

Important Facts About The Old Testament Law

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Rightly dividing the word of truth, and properly understanding the our relationship to the Old Testament, including the sabbath and the ten commandments, requires knowledge of these basic facts:

1. The Old Testament was for Old Testament Israel - Exodus 19:4-8 records the covenant God offered to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, and Israel's agreement to keep God's law. Deuteronomy 5:1-5 teaches that the Law of Moses, including the ten commandments, was given to Israel, not to other people, or even their ancestors.

2. The Old Testament served a specific purpose - Galatians 3:16-29 teaches that the Old Law was *"added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made,"* verse 19. *"Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor,"* verses 24-25.

3. The Old Testament Law was abolished - Hebrews 8 shows that Christ came with a ministry and promises which were better, and therefore that which is old waxes old and vanishes away.

Colossians 2:11-14 assures us that the "handwriting of ordinances" was nailed to the cross, and that, therefore, we should no longer be judged by ordinances of the Old Testament Law, such as meat, drink, feast days and the sabbath.

What About The Sabbath?

1. The Sabbath was given at Mt. Sinai as part of the Old Testament Law - In Exodus 16:23-30 we learn that the Law of Moses is given at Mt. Sinai, the Israelites disobeyed it, were disciplined, then kept it.

Nehemiah 9:13-14 - *"Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandest them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant."*

2. The Sabbath was one of the ten commandments, which was done away - 2 Corinthians 3:6-8 - *"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?"*

3. The Sabbath is given as an example of the ordinances of the Old law by which we are not bound - Colossians 2:16-17 - *“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”*

4. The Gospel of Christ contains no command, no example or no principle teaching Christians to keep the Sabbath. And there is no penalty in the NT for breaking the Sabbath.