

**Genre: Law**

**Genre:** the category of literature to which the text belongs classified by style, form, or content

**Law:** the genre of authoritative instruction set down by God for his people to know how live out their faith-based relationship to him

**What can we not do with the law?****1. We cannot ignore the law.**

- A. 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. Matthew 5:17
- B. He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'" Luke 16:31

**2. We cannot implement the law.**

- A. The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it. Luke 16:16
- B. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1:17
- C. For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." Galatians 3:10-12

**3. We cannot isolate the law.**

- A. And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:37-40
- B. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel! Mathew 23:23-24

**What are the purposes of the law?****1. The law reflects the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man.**

- C. Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Galatians 3:19
- D. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. Romans 4:15
- E. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. Romans 3:20

**2. The law restrains our baser instincts so that in our sin we are not as sinful as we could be.**

- A. Now before faith came, **we were held captive under the law**, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, **the law was our guardian until Christ came**, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. Galatians 3:23-26
- B. Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that **the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient**, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality,

enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted. 1 Timothy 1:8-11

### 3. The law reveals what is pleasing to God.

- A. **Blessed is the man** who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but **his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.** Psalm 1:1-2
- B. **Blessed are those** whose way is blameless, **who walk in the law of the Lord!** Psalm 119:1

### What are the types of laws in the Old Testament?

1. **Casuistic Law:** case law that uses an "if...then" condition-response structure and is written in the third-person
  - A. Exodus 12:48
    - (1) **setting** If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the Lord,
    - (2) **condition** let all his males be circumcised.
    - (3) **response** Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it.
  - B. Deuteronomy 24:10-11
    - (1) **setting** When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort,
    - (2) **condition** you shall not go into his house to collect his pledge.
    - (3) **response** You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you.
2. **Apodictic Law:** absolute law written in unconditional, categorical directives such as commands and prohibitions
  - A. Exodus 20:13 **You shall not murder.**
  - B. Exodus 21:22-25 **When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.**

### What are the major collections of laws?

1. **Covenant Code** - Exodus 20-23 - having given the law to his people in the decalogue, God then gives application of that law in terms of ethical practices for his people - laws concerning slavery, debt, restitution, interaction with neighbors and sojourners, weekly worship and annual festivals, and conquest
2. **Deuteronomistic Code** - a renewed presentation and application of the law of God for Israel by the prophet Moses just prior to their entry into Canaan - Deuteronomy 12-26 - contains statutes and ordinances for pure worship and purification of idolatry and idolaters, laws concerning the release of the indebted and the canceling of debts, regulations for the leaders of God's people including priests, prophets, and kings, laws concerning the governance of the nations, and conditional promise of blessing or cursing based on obedience
3. **Holiness Code** - Leviticus 17-26 - laws concerning the innate holiness of God and the practiced holiness of his people - separation is the key word - they practice separation in their daily lives as a reminder of their separateness from the nations
4. **Priestly Code** - the laws that governing how the priests organize and implement the worship of God in the tabernacle - includes codes for the construction of the tabernacle, the altar, the implements, the garments - but also instructions for how the priests and their families are to live before, during, and after their service - Exodus 25-31, 34:29; Leviticus 16

## Foundational Principles for Interpreting the Law

### 1. Relationships always precede rules.

#### A. Adam

- (1) Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Genesis 1:26-28

#### B. Abraham

- (1) And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:6
- (2) For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. Romans 4:13-14

#### C. Jesus

- (1) If you love me, you will keep my commandments. John 14:15

### 2. Context is as important as content.

- A. When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the Lord. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance. Deuteronomy 24:1-4

- B. They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." Mark 10:4

### 3. Holiness remains the destination and obedience the duty.

- A. You shall be holy to me, for I the Lord am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine. Leviticus 20:26
- B. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. 1 Peter 2:9-12