**The Proper Use Of**

**The Old Testament**

**Two main points:**

* **We are not under Old Testament law today**
* **Why we should still study it**

**Nothing in the Old Testament serves as law for Christians today – not principle, precept, ordinance, commandment, statute – nothing …**

Heb 7:12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

* Jesus is our high priest, but He is descended from Jacob’s son Judah not from Levi, therefore the priesthood must have changed
* the writer’s argument = since one part of the law has changed, the whole thing must have changed

Gal 3:24-25 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

* schoolmaster = the law; not under schoolmaster, so not under the law
* doesn’t say “not under ceremonial part of law”; doesn’t say “not under 99% of law”

5:3 For I testify … to every man that is circumcised, … he is a debtor to do the whole law

* If we bring even one law from the Old Testament forward, then we are bound by consistency to keep every law of the Old Testament
* again - all or nothing
* verse 4 – this is serious – we are lost if we try to bring even one law forward to bind

This is one of the primary mistakes of the 7th Day Adventists – they want to bring one law (the Sabbath) forward, but leave all the other laws back there.

**The New Testament Is Our Exclusive Law For Today**

Heb 9:15a And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament …

* not - Jesus is the mediator of the New Testament plus a few parts of the Old Testament

Heb 7:22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

* The contrast is that the New Testament is better than the Old Testament (“a disannulling of … the law” - verses 18-19), not a conglomeration of the New Testament with what we think are the few best rules of the Old Testament

II Cor 3:6a Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament

* We are ministers of the New Testament only, not a combination of the New Testament and the Old

**Why We Should Study The OT**

But it is still so very important that we study the Old Testament regularly because there are vital things we can learn from it that help us to understand the New Testament.

I Cor 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Some illustrations include …

**Parallels And Analogies**

John 3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:14-15 is a comparison of Jesus being hung on the cross and the necessity of our belief in him (looking on him) to the Num 21:4-9 story of the brazen serpent being hung up and the necessity of the Israelites to look at that serpent in order to be healed of their snake bites.

If we never study the Old Testament, how will we fully and properly understand the parallel in John 3:14-15?

And there are many other cases like that – where the New Testament draws a parallel to the Old.

**Definitions**

I Tim 2:9-10 … that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

This New Testament passage instructs us to dress modestly.

OT passages can help define for us what modest is – as lust has not changed …

Gen 3:7And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

**10** And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

**21** Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Even though Adam and Eve had “aprons” on, they still considered themselves naked. And God also still considered them naked, so he made them coats of skins to cloth them.

We see a lot of people at the mall that only have the equivalent of an apron on. At the beach they generally have much less than aprons on.

**Facts**

It is a fact that “God created the heaven and the earth.” - Gen 1:1

While laws can and do sometimes change, facts do not change. The fact that the Old Testament is no longer binding would not change the fact that God created the heavens and the earth.

The Old Testament is littered with many such facts that (by definition) don’t change – since they are facts, not laws.

* Prov 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rodof correction shall drive it far from him.
* Prov 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

This fact (“Spare the rod, spoil the child”) doesn’t change, therefore we should spank our children today. But what rules we enforce upon them with the rod will differ somewhat based upon the change in God’s law.

For example we wouldn’t spank them for working on Saturday these days, but we might spank them for playing and talking during the Lord’s supper.

**Details**

The New Testament tells us homosexuality is sinful:

Rom 1:26-27 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

But Lev 18:22-23 in the Old Testament informs us that God considers this behaviour like (in the same category as) having relations with an animal:

Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion.

I’m sorry for the crudeness, but considering the modern immoral world we live in, even children need to know just how bad this sin really is.

Another illustration - The New Testament teaches we should fast, and then the Old Testament gives ideas about when, what for, and for how long.

**Our Duty To Teach The Truth**

Ezek 3:18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

This verse helps us understand that we should warn those in sin as we have opportunity – though what is and what is not defined as sin has changed in many particulars since Ezek 3:18 was written.

**Are we teaching/warning folks as we ought?**

**If not, their blood will be upon our hands.**

**How God Views Disobedience**

I Sam 13:8-14 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; … And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.

We don’t do animal sacrifices today, but we can learn from this Old Testament passage that we should always do things God’s way.

**It Matters How We Worship God**

Lev 10:1-2 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

We don’t learn how to worship God today from Lev 10:1-2 since it is part of Old Testament law (i.e., we don’t burn incense in worship today), but we certainly learn from this passage that God will be very, very displeased with us if we don’t worship him the way He has instructed us in His New Testament law.

**God’s Strictness With His Law**

I Chron 13:7,9-10 And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart. … And when they came unto the threshingfloor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.

There is no ark of the covenant in the NT, so we don’t have to worry about how we carry it, or whether or not we touch it.

But what we can learn from this Old Testament story is that we should never do something God has said not to do (in the New Testament), even if we think doing it will help God’s cause.

**Quotations**

Acts 3:25-26 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, **And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed**. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

Gen 12:1-3 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: **and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed**.

If we don’t study the Old Testament, then we might not fully grasp/appreciate the meaning and significance of the phrase in Acts 3:25 “And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.”

**Written For Our Learning**

There could be dozens of other illustrations, but the preceeding should suffice to make the point.

The Old Testament was “written for our learning” (Rom 15:4).

Let’s not neglect the Old Testament in our studies.

**One Last Application - The Thief On The Cross**

Many try to use the thief to prove we don’t have to be baptized today to be saved.

But when we realize that we are not under the old covenant that the thief lived and died under, then we can properly understand that his case does not mitigate against the many New Testament passages that prove we must be baptized to be saved:

Mark 16:16a **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved …**

Acts 2:38 **Repent, and be baptized … for the remission of sins …**

Acts 22:16 **arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins**

I Peter 3:21 **baptism doth also now save us**

Perhaps you need to obey those passages (the gospel) today?