

02 – HOW DO WE RELATE TO THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- ✓ As NT believers, how do we relate to the Old Testament”? Does some of it apply to us? All of it? None of it? (Do we even need to read it now?)

Is the Old Testament Still Valuable?

1.) The OT is Valuable for its Stories

Ro. 15:4a – “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us.”

- ✓ Some people say, “Experience is the best teacher”. But that’s not true! Experience is a *terrible* teacher! The problem with experience is: It gives you the test first, and the lesson afterward.
- ✓ What if your Grade 12 Algebra teacher did that? What if he walked in on the first day and gave you the final exam? Then once you’d written it – and he’d recorded the marks – THEN he started to teach you the material. Would he be a good teacher? No.
- ✓ But that’s exactly what experience does. You’re walking through life, minding your own business, and suddenly, you’re faced with a test. You’re at a fork in the road. You’ve got to go one way or the other. (Either way you’re going to learn something.) One way will turn out well. The other is going to hurt ... a lot.
- ✓ No, *experience* isn’t the best teacher. The *Word* is the best teacher! The Word gives you the lesson first. Then when you face the test, you’ll know which way to go, and you won’t get hurt.
- ✓ Now, don’t get me wrong. You *can* learn things through experience. But who says it has to be your experience? I can go to the Word and watch *David* commit adultery and murder – and I can learn from his story, without having to commit those sins myself. (That’s a much better way to learn!)

2.) The OT is Valuable for its Principles.

- ✓ There are principles scattered *throughout* the OT that we can glean from. We may not be under the OT, but there’s plenty of wisdom written there. (There’s no NT equivalent for the Book of Proverbs. Read it! You don’t want to miss out.)
- ✓ Okay, let’s talk about the Law specifically, and see what, if anything, we should be following.

There Were 3 Divisions of the Law

- (i) The Moral Code – How we act and interact with others. Our code of conduct.
- (ii) The Social Code – These were laws for governing the nation of Israel.
- (iii) The Spiritual Code – These were “types & shadows” of Christ.
- ✓ Do any of those divisions apply to us today? We know the types and the shadows have served their purpose.

Col. 2:16 – “These were only temporary rules that ended when Christ came.”

- ✓ So, we don’t have to sacrifice animals or observe the feast days. That leaves the *moral* and the *social* codes. Do we follow *those*?

Six Questions to Ask Yourself

1.) Is It Repeated in the New Testament?

- ✓ The best example I can give you is the 10 Commandments. Nine of the ten are repeated in the NT. (The only commandment that *isn’t* repeated is the law concerning the Sabbath. So, obviously, *that* one didn’t carry over into the NT, but the others did.)

2.) Is It **Repealed** (Revoked) in the New Testament?

- ✓ Sometimes, we're told that certain laws are no longer in force. (1 Tim. 4:4 answers the "bacon question". The OT dietary laws have been revoked. Paul says: We're allowed to eat *anything*, if we'll receive it with thanksgiving and prayer.)
- ✓ **Sometimes a law isn't repeated or repealed.** Tithing is an excellent example. (Is tithing repeated in the NT? Barely. There are a few verses in Hebrews 7. Maybe two or three. That's it.)
- ✓ Tithing isn't really repeated in the NT. (Not much, anyway. It only mentions it in a verse or two!) But neither is it repealed. (No verses specifically say, "You don't have to tithe".) So, what do we do? (We can ask ourselves the rest of these questions.)

3.) Does the **Principle** carry over?

- ✓ For This, I Ask Myself: Is there still a need for it in the New Testament? Let's try a couple of examples. How about animal sacrifices? Are they still needed in the NT? Of course not! The Blood of Jesus was enough!
- ✓ All right, then. What about tithing? Is *tithing* still needed? (Well, why did tithing exist in the first place?)

a.) It Taught God's People to Honor Him and to Put Him First

Deut. 14:23 – "(Tithe) that you may **learn to honor the Lord** your God always." (Prov. 3:9)

- ✓ Tithing wasn't just about money. First and foremost, it was about honor. Do we still need to honor God? Yes? (Do we need to teach our kids to honor God? Yes.) So then, tithing could still have a purpose in the NT. (That's not proof that tithing is still in force. But it does show us that tithing can still be useful. Okay, why else did

tithing exist?)

b.) Tithing Allowed the Ministers to Serve God Full-Time, (and Not Have to Work a Secular Job)

2 Chron. 31:4 – "He commanded the people living in Jerusalem to give the tithe, **that the ministers might be free to devote themselves to the Law of the Lord ...**"

- ✓ Tithing ensures that the preacher isn't distracted in his duties. Is *that* still needed? Well, it certainly is helpful. (1 Cor. 9:14).

Neh. 13:10 – "Then I found out the people weren't giving the tithe, so the Levites and the singers who were supposed to be doing the work, forced by necessity, had returned to work on their farms." (So, there's a need. Bu we still haven't proven that tithing is a New Testament practice.)

4.) Did Something Modify or Replace the Old Testament Command?

- ✓ In the case of tithing, I think it did. Ask Yourself This: If God doesn't mention tithing very much, what does He mention? (The NT "buzzword" is not "tithing".) The NT "buzzword" is "generosity". (You see *that* word everywhere!)

God is Described as "Generous"

Ro. 5:5 – "We're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary – we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God **generously** pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!" (MSG)

1 Cor. 15:10-11 – "... because God was so very **generous** ..." (MSG)

Ro. 10:12 – "God is rich unto all, acting the same **incredibly generous** way to everyone." (MSG)

- ✓ God is generous by nature. And **that's the goal that He calls us to** in the NT. (2 Cor. 9:11 NRSV; 2 Cor. 9:6 Amp; 1 Tim. 6:18 MSG; Heb.

13:16 ISV)

- ✓ Why isn't tithing more prominent (NT)? In the NT, God is shooting for something *higher* than just having us follow a "rule". He wants to see His own generous nature reproduced in His children.
- ✓ So, in the New Testament, the tithe verses drop to a minimum, and what's showcased is a *generous heart*. (What's happening there? The external controls are coming off in favor of internal controls.) Should I be tithing? Yes! But not because it's a rule. But because I want to. (And generosity should extend beyond just the church. It should permeate my entire life!)

2 Cor. 9:7 (Amp) – "Let each one [give] as he has made up his own mind and purposed in his heart, not reluctantly or sorrowfully or under compulsion, for God loves (He takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, "prompt to do it") giver [whose heart is in his giving]."

5.) Did It Exist Before the Law?

- ✓ If it existed before the Law, it probably came *through* the Law and out the other side. (Marriage existed before the Law, and so did worship. The Law didn't *create* those things, and so, they didn't *end* with the Law.)

6.) Does Culture Change the Meaning of the OT Command?

- ✓ Tattoos in the OT weren't an art form. They had to do with idol worship. (Your tattoo showed who you belonged to, and who you served.) Tattoos don't mean that today.

Jer. 10:3-5 – "Do not learn the way of the nations, for the customs of the peoples are worthless. Someone cuts down a tree from the forest; it is worked by the hands of a craftsman with a chisel. He decorates it silver and gold. It is fastened with hammer and nails, so it won't totter."