



Christian Questions

Think about the Bible like you never have before

Dear Inbanathan,

You asked us to explain the Law Covenant as applicable to the Gentiles.

The Law of Moses was given to the Jews to keep them pure and separate from the nations around them. The Jews were God's special people from whom the Messiah was to come.

According to Galatians 3:24, the Law was a "tutor" (some translations say "schoolmaster") to bring people to Christ. The Greek word used here does not mean "teacher," but rather a guardian who was trusted with taking the children to and from school, responsible for their safety. Thayer's Bible Dictionary says: *"Among the Greeks and Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood."*

Continuing in Galatians 3:25, the Apostle Paul says, "Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law." Once Jesus came and fulfilled the Law by his sacrifice unto death (Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them."), the Law was no longer binding to the Jew providing he accepted Jesus. The Apostle Paul further explains this thought by commenting, "...a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ..." (Galatians 2:16) The Law was a tool to lead men to faith before Jesus' time.

Christians, be they Jew or Gentile, are not required to follow the Old Testament's 600+ plus laws or to celebrate the Jewish Sabbath or holy days, but are required to follow the Ten Commandments. In fact, as Jesus taught us in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), these commandments should be taken to the highest level possible and be written on our hearts.

In the Sermon, Jesus gave his followers the high principles that they and we, as Christians today, are to live by. Jesus said, "You have heard it said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:43-45)

Jesus' followers are specifically NOT under the Old Testament Law of absolute justice. He illustrated this principle stating we should **not seek revenge** when hurt, **and** we should figuratively turn the other cheek rather than injure the perpetrator! (Matthew 5:38-45) We **must not** exact vengeance on someone who has harmed us. Instead, under the law of love, we must pray for our enemy.

Jesus showed his followers the importance of the law of love, a law that is far greater than the Old Law Covenant.

Is the Law Covenant applicable to the Gentiles? This matter greatly concerned the early church during the Apostle Paul's time and you can read the details in Galatians 3. From the time of Moses until our Lord came on the scene, the Law Covenant applied only to the Jewish nation. Once Jesus fulfilled the Law by his death and resurrection, the Law was no longer binding. However, the Ten Commandments do apply to both Jews and Gentiles today. Additionally, Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount that these commandments were to be taken to the highest level possible. Ultimately, we should follow the **instructions** of the New Testament, but live by the **spirit** of the Old. We should honor the Old Law principles of righteousness, repentance, justice, purity and obedience. Studying the Old Testament gives insight into the New Testament and God's incredible plan for all mankind.

For more on Jesus' teaching, search our website for Episode #1007 – “Do We Have to ‘Turn the Other Cheek’?”

We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to sign up for our weekly newsletter to receive CQ Rewind at ChristianQuestions.com. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

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