

# Shadow and Reality

## ***The conflict between the Old and New Testaments***

Many people criticize the Bible on the basis of certain examples found in the Old Testament, such as the readiness with which people go to war, discrimination against non-Jewish peoples, the devaluation of women and the barbarity of punishments, such as stoning to death.

Although these aspects strike a huge contrast with the teachings of Jesus, both in the Gospels and in the rest of the New Testament, they inspired many historical aberrations such as the Crusades, the "Holy" Inquisition, Indulgences, and gave rise to innumerable heresies laying emphasis on one or other of these points.

Fortunately, however, Jesus Christ made clear and orderly about what was obscure and confused in the past. His character and teachings perfectly reveal the essence of a God of love.

### **I John 4:8**

*Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

For this reason, we read in John 1:17 that the Law was communicated through Moses but the truth came through Jesus Christ.

### **John 1:17**

*For the **law** was given through Moses; **grace** and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

In Matthew 5:38 and 39, for example, Jesus contrasts the old teaching "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" with his message of peace, saying "resist not evil, but whosoever smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also".

### **Mathew 5:38, 39**

*"You have heard that **it was said**, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' **But I tell you**, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also".*

This attitude confirms that Jesus did not advocate revenge, although this was permitted according to the Law of the Old Testament.

When Jesus refers to an existing teaching brought to the people through this Law, he says "listen to what the ancient peoples (them of old time) were told" (Matthew 5:5:21, 27, 33, 38 and 43). However, He immediately added the words "But I say unto you" (Matthew 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39 and 44), showing that he had a personal and authentic message to bring.

### **Mathew 5:21, 22**

*"You have heard that **it was said** to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' **But I tell you** that anyone who is angry with his brother<sup>l</sup> will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.*

### **Mathew 5:27, 28**

*"You have heard that **it was said**, 'Do not commit adultery.' **But I tell you** that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

**Mathew 5:31**

*"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.*

**Mathew 5:33, 34**

*"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne;*

**Mathew 5:43, 44**

*"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

If, in the Koran, women are at a disadvantage in relation to men, it is also true that in the Old Testament women are portrayed as inferior and even humiliated, the value of a woman being considered slightly more than half that of a man, as we are given to understand in Leviticus 27: 2 to 7.

**Leviticus 27:1 until 7**

*Jehovah said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If anyone makes a special vow to dedicate persons to the Lord by giving equivalent values, set the value of a male between the ages of twenty and sixty at fifty shekels of silver, according to the sanctuary shekel; and if it is a female, set her value at thirty shekels. If it is a person between the ages of five and twenty, set the value of a male at twenty shekels and of a female at ten shekels. If it is a person between one month and five years, set the value of a male at five shekels of silver and that of a female at three shekels of silver. If it is a person sixty years old or more, set the value of a male at fifteen shekels*

In Deuteronomy 24:1, we have another example, where we read that if a man were to marry a woman and be disappointed, seeing in her something "indecent", he could reject her by giving her a "certificate of divorcement".

**Deuteronomy 24:1**

*If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house,*

However, the wife did not have the same right in relation to the husband.

Who would not be shocked at the Old Testament law decreeing stoning for soothsayers and wizards, ...

**Leviticus 20:27**

*"A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads".*

...and murderers.

**Leviticus 24:17**

*"If anyone takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death. Anyone who takes the life of someone's animal must make restitution-life for life. If anyone injures his neighbor, whatever he has done must be done to him.*

Stoning was also decreed for people who worked on the Sabbath,...

#### **Numbers 15:32 until 36**

*While the Israelites were in the desert, a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath day. Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly, and they kept him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him. Then Jehovah said to Moses, "**The man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp.**" So the assembly took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as Jehovah commanded Moses.*

...people who worshipped another god and idol worshippers,...

#### **Deuteronomy 13: 6 until 10**

*If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods that neither you nor your fathers have known, gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other), do not yield to him or listen to him. **Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him. You must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. Stone him to death,** because he tried to turn you away from Jehovah your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*

...a woman who lost her virginity outside marriage,...

#### **Deuteronomy 22: 20, 21**

*If, however, the charge is true and no proof of the girl's virginity can be found, she shall be brought to the door of her father's house and there **the men of her town shall stone her to death.** She has done a disgraceful thing in Israel by being promiscuous while still in her father's house. You must purge the evil from among you.*

...and even a rebellious son.

#### **Deuteronomy 21:18 until 21**

*If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard." Then **all the men of his town shall stone him to death.** You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.*

Despite all this inflexibility and severity, which is found in all the laws of the Old Testament, there is a lack of consistency in its principles, since men were encouraged to obey simply to benefit from material rewards on earth. On numerous occasions, Jesus highlighted the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, instilled with this type of aspiration.

Proof that in the Old Testament the material world took precedence over the spiritual lies in the fact that all the promises made to men relate to material aspects, in terms of goods, wealth, sons (physical continuity) and earthly glory (Genesis 15:13 and 14; Exodus 3:21 and 22; 12:35 and 36; Psalms 128:1 to 6).

#### **Genesis 15: 13, 14**

*Then Jehovah said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will*

*punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions.*

**Exodus 3:21, 22**

*"And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. **And so you will plunder the Egyptians.**"*

**Exodus 12:35, 36**

*The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. The Lord had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; **so they plundered the Egyptians.***

**Psalms 128: 1 until 6**

*Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; **blessings and prosperity** will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion all the days of your life; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem, and may you live to see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel.*

In the New Testament, all the promises made by Jesus relate to spiritual things, in a heavenly home free of material needs and earthly interests (Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 1:12 and 13).

**Ephesians 1:3**

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every **spiritual blessing** in Christ.*

**Colossians 1:12, 13**

*Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the **kingdom of light**. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Jesus' disciples did not understand the real objective of their Master's mission, asking for leading roles and positions that they are anxious for in the future kingdom, as we see in Matthew 20:20 and 21.

**Matthew 20: 20 until 23**

*Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."*

However, Jesus made it clear to them that His Gospel involved above all resignation and mortification.

**Mark 8:34**

*Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*

The philosophy of revenge based on "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" that they had heard in the past should be replaced by "turning the other cheek" or "love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you" (Matthew 5:44), something completely new to them.

#### **Mathew 5:44**

*But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

According to Jewish law and traditions, Jesus' disciples were conditioned to forgive up to seven times, but Jesus told them to forgive seventy times seven times (Matthew 18: 21 to 22). Obviously someone who is prepared to forgive four hundred and ninety times will always forgive.

#### **Mathew 18:21, 22**

*Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.*

On one occasion, a woman caught in the act of adultery was taken to Jesus by the Pharisees with the aim of trying to trap him. As we read in John 8:4, according to Law, the punishment for adultery was stoning to death.

#### **John 8:3 until 6**

*The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. **In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women.** Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.*

If Jesus authorized stoning, he would be going against all the principles of His teachings. On the other hand, if He did not authorize this punishment, he would be going against the Law by failing to enforce it. He wisely proposed that the person without sin should cast the first stone. Since no one was able to claim in all conscience to be without sin, the woman escaped death. Jesus would be the only one able to stone the woman, for He was without sin, but He did not because his aim was to save her, not to destroy her. Then Jesus says to her, "Go and sin no more" (John 8:11).

#### **John 8:9 until 11**

*At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. **"Then neither do I condemn you,"** Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."*

Therefore we can confirm that, in general, Jesus expanded the entire Law, giving it a more complete meaning, not one limited to judging only what a man does, but also what he omits to do. This principle is clear in James 4:17.

#### **James 4:17**

*Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.*

How can a Law that justifies revenge be reconciled with a doctrine of loving your enemy, blessing those that curse you, doing good to those who hate you and praying for those who mistreat and persecute? There is an enormous difference! A law so full of partiality and bias can only result in hearts full of obstinacy and arrogance, like the Pharisees who lived at the time of Jesus.

Those who follow the commandments of Jesus, permeated with mercy, forgiveness and understanding, do not need to be bound by the commandments full of dominance, severity, rigidity and hardness in the Old Testament, simply because in practical terms, while the commandments of Jesus have an effect on the lives and character of His followers, the obsolete commandments only result in arrogance and pride, as we see in Luke 18:11 and 12.

### **Luke 18:11, 12**

*The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'*

The expression "stone tablets" in 2nd Corinthians 3:3 aptly typifies the coldness and inflexibility of those ritualistic laws, eager to punish and heap more and more damnation on the human kind. What a contrast with Christ's principles, etched on the "fleshy tablets" of the heart!

### **2 Corinthians 3:3 until 6**

*You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on **tablets of stone** but **on tablets of human hearts**. Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a **New Covenant**--not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

The law etched on the stone tablets is referred to by Paul as the "ministration of death and condemnation" in 2nd Corinthians 3:7 to 9, and as the "ministration of the epistle" in 2nd Corinthians 3:6. Verse 7 of the text says that there was "glory" in that ministration, which reflected in the face of Moses, but this was only transitory. Unhappy with the radiance which was fading, Moses put a veil over his face before the glory faded completely, so that no-one should contemplate his ultimate condition.

### **2 Corinthians 3:13**

*We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away.*

Paul continues to explain, in verse 13 of the text, that those who are under this Law have, like Moses, a veil of shame over them, enabling them to deny the reality that the New Testament is replacing the Old.

The sacrificial Law of the Old Testament was aimed basically at individual morality, but allowed justice with vengeance and punishment. The Law of Jesus in the New Testament is aimed at molding character with a view to forgiveness and full regeneration.

Therefore, in so far as the Law of the Old Testament became obsolete because of its superficiality, the commandments of Jesus took precedence and brought a clear synthesis of all that the Law expressed in a vague and confused way.

The text in Hebrews 7:18 and 19 states that the Law of the Old Testament, also called the "commandment going before", was superseded because of its "weakness and unprofitableness".

### **Hebrew 7:17, 18**

*The former regulation is set aside because it was **weak** and **useless** (for **the law made nothing perfect**), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.*

The entire Old Testament does not make sense if what was represented in figurative terms was not related to the reality brought by Jesus. According to Hebrews 10:1, the Law contained the "shadow of good things to come" but the exact image came through Jesus.

**Hebrews 10:1**

*The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.*

The scriptures of the Old Testament serve only to outline the shadows (Colossians 2:16), providing a silhouette of the real image. The truth in its definitive form would come with the revelation of Jesus. The shadow gives only a partial idea of the reality.

**Colossians 2:16, 17**

*Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.*

When Jesus gives a "New Commandment" in John 13:34, it is understood that the existing Law does not absolutely contemplate the essence of His doctrine, which was not really His, but belonged to the Father, as he says in John 12:49 and 50.

**John 13:34**

*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.*

**John 12:49, 50**

*For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."*

We cannot compare the complexity of the details and complicated doctrines of the Old Testament with the simplicity of the Gospel taught by Christ. This is why the Father endorsed and confirmed the commandments of the Son.

What Jesus taught had never before been taught. What Jesus preached had never been contemplated before. There had never been authority or courage enough to say what Jesus said. This is why His Word attracted the attention of the people, and the words of the scribes and Pharisees did not.

And for this reason, Jesus is the author and mediator of a New Testament, as written in Hebrews 9:15, of which He Himself was the guarantor, since the Old Testament had succumbed to its own weakness and powerlessness in the face of a ministry that was so much superior (2nd Corinthians. 3:14 and Hebrews 7:22-24).

**Hebrew 9:15**

*For this reason Christ is the mediator of a New Covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first Covenant.*

**2 Corinthians 3:14**

*But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.*

**Hebrew 7:22 until 24**

*Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better Covenant. Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.*

*Oswaldo Carvalho*