

Responding to the New Atheists' attacks on the God of the Old Testament-28: The Mosaic Law-1 (Introduction)

An area of attack and misunderstanding by atheists and Christians alike is the Mosaic Law. How do we reconcile its patriarchal structures, primogeniture (rights of the first born), polygamy, warfare, servitude/slavery, and a number of other social arrangements with the concept of God's perfect instructions? Many of these laws seem as baffling as they are contradictory to God's original purposes for man—e.g., polygamy and slavery. Over the next several daily doctrines we will examine these laws in light of their background and God's purposes.

I ran across an "Open Letter to Laura" that will serve to introduce some of the issues regarding the Mosaic Law. Whether the letter is authentic, it still serves to introduce our topic. Dr. Laura Schlessinger is the Jewish author and (until recently) radio talk show host who offers practical advice about relationships, parenting, and ethical dilemmas based on Old Testament principles. Here's part of that letter—wow, what sarcasm!

Dear Dr. Laura:

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from your show, and I try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tried to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate.

I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some of the specific laws and how to follow them:

- I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?
- I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself?
- A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination (Lev. 11:10), it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this?
- Leviticus 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle room here?

- Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden in Leviticus 19:27. How should they die?
- I know from Leviticus 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?
- My uncle has a farm. He violates Leviticus 19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend)

I know you have studied these things extensively; so I am confident you can help. Thank you again for reminding us that *God's word is eternal and unchanging* (emphasis mine). You devoted disciple and adoring fan.

How do we reconcile the notion of a perfect God who gives man His perfect law with the Mosaic Law which seems so antiquated by today's standards? Some Christians, mainly Theonomists, believe that many of the Mosaic laws are still binding today. Other Christians, while they do not believe these laws are binding, are still a bit embarrassed by them. There is no reason to be embarrassed. The solution is always to dig deeper. Deeper studies always reveal truths that always reflect God's glory and grace. It is hard work, but God's Truth is always worth the effort—God is worth the effort! The choice is to be embarrassed and confused by God's Law or to be impressed and enlightened by it.

In Him,

Pastor Don



Galatians 3:24-25. The Law controlled us and was supposed to teach us until we had faith and were acceptable to God. But once a person has faith, there is no more need to have the Law as a teacher.