**Word of God, Kinds**

**of Laws & Pharisees**

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. **18**For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. **19**Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **20**For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven (ESV)

Our Bible is divided into two testaments. Testament means a “covenant, contract, or agreement”. The Old Testament was God’s initial contract with the people of Israel. The New Testament is God’s new contract with His people. The Old Testament was written from the time of Moses until about 400 years before Jesus walked the earth. For 400 years there was no word from the Lord to the people. Then the Word Himself became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:14) Jesus, who represents the Word of God came to the earth in the form of a man. It was after this time that the New Testament was written, sharing about all that Jesus did and taught.

One of the most common misconceptions about Jesus today and in His time was that when He came in as the Messiah and brought in a New Covenant between God and His people that He did away with the Old Testament writings. There’s this idea, and there still was at that time, that Jesus came to make the Old Testament obsolete. I mean, a New Covenant means the old one is not necessary right? That is simply not the case. I may have a contract of marriage with a partner, followed by a contract of my will to that person if I should die, but that second contract does not make the first one worthless—it actually compliments and reinforces it.

Jesus instead is saying that everything He teaches is in harmony with the Old Testament. Matter of fact, Jesus actually quoted much of the Old Testament during His ministry. In His encounter with the devil early in His ministry, Jesus used verses only from the Book of Deuteronomy to combat Satan’s wicked words. This clearly shows the respect and appreciation Jesus had for the Old Testament. Even if Jesus had never said it with His words, it would be clear from his actions that He believed in the power of the Old Testament.

The Law of the Old Testament found in the first five books of the Bible came in three different kinds: Ceremonial Law, Judicial Law, and Moral Law. The Ceremonial Law had to do with the offerings and sacrifices God commanded Israelites to make if the sinned. The Judicial Law dealt with Israel in their specific context at that time. The Moral Law consists of the Ten Commandments and all the moral issues that were laid down as principles for all of time.

When Jesus said that He fulfilled the Law it does not mean that He added anything to it to bring it to completion. Instead it simply means that He obeyed it to its full extent and carried out everything stated there. Not only that, but All of the works of the Law and prophecies of the Old Testament point to Jesus. They are all fulfilled in Jesus. The Book of Hebrews tells us that all the sacrifices pointed to Jesus in the future and the sacrifice He would make on the cross as the perfect, spotless Lamb of God. We also know Jesus fulfilled at least 300 Old Testament prophecies about Himself during His time on earth. Not only this, but Jesus obeyed the Law. God put His own Son under the Law. This proves God’s Law is important.

Jesus proceed to tell us that the Word of God is absolute—Old Testament included. The Word of God can never be changed! The demands of the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments are permanent. Jesus did not come to add to, take away from or put an end to the teachings of the Old Testament. Matter of fact, Jesus’ Bible was the Old Testament! Because the Old Testament was the Bible Jesus preached from, how much more should we value what the Old Testament has to say? Truly, the New Testament cannot be understood without the Old Testament. Everything about the central aspect of our faith, the Cross, has to do with the Law of the Old Testament. We cannot understand why Jesus had to die unless we understand the Law. We cannot understand the Cross of Jesus unless we understand the Law.

There is a growing number of people that believe that the Bible is not the Word of God, that it is not all inspired Scripture. But that stands in. complete opposition to who God is and what He said about the Bible. When people say the Bible is not the inspired Word of God they are in effect calling God a liar. When you say the Old Testament doesn’t matter you are saying what Jesus has to say doesn’t matter.

Jesus fulfilled the Law by acting as our sacrifice and burnt offering. In this sense, he ended the NEED for CONTINUAL sacrifices and burnt offerings because He acted as the FINAL sacrifice for sins! Sacrifice is still necessary for us to be forgiven for our sins, but that sacrifice has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The Judicial Law also has no need for us to obey. We don’t have to worry about putting parapets on our house or not eating certain kinds of foods because these pertained to Israel as a theocratic nation, but when Jesus came He established a new kingdom, thus effectively ending Israel’s time as a theocratic nation meant to be run by religion.

The moral law, however, has never changed. That which God has called sin never ceases to be sin. This is how we know things like homosexuality, Jesus actually goes so far as to say that if we act as though the Old Testament commands do not apply to us morally, that we are in deep water. Even deeper water if we try and convince others of the same thing.

Jesus fulfilled the moral law because He obeyed it. Jesus never sinned. He never lied, never stole, never hated, never lusted, never gossiped, never dishonored His parents, never served other gods. He also upheld righteousness, justice and godliness with every action. Jesus fulfilled the moral law, but that does not mean it is finished and doesn’t need to be followed. This is one of the biggest takes that people have when it comes to certain sins. They say, “well, the Old Testament says it is sin, but the New Testament doesn’t say anything about it so it must not be sin anymore”. As Jesus followed the moral law, so should we.

Because the moral law still stands we are still to live righteously. Jesus even said our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees. What did He mean by that? First we must understand who the Pharisees were and what they did. The Pharisees were a religious sect of leaders that were known for being very showy. Jesus came face to face with the Pharisees many times in the Bible because He opposed their message and way of living

The Pharisees put great burdens on people. They added onto the already existing Law of God with their own traditions. They expected people to obey their laws and rules and burdened and punished those who did not. They also lived a superficial life. They twisted God’s Law to make it appear as though they were righteous to other people. They made long prayers and distorted their faces when they fasted so people would notice that they were doing so, making others think they must be righteous and holy

You can’t be righteous if your motivation is yourself. Your motivation must be pleasing God and obeying Him. You are righteous because you are in right RELATIONSHIP to God, not right relationship to yourself. But that is exactly what the Pharisees were doing: living for themselves and their reputation. We are not to try and live better than the Pharisees. No, it is simply that when we follow Jesus and obey the Word of God we naturally will be living more righteously than the Pharisees did.

All the Bible points to Jesus. Everything from the Old Testament to the New points towards Jesus as the Messiah. All the Bible for all the world for all of time for all of eternity!

The Bible is the infallible, inspired, eternal Word of God. It never changes, and we are called to obey it and live a holy life. When we put our faith in Jesus He give us the Holy Spirit so that we are enabled to live according to the Word of God! We need the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to live righteously.