

Controversies of Commandments and Salvation in New and Old Testament

The bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament has raised controversies on the significance of the ten commandments in the New Church founded on the New Testament. The teachings in the New Testament guide Christians on the laws of Moses that they must adhere to uphold their salvation. There is also a controversy on the concept of salvation in the two testaments and the role of the commandments in salvation. Although obeying the commandments was highly emphasized in the Old and New Testament, it does not bring salvation which comes on through Jesus Christ (Romans 3:23-24).

Christians should uphold the ten commandments despite them being cited in the Old Testament. Paul encourages believers to uphold the law and the commandments for they are holy, just, and good (Romans 7:12). The first four commandments discuss what man must do to maintain a good relationship with God while the other six guide man-to-man relations. Thus, observing the ten commandments ensures we honor God and maintain a harmonious relationship with others. Therefore, in the spirit of salvation and righteousness, Christians should obey the ten commandments to honor God and others.

The New Testament provides many views that support the significance and necessity of obeying the commandments among Christians. In Matthew 5:17, Jesus said he did not come to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfil it. The New Testament also reinforces the ten commandments through its teachings and commands to the church. For example, in Matthew 15:4, Jesus teaches about the fifth commandment of honoring parents, whereas Matthew 19:18 condemns adultery, thus upholding the seventh commandment. In these teachings, Jesus and the apostles express the integration of the commandments with salvation. The New Testament also warns believers that those who do not honor the commandments shall not inherit the kingdom of

God. In Matthew 5:18 and 19, Jesus emphasizes that whoever breaks the commandment shall not inherit the kingdom of God, but those who preach and live by them shall be great in the kingdom of heaven. Similarly, in Mark 10:17-19, when a man asked Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life, Jesus tells him to abide by the commandments. Thirdly, the New Testament says that obeying God's commandments is an expression of our love for him (John 14:15 and 1st John 5:3). In John 15:10, Jesus Christ encourages Christians to abide by the commandments like he did to abide by God's love. Therefore, the New Testament expects Christians to honor the ten commandments as Jesus came to fulfil them, as a pursuit of eternal life, and to express their love for God.

The Old Testament describes salvation as deliverance from sin through rituals. Israelites believed that salvation was acquired through the righteousness of the body, soul, and mind. The cleansing was done in atonements and burnt offerings of animals, birds, and grain. The book of Leviticus in chapters 6 and 7 offers the guidelines on offerings and cleansings which atoned for sins and guilt to save those who acted against the law of Moses. The concept of salvation through offering is also seen among prophets. For example, Elijah offered a burnt sacrifice to give salvation to Israel from the famine and the idol worshipping of Baal at Mount Carmel (1st Kings 18:16-45). However, Israelites' salvation was not achieved by obeying the ten commandments. The law of Moses extended to dictate their customs and behaviors to achieve to honor God and live by his will as a condition to receive success and favor from God rather than be saved (1st Kings 1:3 and Deuteronomy 21:12). Salvation in the Old Testament was temporary and was renewed with sacrifices and atonement if one sinned again. It is only through Jesus Christ that believers received eternal salvation as Jesus was offered as the final and eternal sacrifice.

Therefore, salvation in the Old Testament was not achieved by obeying the commandments rather than by sacrifices and atonements for sins committed.

Conclusively, although Christians should obey God's commandment, it is not a source of salvation but a way of upholding righteousness and abiding by God's will. The concept is similar to Old Testament as the commandments did not offer salvation but were guidelines for honoring God and coexisting with others. Israelites received salvation through offerings and atonements and not the commandments. However, the teachings of Jesus and his apostles in the New Testament cement the significance of the ten commandments in the new church just like in the Old Testament. Therefore, Christians should obey the commandments but must believe in Jesus Christ to receive salvation.