

Trends

If Americans got to choose, houses of worship would be one of the first organizations reopened when social distancing restrictions are scaled back, according to a new poll on reopening society. More than one-third of registered voters (35%) said in-person church services and other religious gatherings should be opened as soon as possible. Fewer Americans said the same about schools (31%), bars and restaurants (21%) and large entertainment events, like NBA games and concerts (14%), the survey reported.

via ScottRasmussen.com

Psalm 111:1: "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation."

Sentence Sermons

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

—First Amendment, U.S. Constitution

Psalm 132:7: "Let us go into His tabernacle; Let us worship at His footstool."

News & Notes

Please pray for Zachary Wallace. He is not faithfully attending services as he should (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Her birthday is March 24th. She's an encouragement to all!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

Pray for the African appeal for funds to buy Bibles, songbooks and support faithful preachers' travel expense. Donate if you're able! 1 Jn. 3:17

My trip to the Philippines (April 7-May 5) has been cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak. Lord willing, this will soon come to an end and the preaching training schools planned can be rescheduled. Please continue to pray for the furtherance of the gospel!

Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



What is the difference between the Old and New Testaments?

Craig Thomas

We know that in order for one to be "good steward" a man must be found faithful (1 Cor. 4:2). This, of course, involves being able to "rightly divide the word of truth" as Paul instructed the young preacher Timothy to do in 1 Timothy 2:15. This becomes especially important when dealing with the Old and New Testaments. In order to understand anything about the scheme of redemption (God's plan for saving man) one must first understand the difference between the Old and New Testaments. So what is the difference between them?

1) **They involved different parties.** The Law of Moses as contained in the Old Testament was only meant for the Jewish nation. In Deuteronomy 5:2-3 Moses clearly identifies that "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." Thus, the Law of Moses was not given to the patriarchs ("fathers") nor was it given to the Gentiles or to Christians. The Old Testament law was never meant for anyone else but the Jews. Since there no longer exists a race of pure Jews in the world today (Jer. 31:35-36; Matt. 23:37-38; 24:29; 1 Tim. 1:4; Titus 3:9) the old law is no longer in force. On the other hand, the New Testament is meant for all men, all nations, everywhere (Mk. 16:15-16; Eph. 2:13-22).

2) **They had different purposes.** The old law could never make anyone justified in God's sight (Heb. 10:1-4). As a result, something had to change. Christ came to do this very thing (Jn. 1:17, 29). God promised Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that eventually "all families of the earth" would be blessed through his seed. We learn from Galatians 3:19 that the old law was "added because of transgressions until the seed should come." Since that seed was Christ (Gal. 3:16) and He has already come we are no longer under the old law. Or as Paul states, "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24); therefore, since Christ has come "we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Gal. 3:25) Everyone on earth can now partake of the blessing of the new testament which is contained in the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16-17)

and have their sins washed away by His blood (Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5) through a new and better covenant (Heb. 8:6, 8, 13; 12:24).

Consequences of Keeping the Old Law

Craig Thomas

Many religions groups today teach that one must still keep certain aspects of the Old Testament Law. For instance, Sabbatarians teach that we must continue to “remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy” (Ex. 20:8). In order to help us understand why it is that we are not responsible for keeping any part of the old law we will look at some consequences that would result from the practice.

1) **Makes the death of Christ vain.** In Acts 15 and Galatians 2 we read of some Jewish Christians who were trying to bind circumcision (one element of the old law). When the apostle Paul learned of it he went to Jerusalem (where this was taking place) to help straighten things out. He said in Galatians 2:21, “for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” As a result, he rebuked them sharply (Titus 1:10-13) so the truth of the gospel could continue (Gal. 2:5).

2) **Makes one a debtor to do the whole law.** If one chooses to keep any part of the law of Moses (e.g., Sabbath keeping, circumcision, religious feasts) he/she must keep all the law. James said, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (Jas. 2:10). In Galatians 5:3 Paul tells us that if we keep even one aspect of the old law we become a “debtor to do the whole law.”

3) **Causes one to fall from grace.** Paul said to those same Jewish Christians that were binding circumcision, “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” Since the grace of God brings salvation (Titus 2:11) anything that would cause one to fall from that grace would be disastrous! Don’t become “estranged from Christ” (Gal. 5:4) by holding on to parts of the old law!

Even though we are not under the old testament law it can still be profitable to us. Romans 15:4 says, “For whatsoever things were written aforetime (i.e., OT) were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” Paul also tells us concerning the Old Testament that “all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition” (1 Cor. 10:11). Let us be content to simply use the Old Testament in the way God intended for us to use it.

What About Those Who Never Heard the Gospel?

John Elliot

God can get the message to anyone who desires it. As we look around the world, we can’t help but consider all those cultures which have no semblance of the gospel, and even many which are illiterate. What will God do with all of them?

First, do they need the gospel to be saved? Is the Bible the only truth from the only God? Is it for every man? Romans 1:16 says yes to all these questions. Hebrews 2:9 adds that Christ tasted death for every man. Jesus claimed exclusive access to God (John 3:16-18; 14:6; Acts 4:12), and said that if we are not with Him, we are against Him (Matthew 12:30).

Second, couldn’t God just save everyone? What about sin and evil? What about justice? God’s eyes are too pure to approve evil (Habakkuk 1:13; cp. Psalm 5:5). To some, sincerity is the only criteria that matters. But Jesus taught in Matthew 7:21-23 that God requires obedience in order to save people!

Third, why hasn’t the world heard the good news? Even though all men have some knowledge, Paul declared that the truth is suppressed (Romans 1:18-25). This is true even in our literate, civilized culture (Romans 3:9-10). All men have a God-given conscience, which leads us in our decisions, and by which we are judged (Romans 2:6, 12-15). One must weigh the evidence and respond.

Fourth, is God at fault? God can get the message to anyone who desires it (Romans 9:14-16, 25-26). He could get it to the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza and He could get it to the Gentile Cornelius in Caesarea. The question of Genesis 18:25 holds true: “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

Fifth, if ignorance is safety, then what would be the best course of action? Would it not be to refrain from preaching to them, so they can be saved in their ignorance? Does that make sense in light of our duty in Matthew 28:19, 20: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” We must have a conviction that they are lost without the gospel.

Each of us was born to hear the holy call, to find our place in God’s unfolding plan. When His voice is heard, it’s glorious to obey and bear His light and truth to every man. We’re called to be a generation that turns the tide within our nation, but who will go and who will stand?

Each of us was born to know the heart of God, His deep desire to love and to forgive. He does not delight in judgment or in wrath, but calls to all to turn to Him and live (2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4). The word that brings true repentance, that turns away God’s sentence, are words that only we can give.

For such a time as this we were born to speak the truth—anointed words that move the hearts of men. If we are silent now, the Lord will send some other men—faithful men whose hearts are fully His, for such a time as this.