

WHY THE LAW?

Jesus and the Law of Moses, *Galatians 3:15-29*

Our Bible reading schedule has us reading through Leviticus this month, a book detailing the laws God gave to Israel as part of His covenant relationship with them. The book's record of those laws seems strange, arbitrary, and sometimes even cruel to modern readers, which raises the question in many peoples' minds - why did God give those laws and what am I supposed to do with them today? We will consequently read through a series of passages that outline a basic overview of God's purposes in the law, purposes that help us understand its place in God's Bible and in our lives today.

Consider the following passages and what they reveal about the laws of Moses:

Exodus 19:5-6; 20:1-17

God intended the laws to provide the Israelites a framework for thinking and acting in ways that would allow them to serve as His priests, mediating between the world and Him.

Exodus 20-31, Exodus 32-33, Exodus 34-Leviticus 27

God's laws developed in response to the nation's failures, giving more laws designed to help the rebellious nation understand God's holy nature and its meaning for their lives.

Romans 7:7-8:4; Leviticus 19:2

God's law is holy, righteous, and good but it addressed people who were not holy, righteous or good. It provided for them a way to recognize their unholiness and a way to become holy.

Galatians 3:10-29

God intended the laws He gave to Israel to impress upon them the reality of their rebelliousness, their need for a redeemer, and to therefore prepare them for Jesus.

Applications

- The Law of Moses fully accomplished what God designed it to do.
- Even though we do not live under the authority of the Law of Moses, God's purposes for the laws remain as important today as when first revealed. God attests to its value by, for example, devoting so much of the Bible to recording the law and the peoples' relationship to it.
- The Law of Moses is not discontinuous with the Law of Christ.
- We cannot know God or Jesus if we do not know our Old Testament.