

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

Text: Acts 24:14, But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

INTRO: Paul, a prisoner, stood before Felix, a Roman governor, to defend himself from the false charges of the Jewish priests & elders. He had been falsely accused of blaspheming Moses & the O.T. law.

I. MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ARE SOMETIMES CHARGED WITH NOT BELIEVING THE O.T.

A. We are in full agreement with Paul in Acts 24:14.

B. We are in full agreement with Jesus' words in JN 5:46-47, Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me.

Creation, Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel, Noah & the flood, the tower of Babel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the crossing of the Red Sea... The writings of the prophets.

C. We believe with Paul that 2 Tim. 3:16-17, and that "the law is good, if it is used lawfully" (1 Tim. 1:8).

D. But we recognize the Divine limitations of O.T. law.

1. It was limited in scope--to the Hebrew nation.

The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day (Deut. 5:2-3).

Gentiles... have not the law (Rom. 2:14).

2. It was limited in power--by the blood of animals.

And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins (Heb. 10:11).

3. It was limited in duration--till Christ came & fulfilled it. READ GALATIANS 3:19, 23-29.

Gal. 3:19, 23-29, Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

- E. We certainly believe the OT was inspired by God, but it is not & was never intended to be God's law for those who live in the gospel age. This is why members of the church of Christ do not burn incense, offer animal sacrifices, honor a human priesthood, worship with mechanical instruments of music, teach Sabbath-keeping, tithing, etc. All these things were part of the OT system but NONE of them belong in NT worship.

II. NOW LET US LOOK AT SOME OTHER MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST & THE OT.

- A. The church was part of the plan & purpose of God even before the OT came into existence. READ EPH 3:8-11
- B. Christ's church was foreshadowed in OT types, copies.
 1. Israel in the wilderness was a likeness to the church.

- a. Their bondage in Egypt symbolizes our bondage in sin, Rom. 6:17-18
 - b. Their crossing of the Red Sea corresponds to NT baptism, 1 Cor 10:1-2
 - c. Their freedom in the wilderness parallels our freedom in Christ, Acts 7:38
 - d. The promised land they sought corresponds to heaven for us, Heb. 4.
2. From Acts 15:14-17 & 1 Cor. 3:16 we learn that the tabernacle & the temple of OT times were shadows or types of the NT church.
- C. The Lord's church was foretold by OT prophets/psalmists.
- 1. Psa 22 is one of the most thoroughly Messianic of all the psalms. The Hebrew writer shows that vs. 22 is fulfilled in the NT church: He is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. (Heb 2:11-12).
 - 2. Isa. 2:2-3 & Micah 4:1-2 foretell the establishment of "the house of God" & the word of the Lord going forth from Jerusalem as fulfilled in Acts 2.

In 1 Tim 3:15 the house of God is identified as "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - 3. Isa. 28:16 foretells that God will lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." Both Peter & Paul identify this prophecy with Jesus as the foundation of the NT church. Eph 2:19-11;

1 Peter 2:4-6.

D. Even tho we do not live under the OT system of law, there are many moral & spiritual lessons to be learned by reading its pages.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we thru patience & comfort of the Scriptures might have hope (Rom. 15:4).

I Cor. 10:1-12, Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

CONCLUSION: The greatest spokesman in the OT foretold an even greater Spokesman for the NT, Acts 3:22-24: For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

Centerville, TX, March 2, 1993 (lectureship)
Shiloh, Mexia, TX, December 5, 1993
Wonsley Drive, Austin, TX, April 9, 1998 (meeting)
Northside, Georgetown, TX, November 17, 2000 (meeting)
Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, February 3, 2002
Highway 29, Liberty Hill, TX, June 8, 2004 (meeting)