

byDesign

By Design The Law of Moses

After the fall of man, there was lawlessness. There were no nations and no human government for men to follow. There was no moral code for men to follow. There was absolute chaos. Violence filled the earth!

There was no moral code for men to follow until nations began to form. To survive, families became tribes. Tribes eventually joined together and became nations ruled by Kings. Kings created moral codes for the nations they ruled.



For example, in the 24th century BC, a king named Urukagina ruled the city state of Lagash in Mesopotamia. He wrote a code of law for his kingdom. It is referred to in ancient literature, but no texts have ever been found.

In the 21st century BC a king named Ur-nammu ruled in the southern region of Mesopotamia. He wrote a code of law for his kingdom. Not only is it referred to in ancient literature, but archaeologists have discovered fragments of stones with texts of some of the laws. It is the oldest moral code text that has been discovered.

The following is a list of [ancient](#) legal codes in chronological order:

- I. [Code of Urukagina](#) (2,380-2,360 BC)
- II. [Cuneiform law](#) (2,350-1,400 BC)
- III. [Code of Ur-Nammu](#), king of [Ur](#) (c. 2050 BC)
- IV. [Laws of Eshnunna](#) (c. 1930 BC)^[1]
- V. [Codex of Lipit-Ishtar of Isin](#) (c. 1870 BC)^[2]
- VI. [Babylonian laws / Code of Hammurabi](#) (c. 1790 BC)
- VII. [Hittite laws](#) (c. 1650–1100 BC)
- VIII. [Code of the Nesilim](#) (c. 1650-1500 BC)
- IX. [Law of Moses / Torah](#) (15th century BC)

In the 15th century BC, a man named Moses wrote a code of law. It is listed as 9th by archaeologists in a list of codes of law that have been discovered in world history. It is different from all the other ancient codes of law that they have discovered.

How is it different?

1. The law was written by a prophet and not a king. His name was Moses. (Exodus 20)
2. The law was written for a group of people that did not have a kingdom. (Genesis 12:1-9)
3. The law was written for a theocracy. (Deut. 17:14-20; 1 Samuel 8:5-7; Hosea 13:10-11)

In the law Moses wrote, God is the King. Israel was not a monarchy. It was the first theocracy.

Transgressions of the laws were offenses against God. Therefore, those transgressions were called sin.

The laws were supreme over all other sources of authority (any ruler and/or his officials).

4. The law was written for the benefit of the people rather than the benefit of the ruler. (Deut. 20:9; Joshua 1:7-8)

Other ancient codes of law were only interested in giving special protection to the king and the middle and higher social classes.

The law of Moses was written for the benefit of all the people.

5. The law was written to provide equal justice for all.

In the law of Moses, all men were given inherent value. This was because the law said all men were created in the image of God.

Genesis 1:26-27

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

NKJV

- This included the stranger (Exodus 12:48-49; Lev. 19:33-34)

Leviticus 19:33-34

33 'And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him.

34 The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.
NKJV

- This included the slave. (Exodus 21:1-11)

The laws protected the disenfranchised members of society.

There was to be no partiality in the application of the law.

This included capital punishment.

Whoever destroyed a human life must give a reckoning for it:

Genesis 9:5-6

5 Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man.

6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.

NKJV

The uniqueness of human life in the Bible does not allow it to be measured in terms of monetary or property compensation, as it does in other Mesopotamian law.

Numbers 35:31

31 Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death.

NKJV

A Life For A Life

The law was written to provide equal justice for all.

6. The law was written to be available to all members of society.

In other nations, the common man could be held accountable for a crime and not even know what he had done wrong. For example, in the laws of Hammurabi, the offended party learned of the condition of the law pertaining to his case only after he committed the crime. Though Mesopotamian law collections were copied in scribal circles, there is no mention in them of making the law public knowledge.

In the law of Moses, an entire tribe of people was chosen to teach the people the law. They were the tribe of Levi.

Leviticus 10:8-11

8 Then the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying:

9 "Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations,
10 that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean,
11 and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses."
NKJV

Deuteronomy 33:10

10 They shall teach Jacob Your judgments, And Israel Your law.
NKJV

This was their job. Also, fathers were responsible to teach the law to their families.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.
7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.
NKJV

The entire nation was required to attend three gatherings a year to hear the law. (Lev. 23)

The law was written to be available to all members of society.

7. The law was written to make every member of the nation personally responsible for the observance and enforcement of the law.

In other nations, it was the sole concern of the leader of the community to maintain justice and to protect the rights of the community.

In the law of Moses, since every citizen was taught the law, it was the responsibility of every member of the society to maintain justice and protect the rights of the community.

Leviticus 19:15-18

15 'You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

16 You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord.

17 'You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.

18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

NKJV

Since the law was communicated to all, the obligation for its observance rests on the entire people. Each member of the community had the dual responsibility to observe the law personally and collectively, as a group. Each had to see that justice was executed and that all crimes were punished; otherwise the community and its members would experience dire consequences.

In the law of Moses, faithful observance of the law granted divine protection and reward to both the individual and the group. As a result, the law became the single most important factor in the life and destiny of Israel.

The law was written to make every member of the nation personally responsible for the observance and enforcement of the law.

8. The law was written to encompass every aspect of life

The law addressed civil, health, moral, and religious aspects of life.

For example, in Lev. 11-18, there are health laws.

All the important aspects of life were interwoven in to a single body of legislation. Since the law was written for a theocracy and God is the sole legislator, the people are ultimately held solely responsible to God for all aspects of their existence.

The law was written to address every aspect of life

9. The law was written to appeal to the people's conscience.

The law codes of other nations did not attempt to convict the heart of man. Throughout the law of Moses, motive clauses were included which gave reasons for observing the law. See, for example...

Exodus 22:21

21 "You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. NKJV

Exodus 22:26-27

26 If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down.

27 For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious.

NKJV

Such explanatory, ethical, religious, and historical additions were intended to appeal to the people's conscience and motivate them to observe the law.

The law was written to appeal to the people's conscience.

10. The law was written to restrict the punishment to the offender.

Other law codes left room for those offended to take revenge on the family of the one that was guilty. If he raped your wife, go rape his.

In the law of Moses, punishment for offenses is meted out to the actual offender and not to someone who was not complicit with the offender.

Deuteronomy 24:16

Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin. NKJV

The law was written to restrict the punishment to the offender.

11. The law was written to fulfill love.

There are 611 laws in the law of Moses. Every law is a way to love God and love your neighbor.

Matthew 22:37-40

37 Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

NKJV

Is it any wonder that David wrote this in his psalms?

Psalms 119:97-100

97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

98 You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me.

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation.

100 I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts.

NKJV

Psalms 119:127-128

127 Therefore I love Your commandments More than gold, yes, than fine gold!

128 Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way.

NKJV

Psalms 119:159-160

159 Consider how I love Your precepts; Revive me, O Lord, according to Your lovingkindness.

160 The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

NKJV

The law of Moses is the most complete code of law that has been preserved from the ancient world. There have been more ancient manuscripts discovered to support the authenticity of the law of Moses than what has been found for any other ancient code.

Do you think that this is an accident?

The law of Moses is by design.

How should we respond to this?

- We should love the law

Matthew 5:18

18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

NKJV

- We should study the law

Joshua 1:8

8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

NKJV

- We should teach the law to our children

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

NKJV

Ephesians 6:4

4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

NKJV

- We should rightly divide the word of truth

2 Timothy 2:15

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

NKJV

The law of Moses was written for a theocracy to the Jews. There are laws that God never intended for us gentiles to keep.

- We should understand the chief aim of the law

Galatians 3:24-25

24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

NKJV

When God judges the world, the only way to be saved will be if you are righteous in God's sight.

To be righteous in God's eyes you would have to perfectly keep the whole law.

[James 2:10-11](#)

[10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.](#)

[11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.](#)

[NKJV](#)

Jesus is the one person that has kept the whole law.

It is impossible to perfectly keep the whole law. It has always been impossible. That is why Paul said, there is none righteous, no not one.

Right now, it is impossible for the Jews to keep the whole law. God made sure that this would occur by having the temple destroyed.

The only way to become righteous in God's eyes is to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ apart from your works.

Jesus promised that His death would pay for the sins of the world and that His righteousness would be given to all that believe in Him.

Jesus also promised that those who believe in Him would receive a new heart and become a new creation. He promised that the laws of God would be written on the hearts of all that believe in Him. He promised that His Spirit would dwell in all that believe in Him.

Paul said it is by the Spirit's presence in us that we know we are saved.

[Romans 8:9](#)

[9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.](#)

[NKJV](#)

Do you love the law of God? If the Spirit of Jesus is in you, you do?

Invitation

- Thank God for the law of Moses
- Receive Jesus
- Make disciples