

This is Andy Stanley. He is the pastor of North Point Community Church in Georgia. North Point is a multi-site church, which means that it has several locations but one senior pastor. It has a membership of about 33,000 people.

Mr. Stanley has made the news in the past for some of his comments, namely that we need to "un-hitch" modern Christianity from the Old Testament. Upon receiving criticism for his remarks, he sought to clarify himself by saying, "Well, I never suggested we 'un-hitch' from a passage of Scripture or a specific biblical imperative."

However, Mr. Stanley has recently left himself no wiggle room. In an article in *Relevant* magazine, he stated, "Participants in the new covenant (that's Christians) are not required to obey any of the commandments found in the first part of their Bibles. Participants in the new covenant are expected to obey the single command Jesus issued as part of his new covenant: as I have loved you, so you must love one another."

There are multiple problems with this statement. Most of which should be obvious. Let's look at a few.

1. If the only command of Jesus we are to follow is "as I loved you, so you must love one another," then what do we do with Jesus' other commands. Not only are we dismissing the OT, we are now dismissing much of the Gospels. This includes Jesus commending the command to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, strength and mind.

2. If we are to dismiss the OT are we to dismiss the portions of the NT that are quotes or references to the OT?

3. What do we make of Paul's words to Timothy that "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work"? Was Paul mistaken? If he was mistaken about the relevance of the OT for the NT believer what else might he have been wrong about? If we take this tack, we can dismiss most of the NT, including Paul's argument in Acts 15 which is the passage Mr. Stanley uses in his "un-hitched" sermon.

4. And finally, what would Jesus say about Mr. Stanley's interpretation? The answer to that question can be found in today's passage.

Scripture: Matthew 5:17-20

- I. Fulfilled NOT Forsaken
 - A. **Fulfillment in Christ** (17)
 - 1. Law or Prophets = OT
 - a) Moral, Civil, Ceremonial
 - 2. Fulfill

- a) Jesus fulfilled the OT in the sense that he satisfied the requirements of the Law
 - b) Jesus' teaching fulfilled the Law in that it completed the Law
 - c) Jesus removed the binding of the civil and ceremonial aspects of the Law
 - (1) The moral aspects still apply
 - d) Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT
 - e) Matthew is making the point that the OT points to Jesus and his teachings are to be taken as authoritative
- B. Foreboding Commentary (18-19)**
- 1. Dismissing the OT
 - a) The relevance of the OT will not pass away until Christ returns
 - (1) In large part because the OT reveals our sinfulness and our need for a Savior
 - (a) Rom. 3:20-22
 - 2. Disobedience to the OT
 - a) Practiced or Proclaimed
 - (1) Makes one least in the kingdom
- C. Formidable Calling (20)**
- 1. Righteousness > Pharisees
 - a) Righteousness of the Pharisees
 - (1) Pentateuch memorized
 - (2) Painstakingly maintained their traditions
 - (3) Problem
 - (a) Matt. 23:25-28
 - (i) Exterior not Interior
 - (ii) Hands not Heart

I guess, if you're willing to be one of the least in the kingdom, you can discard the OT. I, however, do not wish to be one of the least. I desire to be one of the great and I pray that you do as well. In order to be one of the greats, we cannot dismiss the OT but we must instead be determined to obey all the commands of Christ and uphold the teachings of the OT. Does that mean that we are bound by rules regarding such things as clothing, hygiene, and sacrifices? No, we are bound by our faith in Jesus Christ as the all sufficient sacrifice. We are bound to God by the blood of THE Lamb not the blood of lambs. We are bound by the new heart that comes with being a new creation in Christ Jesus. So celebrate Christ's fulfillment of the Law but don't mistakenly interpret his fulfillment as permission to forsake the OT. For without it, we would be blind to our sin and bereft of our hope which is Jesus.