisfied with what you have.	Exod. 20:17; Deut. 5:21	Luke 12:15

SUMMARY

By giving the Israelites the Mosaic Law God took the next step toward making them a nation (Genesis 12:1-3). They now had a common form of government (and worship). All that was needed next to make them a nation was to have them inhabit a common land of their own.