

## Question: How should the Old Testament be used today? (Part 2)

The Law of Moses, which God gave to the children of Israel at Mount Sinai, was only temporary. Jeremiah foretold this fact. *“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah....”* (Jer 31:31).

The writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews, declared the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy (cf. Heb 8:6-13). He explained that in his day the Law of Moses was *“obsolete and growing old...ready to vanish away.”* He also explained there would be *“a change of the law”* (Heb 8:13; 7:12). Passages like these are the reason we refer to the first thirty-nine books of the Bible as the “Old” Testament.

That being the case, of what use is the Old Testament to us today?

1) In general, it has been preserved by God *“for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope”* (Rom 15:4). In another place, Paul said that God’s dealings with the Israelites are *“examples”* to us, *“and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come”* (1 Cor 10:11).

2) Specifically, it supplies many admonitions for guiding and warning man. Every human weakness that may lead people into sin is addressed (Pro 6:16-19; Exo 20:17). Repeatedly readers are encouraged to keep God’s word in their heart and to control their thoughts so as to protect against disobeying God’s will (cf. Pro 4:23; Psa 119:11).

3) It contains historical examples of men and women, prior to the Law of Moses, who lived in faithful obedience to God: meaning they obeyed Him to the extent of the knowledge they were given by Him (Heb 1:1). People like Abel, Enoch, Noah and his wife, Abraham and Sarah were described as living their lives *“by faith”* (cf. Heb 11). From these cases, we learn that people have always been accountable to God for their actions.

4) It contains cases of divine punishment for unrighteousness, as well as examples of attitudes that will avert the wrath of God. King Saul disobeyed God, had his kingdom taken away from him and later committed suicide (1 Sam 15, 31). King David also disobeyed God, but later repented with a *“broken and contrite heart”* (Psa 51:17).

As we read above, it is a sobering thought to know *“the ends of the ages”* are upon us. The children of Israel did not live under the threat of the end of time, but we do. Their covenant with God was designed to lead them to Christ, but many of them refused to follow that lead. The Old Testament is a testimony of Jesus Christ. It was meant to supply the Israelites with the knowledge they needed to identify the Messiah (Jn 5:39). Now that Christ Jesus is revealed to the world, He is the primary Source of knowledge and hope of salvation. *“In (Him) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”* (Col 2:3).

The Old Testament (covenant), as such, is not a binding agreement between God and Christians today. The divinely inspired writings of Moses and the Prophets contain laws, warnings and promises to a people who were looking forward a day of salvation. Paul testified, *“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation”* (2 Cor 6:2). Today, we are not to be guided by Moses and Elijah, but rather by Jesus. Remember that thundering voice on the mountain saying, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **Hear Him**”* (Matt 17:5)!

Thank you for reading today. Next week we will have a concluding article on this subject. Study your Bibles and search for Truth. If you would like to enroll in a Bible correspondence course please contact us at the address above.

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