

## AN EXAMINATION OF JESUS' VIEW OF THE SAVAGE JEWISH LAW HIS SCRIPTURE AS SHOWN BY THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF BIBLE DIFFICULTIES

Gleason W Archer's Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties is the book in question.

QUOTE: Evangelicals do not try to prove that the Bible has no mistakes so that they can be sure the Bible is the Word of God. One might prove that a newspaper article is free from all mistakes, but that would not prove that the newspaper article is the Word of God. Christians hold the Bible to be the Word of God (and inerrant) because they are convinced that Jesus, the Lord of the church, believed it and taught His disciples to believe it. And ultimately their conviction of its truth rests on the witness of the Holy Spirit. Likewise evangelicals do not hold that inerrant inspiration eliminates the human element in the production of the Bible. True, evangelicals have stressed the divine authorship of Scripture because this is most frequently denied and it is this that gives Scripture its unique importance. But informed evangelicals have always insisted on a truly human authorship of Scripture. Even those who were willing to use the word dictation (as did Calvin and the Tridentine Council of the Roman Catholic church) always made very clear that they were not referring to the model of a boss dictating to a stenographer. Rather, they meant to stress the divine (as well as human) responsibility for the words of Scripture.

COMMENT: I agree that without God being the chooser of the words of scripture as much as man is the idea of a divine and infallible Bible is not sustainable. Verbal inspiration is the correct Christian position. Or it is the position that the religion needs to take for anything else shouts, "Another man-made religion!"

QUOTE ABOUT EZEKIEL ASKING IF HE IS WRITING ABOUT A PRINCE OR THE DEVIL: Other commentators propose that verses 1-11 refer to the human prince, but that verses 11-19 refer to Satan. Those who advocate this view point to the change of reference from "the prince (nagid) of Tyre" in verse 2, to "the king (melek) of Tyre" in verse 12. This change of reference from prince to king, coupled with such statements as "you were in Eden" (v. 13), "you were the anointed cherub" (v. 14), and "you were perfect in your ways from the day you were created" (v. 15) may indicate that this section is about Satan. To the contrary, others simply understand these phrases as hyperbolic (literary exaggeration) references to the human prince and king.

COMMENT: It shows that the prince being virtually declared a god warns us to be careful with language that divinises Christ in the New Testament. Scholars can think what they like but if Jesus could be divine maybe the prince is too? He is called it more point-blanked than Jesus was even in the New Testament.

QUOTE: MATTHEW 5:17-18 - Did Jesus come to do away with the Law of Moses? PROBLEM: Jesus said very explicitly, "Do not think that I came to destroy stroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill." However, on one occasion Jesus approved of His disciples when they broke the Jewish law about working on the Sabbath (Mark 2:24), and Jesus Himself apparently did away with the ceremonial law by declaring all meats clean (Mark 7:19). Jesus' disciples clearly rejected much of the OT law, including circumcision (Acts 15; Gal. 5:6; 6:15). Indeed, Paul declared that "You are not under law but under grace" (Rom. 6:14) and that the Ten Commandments engraved in stone have been "taken away in Christ" (2 Cor. 3:14). SOLUTION: In the matter of whether the Law of Moses was done away with by Christ, confusion results from failing to distinguish several things. First of all, there is a confusion of time. During His lifetime, Jesus always kept the Law of Moses Himself, including ordering others to offer sacrifices through the Jewish priests (Matt. 8:4), attending Jewish festivals (John 7:10), and eating the passover lamb (Matt. 26:19). He did on occasion violate the pharisaical (and false) traditions that had grown up around the Law (cf. Matt. 5:43-44), chiding them, "You have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition" (Matt. 15:6). The verses that indicate the law has been fulfilled refer to after the Cross when there is "neither Jew nor Greek ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). Second, there is a confusion of aspect. At least some of the references (if not all) to the Law being done away with in the NT are speaking of OT ceremonies and types. These ceremonial and typological aspects of the OT Law of Moses were clearly done away with when Jesus, our passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7), fulfilled the Law's types and predictions about His first coming (cf. Heb. 7-10). In this sense, Jesus clearly did away with the ceremonial and typological aspects of the Law, not by destroying the Law, but by fulfilling it. Finally, there is a confusion about context. Even when the moral dimensions of the law are discussed, there is a confusion. For example, not only did Jesus fulfill the moral demands of the Law for us (Rom. 8:2-3), but the national and theocratic context in which God's moral principles were expressed in the OT no longer apply to Christians today. For example, we are not under the commands as Moses expressed them for Israel, since, when expressed for them in the Ten Commandments, it had as its reward that the Jews would live "long upon the land [of Palestine] which the Lord your God is giving you Israelites" (e.g., Ex. 20:12). When the moral principle expressed in this OT commandment is stated in the NT, it is expressed in a different context, namely, one that is not national or theocratic, but is personal and universal. For all persons who honor their parents, Paul declares that they will "live long on the earth" (Eph. 6:3). Likewise,

Christians are no longer under the commandment of Moses to worship on Saturday (Ex. 20:8-11), for, since the Resurrection, , appearances, and Ascension (all of which occurred on Sunday), Christians worship on Sunday instead (see Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). Sabbath worship, declared Paul, was only an OT "shadow" of the real substance which was inaugurated by Christ (Col. 2:16-17). Since even the Ten Commandments as such were expressed in a national Jewish, theocratic framework, the NT can speak correctly about that which was "engraved on stones" being "taken away in Christ" (2 Cor. 3:7, 13-14). However, this does not mean that the moral principles embodied in the Ten Commandments, that reflect the very nature of an unchanging God, are not still binding on believers today. Indeed, every one of these principles contained in the Ten Commandments is restated in another context in the NT, except of course the command to rest and worship on Saturday. Christians today are no more under the Ten Commandments as given by Moses to Israel than we are under the Mosaic Law's requirement to be circumcised (see Acts 15; Gal. 3) or to bring a lamb to the temple in Jerusalem for sacrifice. The fact that we are bound by similar moral laws against adultery, lying, stealing, and murder no more proves we are still under the Ten Commandments than the fact that there are similar traffic laws in North Carolina and Texas proves that a Texan is under the laws of North Carolina. The truth is that when one violates the speed laws in Texas he has not thereby violated a similar law in North Carolina, nor is he thereby bound by the penalties of such laws in North Carolina. In like manner, although both the OT and NT speak against adultery, nevertheless, less, the penalty was different - capital punishment in the OT (Lev. 20:10) and only excommunication from the church in the NT (1 Cor. 5:1-13), with the hope of restoration upon repentance (cf. 2 Cor. 2:6-8).

COMMENT: Good. There is no room for ignoring or downgrading the Old Testament in properly understood Christianity.

QUOTE: In connection with the parable of the pounds (or minas), Christ pronounced this judgment on those who had rebelled against their king (Luke 19:27): "But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here, and slay them in my presence" (NASB). This sounds very much like an endorsement of capital punishment. Again, in Luke 20:14-16, as He concluded the parable of the wicked husbandmen (or tenants), our Lord said: "But when the tenants saw him [the son of the landlord], they talked the matter over. 'This is the heir,' they said, 'Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others." Thus it is very clear that neither Christ nor His apostles intended to abrogate the God-given responsibility of the government (under Old Testament law) to protect its citizens and enforce justice by capital punishment.

"If then I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die" (Acts 25:11, NASB).

Numbers 35:31,33: "You shall not take ransom [i.e., allow mere monetary damages] for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death.... So you shall not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it" (NASB).

Jesus also upheld the right of kings to resort to warfare if the circumstances warrant it, for this is certainly implied in Luke 14:31: "What king, going to make war against another king, does not first sit down and take counsel as to whether he is able with ten thousand troops to meet in battle with one who comes against him with twenty thousand?" No pacifist could use such an illustration as this without appearing to condone warfare as a legitimate measure for a head of state. But even more clearly is this implied by what Jesus said to Pilate in John 18:36: "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jews."

COMMENT: Jesus continued the bloodletting attitudes of the Old Testament God. He never claimed there was such a God. He viewed God as yesterday and now and today always the same.

QUOTE: Context for the next quote is how a woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus to see if he would let the men stone her to death as God commanded in the Bible:

Leviticus 20:10 states: "If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, ... the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (NASB). Deuteronomy 22:24 indicates that both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman herself. Thus this entire process in John 8 was legally defective because the woman's accusers had not brought forward her male partner-in-sin. Without him there could be no valid action taken against her.

Luke 12:14: "Who has appointed Me a judge over you?"), this attempt to remand the case to Him was an obvious farce, devoid of legal justification, and intended only to embarrass the Teacher from Nazareth whom they hoped to discredit. Third, by their own admission, not even the Sanhedrin had the right under the Roman government to execute the death penalty. While they had authority to impose a sentence, capital punishment could not be carried out except under the authorization of the Roman governor. Thus we read in John 18:31: "Pilate therefore said to them, Take Him yourselves, and judge Him according to your law.' The Jews said to him, 'We are not permitted to put any one to death'"

He had ruled that the witness who was “without sin” had the responsibility of casting the first stone at the guilty woman, it was essential for at least one of them to have a completely clean conscience before God’s law. But not one of them could honestly claim to be free from sin before the Lord, and all the accusers suddenly found themselves accused and guilty. Hence they took their leave

As we study Jesus’ response to this challenge, we must clearly observe that He neither covered over the guilt of the accused (as if adultery was not, after all, really heinous enough to require the death penalty—in that modern-minded, enlightened first century A.D.); nor did He suggest that death by stoning was no longer the proper way to deal with this offense. He plainly implied that the woman was guilty enough to die, and that the legal mode of execution was by stoning. The point He raised was that the accusers of the woman were themselves guilty under the law, and that they were hardly competent to carry out the sentence. Certainly they had all become guilty of an attempted lynching, completely contrary to the law of the Roman government to which they were all subject. Hence the whole process was voided by their incompetence and illegality.

COMMENT: Context is how a woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus to see if he would let the men stone her to death as God commanded in the Bible. If Jesus said they may kill her that got him in trouble with the Roman rulers for they banned Jewish ritual murder. If he said yes then he was contradicting the law of God and saying God was wrong. So Jesus had to avoid doing either. Archer does a good analysis. Good to know that the episode is gives no justification for accepting the Christian lie that Jesus had done away with the murderous laws of God demanding that such women be stoned to death without pity.

QUOTE ABOUT MOSES REGULATING DIVORCE: It would be a mistake to assume that the statements of Moses here gave divine sanction to divorce. The passage presents a hypothetical situation which was likely to happen among the people. It simply says that if a man divorces his wife because of some uncleanness in her, and if she remarries, and if her new husband dies or divorces her, it is unlawful for the first husband to take her back. This is not a sanction of divorce. Rather, it is an acknowledgement of the fact of divorce and the implementation of regulation concerning remarriage.

COMMENT: If so then Jesus and Moses were agreed on divorce being wrong. Jesus was not saying Moses made a mistake. And it is obvious that the situation in question was very hypothetical indeed. It would be a very rare occurrence. There is no evidence Jesus had a problem with any moral statement in the Old Testament - he kept affirming moral adherence to it.