

**The Christian and the Law of Moses (2)**

Recap

What are we to do with the Law (the commandments and regulations of the Sinai covenant)?

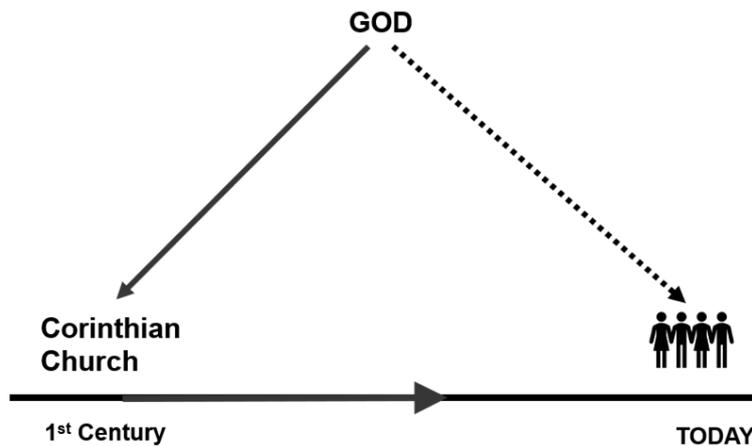
- **The law of Moses is not imposed on Christian believers** (Acts 15)

How does this work theologically?

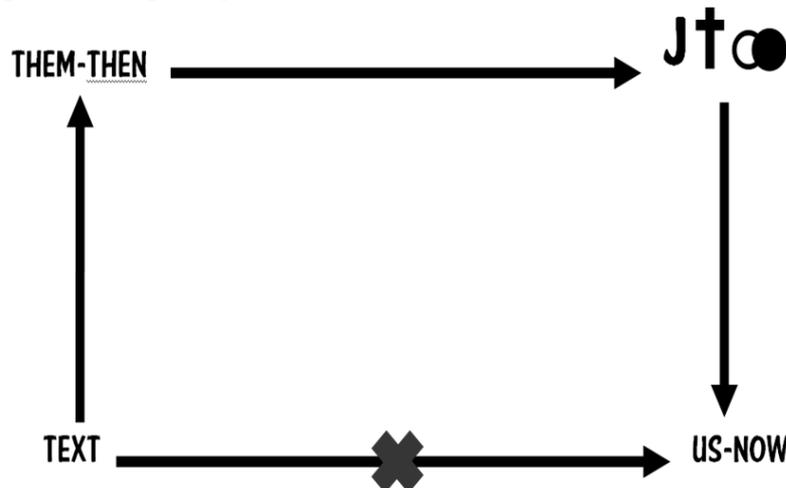
1. Jesus came to fulfil the law (Matt 5:17ff.)
2. The law can only be properly understood from a salvation-history perspective (Gal 3:15-4:7)
3. Christ’s coming brings about a whole new situation with respect to the place of the law (of Moses) in the life of the people of God (Rom 7:1-6; Rom 13:8-10; Gal 5:13-14)
4. The Christian, released from the law of Moses, is not outside God’s law, but under ‘the law of Christ’ (Gal 6:2; 1 Cor 9:20-21)

How then should we read the law?

***‘Going back to Corinth’***



***‘Taking the Long way round’***



### The law as 'prophetic witness'

The Bible teaches that the Old Testament Law points forward to Jesus Christ, acting as a prophetic witness to His person and work.

#### Luke 24:27

*"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."*

- Jesus, after His resurrection, shows that Moses (the Law) and the Prophets spoke of Him—meaning the Law contains prophetic witness to Christ.

#### Luke 24:44

*"He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.'"*

- Jesus affirms that the Law of Moses includes things **written about Him** that must be fulfilled.

#### John 5:46

*"If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me."*

- Jesus explicitly says Moses **wrote about** Him, again indicating again that the Law has prophetic content about Him.

#### Romans 3:21

*"But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify."*

- Paul explains that the Law **testifies** to the righteousness of God revealed in Christ.

#### Colossians 2:16–17

*"Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ."*

- The ceremonial aspects of the Law were **shadows**, pointing forward to the **substance—Christ**.

#### Hebrews 10:1

*"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves."*

- The Law **foreshadowed** Christ and the gospel realities He would bring.

**Exercise on the law as 'prophetic witness'**

Leviticus 1:1-8

**1** The LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting. He said, **2** 'Speak to the Israelites and say to them: "When anyone among you brings an offering to the LORD, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock.

**3** "If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, you are to offer a male without defect. You must present it at the entrance to the tent of meeting so that it will be acceptable to the LORD. **4** You are to lay your hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on your behalf to make atonement for you. **5** You are to slaughter the young bull before the LORD, and then Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and splash it against the sides of the altar at the entrance to the tent of meeting. **6** You are to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. **7** The sons of Aaron the priest are to put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. **8** Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the wood that is burning on the altar. **9** You are to wash the internal organs and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

**Note the main stages to the ritual**

As the one bringing the offering:

- (1) You present a male animal without defect at the tabernacle
- (2) You lay your hand on the head of the animal
- (3) You kill the animal
- (4) The priests splash the blood on the bronze altar for burnt offerings
- (5) You skin the offering and cut it into pieces
- (6) The priests arrange the pieces on the altar
- (7) You wash the internal organs and hind legs
- (8) The priest burns all of it on the altar

Mostly unexplained – *'like the rubric for a communion service without the explanation and the prayers'*

Context

Exodus 40:34-38

Note: the word for offering (*qor.ban*) shares a root with words for *nearness* and *coming near*

The first of 5 types of offering (Lev 1 to 7)

1. Burnt Offering  
See Num 28:1-15 – for the frequency of the regular (daily, weekly, and monthly) burnt offerings
2. Grain Offering
3. Fellowship/Peace Offering
4. Sin Offering
5. Guilt/Restitution Offering

All involve the shedding of blood except the grain offering

Offerings 1 to 3 are regular; offerings 4 and 5 are occasional

Offerings 1, 4 and 5 are said to make atonement (often '*for him* [the offerer]'; or '*for him for the sin he has committed*') (13 times)

In relation to offerings 4 and 5, atonement is said to result in forgiveness (9 times)

Wider context

Noah – first biblical reference to a burnt offering

Gen 8:20-21

Note the effect on the Lord of the 'pleasing aroma' of the burn offering (c.f. Gen 6:5-7)

Abraham – instructed by God to offer Isaac as a burnt offering was provided with a Ram to sacrifice in place of Isaac (Gen 22)

What is meant by the word translated 'atonement'?

'atonement' (*kāphar*) – a verb with the same root as the noun ransom (*kōpher*), 'something given in exchange for a person; a price paid to secure deliverance or favour'

e.g. Ex 21:28-30

*When is a bull owner liable to be put to death?*

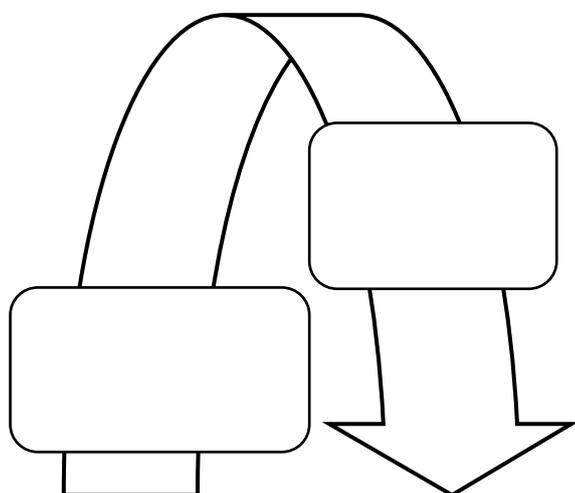
*How can he escape the death penalty?*

What do we learn about blood and atonement from Leviticus 17:11?

*For the life (ne.phesh) of the flesh is in the blood,  
and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls (ne.phesh),  
for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life (ne.phesh).*

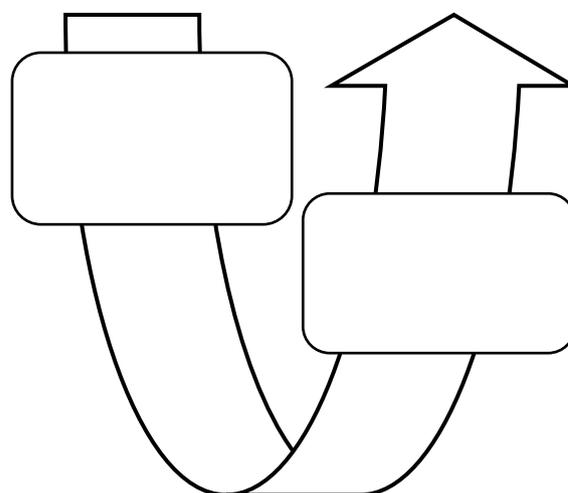
What then is the difference between pagan thinking and the biblical revelation?

PAGAN  
THINKING



the 'n' shaped dynamic

BIBLICAL  
REVELATION



the 'u' shaped dynamic

*'From the meaning of kōpher "ransom," the meaning of kāphar can be better understood. It means "to atone by offering a substitute." The great majority of the usages concern the priestly ritual of sprinkling of the sacrificial blood thus "making an atonement" for the worshipper. There are forty-nine instances of this usage in Leviticus alone and no other meaning is there witnessed. The verb is always used in connection with the removal of sin or defilement, except for Gen 32:20; Prov 16:14; and Isa 28:18 where the related meaning of "appease by a gift" may be observed.*

*It seems clear that this word aptly illustrates the theology of reconciliation in the OT. The life of the sacrificial animal specifically symbolized by its blood was required in exchange for the life of the worshipper. Sacrifice of animals in OT theology was not merely an expression of thanks to the deity by a cattle-raising people. It was the symbolic expression of innocent life given for guilty life. This symbolism is further clarified by the action of the worshipper in placing his hands on the head of the sacrifice and confessing his sins over the animal (cf. Lev 16:21; Lev 1:4; Lev 4:4, etc.) which was then killed or sent out as a scapegoat.'*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Extract from the Theological Workbook of the Old Testament (TWOT) lexicon

### Group Questions

1. What is likely to have been the significance of the various symbolic actions?

See Lev 16:21 – for the significance of the laying on of hands

2. What did the person making the offering have to do? What did the priest have to do? Why could the person making the offering not perform the actions performed by the priest?

3. What did the regular practice of this ritual teach the Israelites?

4. What promise is attached to the whole ritual? What does this tell us about the place of faith in the offering the sacrifice?

5. How did it point forward to the work of Christ? How and why is the work of Christ superior to this 'shadow'?

See Hebrews 10:1-18 for a commentary on the fulfilment in Christ

### **The regular offerings in Leviticus give us a wonderful sequence**

1. The burnt offering – God's provision for the atonement of sin that calls for faith (sin and guilt offerings deal with particular sins).
2. The grain offering – dedication – response by God's people to God's grace.
6. The fellowship offering – celebrating (with thankfulness and generosity) the peace with God and peace with one another that result from sin being atoned for through blood sacrifice.