

THE PURPOSE OF THE OT LAWS

By Denver Cheddie

There are many OT scriptures which are mind boggling to NT believers. Examples include the food laws and ceremonial laws. Of course many of them no longer directly apply to us. But what did these laws really mean to the people to whom they were given? And why were they given?

1. 1 Tim. 2:9, 10 makes it clear that God never intended for man to live by laws. The law was only introduced when the Israelites sinned in the wilderness by worshiping the golden calf. God always wanted man to live by His guidance and leading. But the OT people were not willing. As a result God gave them a list of rules. He only did this to maintain law and order until the fullness of time had come when He would send Jesus. A perfect example is the divorce law. He only allowed it because of the hardness of the people's hearts. Divorce was never His highest purpose for anyone.
2. God gave the laws so there would always be a remembrance of Him. In Deut. 6:20-25, anticipating that there would be future generations of Israel that did not know the God of the Red Sea, God commanded the people to teach the laws to their children. The laws and statutes would naturally arouse curiosity among the children. This was God's means of creating a history of remembrance of His mighty acts to future generations.

3. Col. 2:17 teaches that many of the OT rituals were given so that they foreshadowed what Christ would later do. It was one of the tools used by the writers of the NT to argue for Christ.

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