LAYING DOWN THE LAW
(The Christian & the Old Testament)

A. A jurisdiction is a territory over which authority is exercised.

1. If you have something stolen from you home in San Angelo, you don’t call the Abilene police department.

Many years ago a church sold their building to someone in the next town. A moving company was hired to move the building to its new location. Along the way the building came into contact with a high voltage power line & caught fire. The driver phoned the fire department in the town he was going to, but after telling the dispatcher exactly where he was the driver was told, “I’m sorry sir, but that’s not in our jurisdiction.” The driver replied, “Well, you’d better get your equipment ready, because I’ll be there in five minutes!”

2. Sometimes being in the right jurisdiction makes the difference of whether you get help or not.

3. The same is true with the Bible; there is an OT (covenant or law) & a NT, which jurisdiction are we under?

4. That was one of the main issues facing early Christians; it led to contentious battles & confusing times.

B. People are just as confused today.

1. And knowing that difference ourselves will enable us to be better teachers of the gospel.

[As we notice what happened to the old covenant, we will see the value of the new covenant, & then we can rejoice that God has allowed many of us to enter into that covenant with Him.]

I. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OLD LAW?
{This would include the 10 commandments: Deut 4:13; 9:9; Exo 34:27-28; 2 Chron 6:11}

Deuteronomy 4:13 (Moses recounting history)
13 “So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments; & He wrote them on two tablets of stone.”

Deuteronomy 9:9
9 “When I went up to the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the Lord had made with you, then I remained on the mountain forty days & nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water.”

A. It Faded Away (2 Cor 3:7-15)

1. The fading glow of Moses’ face was a reflection of its temporary nature.
   a. It dealt NOT with substance but with shadow, & like a shadow it faded away.

2. So where does that leave us today (2 Cor 3:16-18)?
   a. Looking to Christ through His word & being transformed into His likeness.
   b. That’s something the Old Testament cannot do for us (John 13:34).
   c. The Old Testament was written for our instruction (Rom 15:4).
   d. It contains examples that admonish us (1 Cor 10:11).

[But we could live by the Ten Commandments, & apply to our lives as many of the laws & proverbs given to the Jews as possible; we could relish the worship of God shown to us by David & the other psalmists, but there is no salvation in something that has faded away.]

B. It Passed Away (Rom 7:1-3)
1. The point of this passage is to show Jewish Christian’s their relationship to the Old Law.

   a. Paul is saying, “You are like a wife whose husband has died. You are now free to marry another, but you cannot go back to your first husband—he’s dead.”

   b. “The law (husband) you once served became so old that it (he) passed away.”

2. So where does that leave us (Rom 7:4)?

   a. We are bound by a new law to a new husband, & only in that relationship do “we ... bear fruit for [to] God”.

C. It Vanished or Disappeared (Heb 8:7-13)

   1. Under the old covenant, a person came into God’s family at birth, & then later was taught God’s laws.

   2. Under the promised new covenant, a person comes into God’s family by being born again, of water & the Spirit.

      a. So a person knows what he’s getting into from the beginning, because he is of an accountable age when he (or she) enters that covenant relationship with God.

   3. We sing: The Gospel Is For All --- all who have sinned (Rom 7:7-12)

D. Its Purpose Was Filled Up (Matt 5:17-18)

   1. The purpose of the old law was to identify sin & to prepare Israel for the coming of Christ (Gal 3:22-25).

      a. The old law was a tutor, schoolmaster to bring the Jew to Christ.
b. It mainly just held the Jews close to God while pointing out their sins.

c. So how did Jesus fulfill the Law?

- He kept the laws perfectly.

- He fulfilled the prophecies.

- When He cried, “It is finished!” He had completed God’s work — the old law was fulfilled; it had served its purpose.


a. Our obedience to God under the new covenant goes beyond the mere technicality of abiding by laws.

b. Our obedience to the law of Christ must stem from a sincere love for God & truth.

1 Corinthians 5:8
8 Therefore let us celebrate the feast [Not the Passover or the Lord’s Supper. It means to engage in the service of God], not with old leaven [corrupting influence of our former nature while in sin], nor with the leaven of malice & wickedness [two examples of the old leaven], but with the unleavened bread of sincerity & truth.

2 Corinthians 1:12
12 For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness & godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, & especially toward you.

Ephesians 6:24
24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love. NKJV - sincerity (genuineness); see also 1 Peter 1:4, “incorruptible” (undecaying) inheritance.
E. Its Power Was Nailed Up (Col 2:13-14)

1. To illustrate the end of the old law, Paul used the words “cancelled/wiped out” – “taken it out of the way” – “nailed it to the cross”.

2. When Jesus was nailed to the cross, men put a sign above His head, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.”

   a. But God nailed something else to that cross: the old law & all the sins it exposed.

   b. The old law exposed men to the cross of Christ, so that men would realize that they were not justified by the old law but by an obedient faith in Christ.

   c. And who would climb up that cross & take down something God nailed down to signify its death?

      - And yet people do --- by reinstituting Priesthoods, Sabbaths, Feasts, Tithing, Instruments, Incense, Temples & Altars.

3. So where does that leave us (Col 2:11-12)?

   a. We must put ourselves under the knife, so to speak, & allow God to perform a spiritual circumcision on us by cutting away our sins through baptism.

[Let’s leave with a positive view of the Old Testament, because it still has a great purpose.]

II. THE OLD COVENANT WILL HELP YOU

A. Find Hope (Rom 15:4) – God delivered His people.

B. Find Examples (1 Cor 10:11-13) – God reproved His people.
C. Find Christ (2 Tim 3:14-15) – God taught & prepared His people for salvation in His Son.

2 Timothy 3:14-15
14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned & become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 & that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.