

Did the New Testament Replace the Old Testament? Are Christians to Keep the Whole of the Law Given to Israel or Are We Given a New Mandate Through Christ?

The New Testament does not replace the Old Testament but fulfills it through Jesus Christ. The Old Testament remains the inspired Word of God, providing the foundation for understanding God's character, His promises, and His plan for salvation. However, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, believers are given a new covenant and a new way of living by grace and faith.

Jesus made it clear that He came to fulfill, not abolish, the Law and the Prophets:

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17, LSB)

Fulfillment means that Jesus completed the purpose and prophetic meaning of the Law, bringing it to its intended goal.

The Mosaic Law given to Israel was a covenant specifically for that nation. Paul explained that through Christ, believers are no longer under the law of Moses but under the law of Christ:

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2, LSB)

Christians are not called to keep ceremonial, dietary, or sacrificial laws given to Israel, because Jesus accomplished what those laws foreshadowed. The writer of Hebrews says:

"For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually every year, make perfect those who draw near." (Hebrews 10:1, LSB)

Through Christ's sacrifice, a new covenant was established:

"For this is the covenant that I will cut with the house of Israel After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, And upon their hearts I will write them. And I will be their God, And they shall be My people." (Hebrews 8:10, LSB)

Thus, the moral and spiritual principles of God's law are written on the hearts of believers. The new way is marked by faith working through love:

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love." (Galatians 5:6, LSB)

Jesus summarized the law into two great commandments:

“And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. And the second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:37–40, LSB)

Therefore, while the Old Testament continues to instruct and reveal the righteousness of God, Christians live under the new covenant through Christ—walking in love, guided by the Spirit, and no longer bound by the old written code but fulfilling its righteous requirement through faith in Jesus.

Referenced Scriptures (LSB):

- Matthew 5:17 — “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”
- Galatians 6:2 — “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”
- Hebrews 10:1 — “For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually every year, make perfect those who draw near.”
- Hebrews 8:10 — “For this is the covenant that I will cut with the house of Israel After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, And upon their hearts I will write them. And I will be their God, And they shall be My people.”
- Galatians 5:6 — “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.”
- Matthew 22:37–40 — “And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets.”