

375 Jesus and the OT

In a discussion with a friend over how we should view the OT, I said that I couldn't see Jesus saying, 'Yes, my Heavenly Father told the Israelites to kill every man, woman and child...'. For me, such passages were written from the limited view of God that the authors then had. My friend agreed that these were 'difficult' passages but pointed to Jesus saying that he had come to fulfil the Scriptures, and that 'not an iota, not a dot' should be removed. Here it is:^[Matt 5]

¹⁸I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practises and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

But if Jesus is saying that **every single commandment** remains valid, how about this one?

¹⁸If 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, ¹⁹his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. ²⁰They 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." ²¹Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death.

So did the early church stone its rebellious sons to death? I'm guessing not. We can read what Jesus **said**, but what did he **mean**? And in what way did Jesus **fulfil** the OT?

As I read the above passage,^[Deut 21] my eye strayed to the following two verses:

²²If a man guilty of a capital offence is put to death and his body is hung on a tree, ²³you must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because **anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse**. (quoted in Gal 3:13)

Isn't it amazing how God inspired the writers to give us what I call a 'chain of clues'. The early church, must have studied their 'Bible' (OT) and excitedly shared their findings, one by one, as they saw how the whole of the life of Jesus had happened "according to the Scriptures".^[1 Cor 15] **That** is (part of) why we need the OT!

I really sense the early church's excitement in seeing the incredible **good news**: God is working (and has been for thousands of years) on a grand restoration plan, which will one day culminate in Jesus returning to earth in triumph – it's all there in the story of Israel, fulfilled in the story of Jesus: his life, death, resurrection and glorification!

Knowing the **purpose** of the OT stops us finding it so difficult.

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