

UNDERSTANDING THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

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FRAMEWORK OF THE COVENANT

THE LAW(S)



REVIEW:NARRATIVE AND LAW

THE LAW(S) - A BRIEF OVERVIEW

- **There are over 600 commandments in the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament)**
- **These 600-plus commandments are found in only four books: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.**

THE LAW(S) - A BRIEF OVERVIEW

- **Genesis is sometimes (particularly historically) referred to as a “book of the Law,” but it does not contain any commandments.**
- **When we see the “law” discussed in OT and NT passages, it does occasionally assume all of the OT and not these particular four books.**

THE LAW(S) - A BRIEF OVERVIEW

- **When we discuss the “law,” we will be discussing the contents from Exodus 20-Deuteronomy 33.**
- **This includes both obvious laws and other legal formulations that are “law adjacent.”**

A FOUNDATIONAL QUESTION

“If you are a Christian, are you expected to keep the Old Testament law?”

– FEE AND STUART

THE LAW(S) - A CHRISTIAN APPROACH IN 6 PARTS

- 1. The Old Testament Law (Hebrew Scriptures)
is a *covenant*.**

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

- a. Covenant* - a binding contract between two parties, with obligations required from both.**
- b. In the Ancient Near East, many covenants were from an overlord offering protection to a servant for fealty, marked by a certain set of behaviors.***

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

- c. OT Law is a binding contract between YHWH and Israel. Israel was under God's protection and showed her fealty through obedience.
- d. Covenants followed a format: preamble, prologue, stipulations, witnesses, sanctions, and document clause.

THE LAW(S) - A CHRISTIAN APPROACH IN 6 PARTS

2. The Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) is *not* our testament.

WHAT IS A TESTAMENT?

- a. Testament* - is another word for covenant**
- b. The Old Testament, therefore, is the Old Covenant - meaning that its mandates and stipulations en masse are not automatically binding for New Testament believers.***

BUT WHAT ABOUT...?

- c. The method by which we interpret the Old Covenant is the *restatement* or *rejection* of its stipulations in the New Covenant.

THE LAW(S) - A CHRISTIAN APPROACH IN 6 PARTS

3. Some Old Covenant laws are *clearly not* renewed in the New Covenant.

CATEGORIES OF OLD COVENANT LAW?

a. There are two major categories of Old Covenant law.

a. Israelite civil laws

b. Israelite ritual laws

CATEGORIES OF OLD COVENANT LAW?

- b. Israelite civil laws - stipulate crimes and punishments for which one might be tried in ancient Israel. **This is not where we live.**
- c. Israelite ritual laws - told people how to carry on the practice of worship: decorations, dimensions, sacrifices, etc. **Again, not us.**

THE LAW(S) - A CHRISTIAN APPROACH IN 6 PARTS

4. Part of the Old Covenant laws are *clearly* renewed in the New Covenant.

RENEWED AND RENEWING

- a. A third category of Old Covenant law - ethical law.
- b. *Aspects* of these laws are often restated in the New Covenant or support commandments given in the New Covenant.

THE LAW(S) - A CHRISTIAN APPROACH IN 6 PARTS

5. All of the Old Covenant law is still the Word of God even if it is not our command.

THE LAW(S) - A CHRISTIAN APPROACH IN 6 PARTS

6. Only the *explicitly renewed* laws from the Old Covenant can be considered the Law of Christ.