6:14, "Sin is no longer your master, for you are no longer subject to the law, which enslaves you to sin. Instead, you are free by God's grace."

If believers still want to follow old rules instead of obeying the commands of Jesus in love, then read to them Colossians 2:16-17: "Do not let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new-moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. For these rules were only shadows of the real thing, Christ himself."

### 3. Plan together with co-workers the activities for the next worship.

Choose activities that fit current needs and local customs.

**Tell** how God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites, and how Moses begged God to spare those who sinned.

**Explain** the historical facts about the Old Testament Law (part 1, above).

**Explain** how God replaced the Old law with the New covenant of grace (part 1, above).

**Let the children** present the drama, poem and questions that they have prepared.

**Explain** the plans you made with co-workers to visit people who struggle with the old law.

**Memorize** together John 1:17: "The Law was given through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

To introduce the **Lord's Supper**, read Colossians 2:13-14. Explain that Jesus' blood freed us from the curse of the law of death, and that the Lord's Supper celebrates His blood sacrifice.

**Pray** and help one another in groups of two or three. Confirm plans to help people who struggle with keeping old laws that God no longer requires for New Testament believers.





# Moses and the Old Testament Law

## Pentateuch part 3: Exodus, God's Law Given.

Those who teach children should read study #32 for children.

**Prayer**: "Help us understand the present purpose of your commands to ancient Israel."

### 1. Prepare your heart and mind with God's Word.

**Read Exodus 19** to find how God prepared the people to receive His Ten Commandments, which were the heart and foundation of the Old Testament Law.

**The Ten Commandments (abbreviated)**

**Have no other Gods but Me.**
**Have no idols.**
**Do not take the name of God in vain.**
**Set apart the seventh day to rest.**
**Honour your father and mother.**
**Do not murder.**
**Do not commit adultery.**
**Do not steal.**
**Do not give false testimony.**
**Do not covet other people's property**

**Find in Exodus 20:1-17** the complete text of the Ten Commandments, which the Old Testament also called simply the Law or the Covenant.

**Historical facts** about the Ten Commandments:

- God gave the Ten Commandments to the ancient Israelites, soon after He had miraculously led them out of slavery in Egypt by making a path through the Red Sea. They were to obey Him because of that great miracle of mercy (Exodus 20:2).
- The ancient Law contained 612 laws including the basic Ten. God no longer requires His people to obey many of those laws, such as worshipping only in Jerusalem, slaying people who worked on the seventh day (Sabbath), not cultivating the soil during Sabbath years, offering animal sacrifices. Very few of the Old Testament laws are required by the New Testament. The primary law of both Testaments is the law of love (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). The Apostle Paul scolded those that required believers to obey special days and to eat only approved food (Galatians 3:1-3; 4:9-11; Colossians 2:16-17).
- Moses followed the advice his father-in-law Jethro and named elders to judge God's people (Exodus 18:24-25). These judges had to know God's laws (Exodus 19:7). One time, the wandering Israelites were camping near a mountain later called Sinai. God told them that they were not to climb that mountain or they would die (Exodus 19:2-5). Only Moses was allowed to go up. God came down onto that mountain with great thunder, lightning and much smoke; the mountain quaked violently (Exodus 19:16-20). There, God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses, engraved on tablets of stone (Exodus 24:12).
- The New Testament repeats nine of the Ten Commandments as requirements for Christian believers. It does not require Christians to set apart the seventh day of the week as a day of rest. Some early Christian congregations would gather on the 'first day of the week' (Acts 20:7). God has not changed the Sabbath to another day. Rather, He has changed the Covenant that defined the kind of rest that He provides for His people (Hebrews 4:3-12). Some churches still require total rest on the Sabbath.
- **The seventh day** rest required by the Old Covenant, like many Old Testament laws, focused on the old, temporary and material creation, because God rested on the seventh day after He finished creating the world (Exodus 20:11).
- **The first day** of the week, on which Jesus rose from the dead, focuses on the new, spiritual creation of the New Covenant that replaced the old. Christians





become part of this new, eternal creation when they are born anew by the Holy Spirit (Jeremiah 31:31-34; 2 Cor. 5:17).

- God has replaced the Old Testament law with the New Testament covenant of grace. Since Jesus introduced the New Covenant by His blood, the New Testament reveals a new kind of law for believers to follow. It is called the law of **Liberty** (James 2:13), the law of **faith** (Romans 3:27-28), the Law of **Love** (Galatians 5:14) and the Law of the **Spirit**; (Romans 8:2-4). The more glorious and eternal 'ministry of the Spirit' replaced the old 'ministry of death,' which was the old law that 'faded away' (2 Corinthians 3:7-11).
- The Old Testament law brought death, because nobody could keep all of its commands. Its purpose was threefold:
  1) It defined civil and military rules for ancient Israel, so that the elders could judge wisely;
  2) It brought knowledge of sin (Romans 3:19-20);
  3) It served as a 'tutor' and 'shadow' of better things to come, to lead sinners to Christ who cancelled our debt to the decree that caused our death, by 'nailing it to the cross' (Galatians 3:24-25; Colossians 2:14-17).

**Read Exodus 32,** another account of God giving Moses the Ten Commandments. **Find**:

- Why God became furious with the Israelites.
- Why God changed His mind about destroying the idolaters.
- What foolish thing Moses did with the tablets because of his anger.

### 2. Plan what believers will do next week to help each other be guided by the Holy Spirit rather than by the 'letter of the law'.

If any believers are confused by the Old Testament laws, visit them and explain the truths given in this study. Explain that Christian believers now live under the New Covenant of grace. The minor details of Christians' lives are not controlled by written laws; the Holy Spirit guides Christians through the law of liberty as we obey the law of love.

If believers feel bound to follow the Old Testament rules, then pray for their liberation from the bondage of the law. Help them to memorize Romans