

A large, light pink brushstroke graphic that starts from the left edge and extends towards the right, with a jagged, hand-painted edge. It serves as a background for the text.

Old Testament

The Law

GOD IN HISTORY

The Law

- Torah: Hebrew for "Law" (Pentateuch: Greek for "five books")
 - The Law is central to the identity & daily practice of the Hebrews
 - The law was given in Exodus (i.e. "exit") when the Jews departed from one life and entered into a new life in covenant with God
- Given soon after departing Egypt, Ex. 19:1: "On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai."
- Given with a promise, Ex. 19:5: "...if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine..."

The Law – The 10 Commandments

- The Law was revolutionary and unique in the world
- The 10 commandments (Ex. 20) are the basis for all our relationships-they provide us a "place" in this world
- 1st, our relationship with God (Commands 1-3)
 - No other God before him; No idols; Honor the name of God
- 2nd, our relationship with creation (4): keep Sabbath holy
- 3rd, family relationships (5): honor father and mother
- 4th, societal relationships (6-8): honor what God gives
 - life (no murder), marriage (no adultery), possessions (no stealing)
- 5th, person-to-person relationships (9-10) no lies, coveting
 - Do not think more highly of yourself than of others

The Law – The 7 year Sabbatical Cycle

- The 7 year Sabbatical was a unique societal contract
- Deut 15 (also Ex 21 & 23) At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release. And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release what he has lent to his neighbor.
- If your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. And when you let him go free from you, you shall not let him go empty-handed.
- But there will be no poor among you; for the LORD will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess—if only you will strictly obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all this commandment that I command you today.

The Law – The 49 year Jubilee Cycle

- The 49 year Jubilee cycle was a complete societal "reset"
- Leviticus 25 You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years. Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land.
- In this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his property. And if you make a sale to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor, you shall not wrong one another. You shall pay your neighbor according to the number of years after the jubilee, and he shall sell to you according to the number of years for crops.
- Therefore you shall do my statutes and keep my rules and perform them, and then you will dwell in the land securely. The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and dwell in it securely.

How did God establish his authority?

- Lev. 10:1-11 "...And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD (YHWH)..."
 - The sons of Aaron offered "unauthorized" fire/incense to the Lord
 - Aaron told not to put lives of his sons "above" the honor of God
- Lev. 16:1-5; 20-22 "The goat shall bear all their iniquities..."
 - There was no removing of sins prior to Christ, only displacement
- Lev. 19:1-18 "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy...you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD"
 - To be holy is to be set apart (from the world and devoted to God)
 - 1 Jn 2:15 "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."
 - Only God can love God. If we love God it is because of God (The Spirit) in us.

Leviticus 23: 7 feasts that point to Christ

- Passover 23:4-8 As lintels/doorposts washed with blood of the lamb so the believer is washed in the blood of Christ
- Unleavened Bread 23:6 Represents Jesus' sinless life/sacrifice
- First Fruits 23:10 Celebrated 3rd day of Passover: represents Jesus' resurrection as first fruits of the dead (1 Cor. 15:20)
- Pentecost 23:16 Seven weeks (50 days) after 1st Fruits: on day of Pentecost disciples received the Spirit & the church was born
- Feast of Trumpets 23:24 A day of rest proclaimed by trumpets: the time of Jesus' return will be heralded by a trumpet
- Day of Atonement 23:26-32 "He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins — and ... the sins of the world" (1 John 2:2)
- Booths 23:34 40 yrs of wandering, God "tented" with his people: As Emmanuel, "God with us," Christ "tented" with us as a man

What is a law?

- Man's law ("positive" law): consensus driven agreement based on "...life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."
- Natural law: Aristotle: "...valid everywhere with the same force and 'not existing by people's thinking this or that' "
 - His examples: Greek city states that subordinated women to men, slaves to citizens, and barbarians to Hellenes.
- Laws of Physics: consensus of observation and theory that establishes repeatable cause and effect outcome
- God's Law: final say in affairs of men and the cosmos
 - Heb. 1:3 "He [Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power."

What is Law? Why are there laws?

- Immature people see rules/laws as restrictions on them (their "authority")
- A law can only be instituted by one (or those) in authority
 - Who the authority is will determine the purpose/value of the law
 - When the authority is challenged the laws are subverted for good or bad
- Law as Warning: "Here be dragons. Don't cross the line."
 - Consequences on spiritual, mental and physical well-being
 - Breakdown of religious, social, family and personal relationships
- Law as Relationship boundaries (hopefully will strengthen relationships)
 - Trend toward arbitrary power dominating family relationships
 - How did this happen? Breakdown of family from integrated unit to individuals living together.
- Laws can define rights of citizens and limits on those in power
 - When laws are created for and by the people under "limited" government
 - Limited gov is "messy" and rarely satisfies everyone (especially those in "power")
 - Limited government will fail when people divide into disparate/warring clans
- Laws will only be accepted if people willingly submit to God as authority
 - Which god the people submit to will determine the nature (justice) of the laws
- What happens when laws are defied or superseded ("law" of gravity)?
 - Christ instituted a new law: "Love one another as I have loved you." Jn. 15:12

Why a chosen people?

- Individual testimony was not sufficient: Adam, Enoch, Noah
- God must testify to Himself in the history of his people
 - Only God could testify to his actual purpose and nature
 - Only God could display his glory to the world
 - Only God could establish his law
 - Only God could assure the line of the Messiah

Why permit "decay" of his written word?

- Decay includes corruption of his word, and disobedience
- Decay is the nature of the natural (fallen) world
- We live under the curse of decay and death of all things
- We must make the effort to confirm our faith as genuine
 - Conflict (our effort to resolve decay) hones and reveals our faith
- The living Word, the Messiah, did not suffer decay
 - Psalm 16:10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.
- I am unaware of any corruption of the Mosaic Laws