

Some Basic Facts Relating to Biblical Authority that all Bible Students Need to Know

Introduction:

- A. The Bible is the inspired word of God.
- B. It is the most translated book of all time and more copies of it have been sold than any other book.
- C. Its intent, if seriously studied, serves many purposes; but the basic idea we should understand is that it is God's message to man.
 - 1. It is how He speaks to us.
 - 2. We should receive it as coming from a just and loving authoritative figure—even as a soldier in an army respects and looks to higher authority for instruction.
- D. Many figures throughout history have benefited from the Bible. Here are a few noted quotes:

Quotes:

“I have a fundamental belief in the Bible as the Word of God, written by those who were inspired. I study the Bible daily.” Isaac Newton

“The Bible is one of the greatest blessings bestowed by God on the children of men. It has God for its author; salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture for its matter. It is all pure.” John Locke

“The Bible, as a revelation from God, was not designed to give us all the information we might desire, nor to solve all the questions about which the human soul is perplexed, but to impart enough to be a safe guide to the haven of eternal rest.” Albert Barnes

“The Bible is proved to be a revelation from God, by the reasonableness and holiness of its precepts; all its commands, exhortations, and promises having the most direct tendency to make men wise, holy, and happy in themselves, and useful to one another.” Adam Clarke

“We can never learn too much of His will towards us, too much of His messages and His advice. The Bible is His word and its study gives at once the foundation for our faith and an inspiration to battle onward in the fight against the tempter.” John D. Rockefeller

“It does not require great learning to be a Christian and be convinced of the truth of the Bible. It requires only an honest heart and a willingness to obey God.” Albert Barnes

“A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education.” Theodore Roosevelt

“Within the covers of the Bible are the answers for all the problems men face.” Ronald Reagan

“The Bible is the rock on which this Republic rests.” Andrew Jackson

“In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength.” Robert E. Lee

“I am blessed to receive a word from God every day in receiving the scriptures and reading the scriptures. And God speaks through the Bible.” Ted Cruz

“The Bible is worth all the other books which have ever been printed.” Patrick Henry

“If Christians will obey the instructions given to them by Christ and his inspired apostles, they will adorn the religion of the Bible, and save themselves much perplexity and severe trials, which they attribute to their afflictions in consequence of believing unpopular truth.” Ellen G. White

Body

I. The Bible must be rightly divided.

A. It is important to “rightly divide” the Bible.

1. This involves understanding that there is an Old Testament (OT) and a New Testament (NT).

2 Tim. 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2. Both testaments are referred to as law, but neither stands alone and one complements and completes the other.

B. The “old law,” known as the **Law of Moses** (Josh. 8:32), was a covenant between God and Israel.

1. While it was inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17) and has timeless laws, like marriage and divorce, its days, as the covenant between God and His people, were numbered.
2. The Old Testament’s replacement was prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah.

Jer 31:33 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

3. The Old Law was not faultless because it needed the second (the new covenant, law, or testament) to make the word of God complete so God’s redemptive plan could come to fruition.

Heb. 8:7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

Hebrews 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

4. The Old Law was abolished, or made inactive, as far as being THE law for the true people of God.

Eph. 2:15-16 **Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:**

II. Misunderstandings regarding the importance of the Old Testament:

- A. Since some insist that the Old Testament is not important, we shall briefly deal with its **importance** and then speak regarding its **applicability**.
- B. Importance and value of the OT:
 1. It makes up 75 percent of the inspired word of God—the Bible.
 2. It contains important history, fascinating poetry, wise proverbs, and prophecy that proves its authenticity.
 3. It was the only scripture that Jesus used.
 4. Many passages in the New Testament would be meaningless if we did not have the Old Testament.
 5. We learn about the same God in both testaments.
 6. The OT announces the good news about Christ.
 7. Both covenants call for love.
 8. The OT is involved in a preacher's responsibility to declare the "whole counsel of God" ([Acts 20:26–27](#)).
 9. The OT has been a guide for archeologists to find historical artifacts and ruins, which, by the way, is strong evidence it is not a book of fiction.
 10. The OT contains statements pertaining to science, that men did not know in the day and time when it was written, that prove God inspired the writers.
 - a. This fact is useful for Christians to teach unbelievers that there is a God and that the Scriptures are inspired.
 - b. All these things attest to the fact that the OT is important.
- C. Some assert that the OT is **not applicable** to Christians today.

1. In view of the truths noted above that attest to the importance of the OT, it becomes apparent that it is applicable in many ways.

2. But we do agree on certain things the Old Testament does not do:

a. The OT is not a source for determining **how to become a Christian**.

Acts 4:12 **Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**

Rom. 1:16 **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**

b. The Old Testament is not a guide **for Christian worship**.

Col. 3:17 **And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.**

2 John 9 **Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.**

c. The Old Testament is not a **pattern for the church**, nor is any part of it to be substituted for the instruction the apostles gave to churches through the Book of Acts and the epistles to various churches.

1 Cor.3:11 **For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

Heb. 10:1 **For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.**

3. The Old Testament is applicable because:

a. It was given for Christians.

1) Peter stated that the OT prophets **were serving not themselves but others**.

1 Pet. 1:12 **It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have**

now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

- 2) Thus, the OT authors understood that they were writing for a future audience—Christians identified with the NT church.

The OT is applicable because:

- b. Paul understood that the OT authors wrote for NT believers, living on this side of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Rom. 15:4 “For whatever was written in former days was written *for our instruction*, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

Rom. 4:23–24 But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,

1 Cor. 10:11 “Now these things happened to [the Israelites] as an example, but they were written down *for our instruction*, on whom the end of the ages has come.”

The OT is applicable because:

- c. The apostle Paul told Timothy, who was raised on the OT by his Jewish mother and grandmother (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim. 1:5), that the “*sacred writings*” of his upbringing “are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15).

Finally,

The OT is applicable because:

- d. Jesus said that all the OT points to him. After his first encounter with Jesus, Philip announced to Nathaniel: “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote” (John 1:45).

III. Jesus was an Old Testament prophet who respected the Law as being God's word.

A. Unfortunately, some today accuse Him of teaching things contrary to the Law, but the fact of the matter is that He explained the Law as He refuted the false notions of the Jews regarding various issues.

B. Let us take a close look at Matthew 5:17-19:

Matthew 5:17 **Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

1. Jesus made two important points:
 - a. That he did not come to destroy the Law, but rather to fulfil;
 - b. That nothing pertaining to the Law would pass before the fulfillment of the Law.
 - 1) This would involve His crucifixion and resurrection.
 - 2) Therefore, it becomes apparent that when Jesus said **"it has been said...but I say unto you"** (multiple times), He could not possibly have been taking issue with the Law of Moses (contradicting it) but with the false notions of the Jews.
2. That said, the Law was in fact abrogated and replaced with a new one, as prophesied by Jeremiah.

IV. Since some professed Christians insist that the Old Testament is still in force, let us look at some passages that shed light on this matter:

Col 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Heb 10:9b He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

8:6-13 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Heb 8:7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.

Acts 13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Gal 3:23-24 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

4:21-31 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? 22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he *who* was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise. 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now. 30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Gal. 5:18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

2 Cor 3:6-16 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 7 But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which *glory* was to be done away: 8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? 9 For if the ministration of condemnation *be* glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. 10 For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. 11 For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious. 12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: 13 And not as Moses, *which* put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of

that which is abolished: 14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ. 15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. 16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

V. The New Testament

- A. Having talked about the Old Testament (Law of Moses), we shall now proceed to address the New Testament—the second law, which is referred to as “the law of liberty” (James 1:25, 2:12) and “the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2: *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ*).
- B. “The re-establishment of Israel reaches its completion in the making of a new covenant, according to which the law of God is written in the hearts of the people; thereby Israel becomes in truth the people of the Lord, (**K & D Commentary**).”
- C. This new covenant is not with the people of national Israel, but the true people of God who make up the church Jesus established, which is made up of both Jews and Gentiles.

1 Cor. 12:13 “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*”
- D. The Bible reveals three dispensations: 1) Patriarchal; 2) Mosaic; and 3) Christian.
 1. During the patriarchal dispensation God spoke directly to the patriarchs.
 2. During the Mosaic dispensation God spoke through the prophets.
 3. In the Christian dispensation God speaks through the written word.
 - a. The New Testament is the **only creed** for the people of God in this dispensation of time.

- b. The New Testament constitutes the **pattern** for the establishment of Christianity in any part of the world.
- c. The twenty-seven books embody Heaven's final revelation to humanity.
- d. The written word is complete.

2 Tim. 3:16-17 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*

Jude 1:3 Jude exhorted his readers to *“earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”*

Barnes: “It was done once in the sense that it is not to be done again, and, therefore, in the sense that it was then complete, and that nothing was to be added to it. There is indeed the idea that it was formerly done, but with this additional thought, that it was then complete.”

1) Thus, we do not need prophets to guide us.

2) The last prophet was John.

Luke 16:16 *The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.*

Jesus was a prophet, but He existed before John.

VI. What about the Ten Commandments?

- A. Some people think that even today we have the responsibility to keep the Ten Commandments, but these commandments are part of the Law that we have seen was replaced by the New Testament.
- B. The substance of the Ten Commandments is taught in the New Testament except for # 4 *“remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”*
 - 1. Once it is understood that Christians are under the New Testament the question of whether we should observe the Sabbath is settled by the fact that the New Testament does not teach Sabbath keeping.

- a. When a law has been made inactive then the law that replaces it is in force.
- b. Imagine people today trying to justify actions based on laws that governed our land previously.

- 1) For example, the British law was in force until it was replaced with the U.S. Constitution.
- 2) This would include British law, Indian law, and French law.

2. The claim that the Catholics changed the Sabbath to Sunday is a moot point because what they did, and do, does not in any way affect the truth taught in the Bible.

3. The accusation that Sunday is pagan is also a moot point, because New Testament churches assemble for worship **“upon the first day of the week”** (Acts 20:7).

- a. The early church practiced Sunday worship according to the guidance of the apostles of Christ who were inspired of God to teach what God wanted.
- b. Christians did not continue the Sabbath but worshipped on the first day of the week, which happens to be called Sunday, and worshiping on this day has nothing to do with any sun god or the Roman Catholic Church.

C. Paul sought to bring his brethren who were under the Law to Christ.

D. Let us look now at several passages that instruct Christians regarding the Law:

Gal 5:3 **For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.**

Gal 5:4 **Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.**

Rom 10:4 **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**

Rom 4:14 **For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:**

Rom 7:6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

Rom 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

VII. The Christian Sabbath is every day—we rest in the salvation of the Lord.

A. The apostle Paul refers to the Sabbath as a shadow of Christ, which is no longer binding because the substance (Christ) has come.

Col. 2:16-17 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

1. It is clear in this passage that the weekly Sabbath is in view because of the phrase "a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day" that refers to the annual, monthly, and weekly holy days of the Jewish calendar.
2. See 1 Chronicles 23:31; 2 Chronicles 2:4, 31:3; Ezekiel 45:17; Hosea 2:11.

B. The Sabbath was the sign to Israel of the Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 31:16-17; Ezekiel 20:12; Nehemiah 9:14).

1. Since we are now under the New Covenant (Hebrews 8) we are no longer required to observe the sign of the Mosaic Covenant.
2. There is no New Testament passage that teaches Christians to observe the Sabbath.

C. The early church worshipers met on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).

- D. When the Old Testament was in force Gentile nations were not commanded to observe the Sabbath nor were they condemned for failing to do so.
1. If Sabbath observance were meant to be an eternal moral principle such a command would not be absent.
 2. In his epistles, the apostle Paul warned the Gentiles about many different sins, but breaking the Sabbath was not one of them.
 3. Paul rebuked the Galatians for thinking God expected them to observe special days (including the Sabbath) (Galatians 4:10-11).
 4. The early church fathers, from Ignatius to Augustine, taught that the Old Testament Sabbath had been abolished and that the first day of the week (Sunday) was the day when Christians should meet for worship. (See the section "Testimony of Patristic Writers" by following the link at the bottom of the last page.)
- E. Sunday has not replaced Saturday as the Sabbath.
1. Instead, the Lord's Day is a time when believers gather to commemorate His resurrection that occurred on the first day of the week.
 2. Every day to the believer is one of Sabbath rest, since we have ceased from our spiritual labor and are resting in the salvation of the Lord (Hebrews 4:9-11).
- F. So, while we still follow the pattern of designating one day of the week for the Lord's people to gather in worship, we do not refer to this as "the Sabbath."

Conclusion:

- A. We have talked about the Bible as a message from God that is inspired.
- B. We have observed that the Bible is a book that must be rightly divided.
- C. We have talked about the importance or value of the O.T. and its applicability.

- D. We talked about Jesus' respect for the Law and how He taught it as He corrected false Jewish notions.
- E. We looked at several passages that teach that the O.T. is no longer in force—that it was made inactive when replaced by the New Testament.
- F. We talked about the New Testament being the current law for the church or Christians in this dispensation; and finally:
- G. We discussed the Sabbath, noting that Saturday Sabbath was for Israel only and that “the first day of the week” is a time when believers in Christ gather to commemorate His resurrection that occurred on the first day of the week.

Robert Waters

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Credits for main point # 8 to Wayne Jackson. Here is the link to his article:

<https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/314-should-christians-keep-the-sabbath>