

# An Apologia for the lawful breeding and use of Mules under the New Covenant

Rev. Thomas C. McConnell  
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## Preface

Though this is an *apologia*, a defense or justification, that primarily addresses the lawfulness of breeding and using mules under the New Covenant, it applies to much more, because it deals with a whole variety of issues related to the law of the Old Covenant as it applies (or not applies) under the New Covenant. Nonetheless, this apologia is very limited, for a full defense could easily take a book to complete because it addresses far more than mules, extending to the whole presuppositional foundation behind our actions, which as Christians, are to be based upon the whole of God's Word (2Tim. 3:16) . . . for *whatever is not from faith is sin* (Rom. 14:23) and *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* (Rom. 10:17).<sup>1</sup>

Both the believer and unbeliever alike operate by a presuppositional foundation of some sort, though many are not epistemologically self-conscious of it, that is, they are not aware of the various foundations of understanding they have developed over time that are the basis for their actions. Many Christians operate by a worldview that is a mixture of biblical truth and the philosophies of fallen man, a subjective hodgepodge that can lead to polytheism, pharisaical legalism, or other "isms" though they may claim that they "live by the Bible." The churches of today are in dire need of biblical reformation.

From the many testimonies of Scripture it is clear that biblical reformation for God's people involves turning away from the philosophies of surrounding nations they have embraced (usually over several generations), including their religious, cultural, and especially their economic practices (Deu. 23:6, Ezra 9:12), to return to keeping covenant with God in obeying His law as the transcendent, final standard for the whole man for the whole of life (Neh. 10:28, Mat. 4:4) for the whole of culture (Mat. 5:13-16). Knowing, therefore, which biblical laws we are to obey today and on what basis is essential to developing a proper biblical worldview. *Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, dividing the word of truth aright* (2Tim. 2:15 - GB). Properly expounding on this vital subject cannot be rightly done in a small writing such as this, but *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Vol. 1) by RJ Rushdoony does a very good job.<sup>2</sup>

In the course of our life as a believer we are often required to give a defense of our faith and practice that is seen by fellow believers as questionable or wrong. For many it may be the use of wine in the Lord's Table, which many modern evangelicals vehemently condemn. For others it may be the eating of pork or other "violations of the dietary laws." For others it may be the keeping of the sabbath on the first day of the week, instead of the last. Still for others it may be head coverings, the wearing of ties or jewelry, and other issues of dress. I have found the list to be nearly endless. For us at *Missouri Woods* it has become the use of mules in our logging business, as many of you have inquired into their biblical lawfulness per Leviticus 19:19, which I will address at length. There are many issues that revolve around Old Covenant law and practices and their validity under the New Covenant, which leads to a few important questions that arise from key New Covenant (Testament) passages. What laws and practices vanished away with the Old Covenant (Heb. 8:13), what passed on and in what form (1Tim 1:8-11), and what changed (Heb. 7:12)? What did Paul mean by shadow and substance and how does it apply to the faith and practice of the believer today (Col. 2: 16-17)? Since the reformation of the coming of the Lord and the establishing of His Kingdom under the New Covenant (Heb. 8:6-13), wherein certain Old Covenant *fleshly ordinances* ceased being imposed (Heb. 9:9-10), what law are we to live by today since we are commanded to keep the commandments of God (John 14:15, 1John 5:1-5)?

These are but a few of many passages that deal with the law and **its transition** from the Old to the New Covenant, all of which must be properly understood if one is going to rightly apply the Scriptures to their life, *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove*

*what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God* (Rom. 12:2). Yet, many believers hardly give this vital transition more than a passing thought, as some quickly dismiss God's law altogether in this "age of grace," while others go the other way in heartily embracing all forms of legalism that can be developed from twisting the Scriptures (2Pet. 3:14-16), the more the merrier. It becomes quickly obvious given these two extremes that an apologia that focuses primarily on mules cannot rightly address to any substantial depth the far broader subject of God's law under the New Covenant.

*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a **defense** to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed* (1 Pet. 3:15-16). The word defense in this passage comes from the Greek word *apologia*, which means a defense or answer, a reasoned statement or argument. It is derived from two words *apo*, which means from or out of, and *logos*, which means word or saying. An apologia is a defense that comes out of reasoning and in the Christian's case, the written reasoning of God, for we know the Lord is the **Logos**, the living Word, whose word is the basis for all thinking or logic, without which no man can think or live. *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.* Since we are to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, any defense we would make of our faith and practice must be derived from God's Word, alone, and not from any arguments both pro and con that are derived from the reasonings of man. This is what is meant by being "biblical." To that end I have sought to keep my chief defense limited as much as possible to the word of God. Though I could help justify the use of mules by their many advantages as a superior draft animal, these types of justifications do not prove their biblical lawfulness. It must be said, however, that any disadvantages they have do not make them automatically biblically unlawful.

[One last note, to help make my case from the Scriptures as clear as possible I have emboldened and underlined certain phrases and words from key passages. In doing so, I may have created a measure of tedium for some of you, which I ask you to forbear.]

## **Mules in the Scripture**

I have begun this defense with a brief study of mules as they are mentioned in the Scriptures. The primary Hebrew word for mule is *pered*, a derivative of *parad*, which means to separate or divide.<sup>3</sup> *Pered* is used eighteen times in sixteen verses (in the KJV), three of which are the derivative *pardah* – a she-mule (in today's vernacular a mare mule), all of which refer to King David's mule.<sup>4</sup> The word mule is used three other times, once from the word *yem*, which is of uncertain meaning (could be mule or hot springs) and twice from the word *rekesh*, which can also mean a dromedary or swift beast. It is important to note that the word mule is not used within the body of any law or statute, nor is its possession or use ever spoken of as sin.

Below are some verses of particular note, which raise questions pertinent to this issue.

### 1. 1 Kings 1:32-34

*32 And King David said, "Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada." So they came before the king. 33 The king also said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own **mule**, and take him down to Gihon. 34 "There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel; and blow the horn, and say, 'Long live King Solomon!'*

King David, whom God states is *a man after My own heart, who will do all My will*, who by God's inspiration wrote the biggest chapter in the Bible, Psalm 119, which is wholly dedicated to extolling God's Law, owned and rode his own mule. In this passage David calls for Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet, Israelites called of the Lord to serve Him in obedience to His word, and asks them to take his son Solomon, put him on his mule, and take him to Gihon to be anointed king of

Israel. Now, David was a sinner, which his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband make very clear. The Scriptures make it also clear that when he sinned he also confessed it openly and repented of it, for which there is ample testimony as in the fifty-first Psalm and many other psalms. Yet, nowhere in the Scriptures is it stated that David's use of the mule was sin, not even by Zadok or Nathan who were instructed to put Solomon on the king's mule for the procession to his coronation, and that before the Lord. Perhaps one could argue that this sin paled in comparison to David's "big ones," and so the word of God overlooks his mule use and the complicity of Nathan and Zadok. This, of course, is an argument out of silence.

Question: Were all these men of God acting in sin and merely blind to their own law-breaking ways? Or was their use of mules lawful before the Lord?

2. 1 Kings 10:24-25

*24 Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 25 Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and **mules**, at a set rate year by year.*

The people of the land came before king Solomon, the supreme judge of the land, to seek the wise judgment God put in his heart, as well as to bring gifts (*minchah* - tribute, offering, oblation) at a *set rate* year by year. Included in these predetermined offerings were mules, which indicate their high value to the Israeli economy. Once again, nothing is said in the Scripture about it being a violation of God's law that Solomon received mules and put them in the treasury of Israel, a nation established by covenant with the Lord and sanctified by His law.

Question: Was Solomon acting in willful disregard of biblical law or was he lawful in taking and using mules?

As in his father's case, the Scriptures do record where Solomon violated God's law, such as in the taking of many foreign wives and seeking after their gods (1Kings 11:1-13). In fact, none of the kings of Israel fully followed God in perfect obedience, for which the Scriptures give many detailed testimonies, but none of them mention any violation concerning mules. Once again, some might argue out of silence that the Scriptures list only the more serious, flagrant violations, supposing that ones of lesser seriousness, such as the possession and use of mules, were not worthy of mention. But this is to act in presumption in judging the import of the law and any violations made against it. The Lord thought it important that the testimony of one man who violated the Sabbath day laws in gathering sticks and was subsequently tried and executed for it, and whose name was not even mentioned, be put into the annals of Israel during the administration of the Mosaic Covenant (Num. 15:32-36).<sup>5</sup> Were the use of mules biblically unlawful, would not their continual use and acquisition by the sworn leaders of Israel be on at least the same par as gathering sticks, and, therefore, worthy of mention? Yes, it can be argued that there were many violations of God's law not mentioned in the Scriptures, but since it is claimed by some that their use was and still is a violation of God's law, then the burden is on them to present the biblical case law to prove this, especially in light of all the Scriptures that speak of their use by Israel?

3. 1 Chronicles 12:38-40

*38 All these men of war, who could keep ranks, came to Hebron with a loyal heart, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest of Israel were of one mind to make David king. 39 And they were there with David three days, eating and drinking, for their brethren had prepared for them. 40 Moreover those who were near to them, from as far away as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, were bringing food on donkeys and camels, on **mules** and oxen—provisions of flour and cakes of figs and cakes of raisins, wine and oil and oxen and sheep abundantly, for there was joy in Israel.*

Besides a means of personal transportation and tribute, the mule was also used nationally to haul goods by the people of Israel.

Question: Was their joy tainted by national sin, especially since Israelites were transporting the victuals for the coronation of David, the Lord's anointed, on mules? If so, this is also not mentioned. It is interesting to note, however, that the children of Israel were seriously rebuked by the Lord for not carefully heeding His law in violating Leviticus 23:3 by bringing commercial goods through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day (Neh 13:15-18).

4. Ezra 2:1,64-67

*Now these are the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his own city. . . . 64 The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty,<sup>65</sup> besides their male and female servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred men and women singers.<sup>66</sup> Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their **mules** two hundred and forty-five,<sup>67</sup> their camels four hundred and thirty-five, and their donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty.*

The children of Judah (the remaining southern tribes, as the northern tribes had already gone into captivity with the Assyrians) were sentenced by God to seventy years of captivity in Babylon, one year for each year they failed to sabbath the land according to their covenant with the Lord (Lev. 25:1-4, Jer. 25:11-12, 2 Chr 36: 16-21, Daniel 9:2). Upon their release and in preparation of rebuilding their capital and nation they took much livestock with them back to Jerusalem, which included 736 horses, **245 mules**, and 6,720 donkeys. Recognizing the godly character and stalwart faithfulness of Ezra and Nehemiah, especially in bringing the people back to faithful covenant keeping and obedience to God's law (Ezra 10:1-5, Neh. 10), it is my opinion that had it been unlawful to possess or use mules, they would not have taken them back to Judah, especially in light of the very painful fact that they were sent into captivity for their generational covenant breaking in willfully disobeying the law of the Lord. Even after they returned they struggled with their covenant breaking ways, which came to a national crisis, wherein they swore an oath to a lesser covenant (drafted by the rulers), which renewed their covenant with God through Moses and dealt with specific violations of God's law (Neh. 9:32-10:39), none of which mention the unlawful use of mules. One violation of particular note, however, was their unlawful marriages with the peoples of the land, a violation of God's law that forbade the mixing of godly seed with foreign seed (Deu. 7:1-4, Ezra 9:2).

Question: Were the 245 mules brought back to Jerusalem by the remnant of God's people a violation of God's law and, if so, why was it not listed in the lesser covenant they made as one of the violations that required immediate repentance?

5. Isaiah 66:18-21

*18 "For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. 19 "I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. 20 "Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the Lord out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on **mules** and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the Lord, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean*

*vessel into the house of the Lord.*<sup>21</sup> “And I will also take some of them for priests and Levites,” says the Lord.

This verse is of particular importance. Here Isaiah is prophesying a glorious time when the Lord would gather all nations and tongues and bring them as an offering to Himself *on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels* to His holy mountain Jerusalem, *as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord*. I have a hard time believing that if mules were unlawful to the children of Israel that they would be used as an instrument of the Lord in bringing an offering to Himself, unless Isaiah was ascribing duplicity to the Lord in overlooking His own law. Yet, when Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, brought a profane offering of fire before the Lord which they were commanded not to (Exo. 30:9, Deu. 12:32), the Lord killed them with fire.

Question: If the Lord held Nadab and Abihu guilty of His law in bringing a profane offering, is He a hypocrite in calling for the use of mules, should they have been biblically unlawful, to bring an offering to Himself?

I raised these verses and questions to shed biblical light on the use of mules by the Lord’s people under the Old Covenant, so as to help us better understand what, if any, laws would have applied to them and what, if any, corresponding cases could be found on the subject. This is particularly important, lest one inadvertently create additional law by superimposing a private interpretation or “spiritual hunch” upon the Word of God. These facts the word of God makes clear:

- Israel valued and used mules, and took them into the national treasury as tribute.
- King David owned and used a mule in his official capacity as king, and had men of God use his mule in the coronation of Solomon.
- Mules were listed among the assets the children of Israel possessed when they returned to the Promised Land by God’s providence and provision.
- The Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, calls for the use of mules in bringing an offering to Himself, describing this offering as being the same as Israel bringing an offering in a clean vessel into the very house of the Lord.
- Absent from the Scriptures, however, are any claims against the use of mules as a violation of God’s law.

All these facts must be kept at the forefront when considering any laws that deal with mules.

## **Laws Pertaining to Livestock**

First and foremost, there are no laws (statutes, ordinances, or precepts) that specifically mention mules. The only law that would pertain to them, since they are considered a kind of livestock, is the statute<sup>6</sup> found in Leviticus 19:19, which prohibits the breeding of livestock of different kinds, the sowing of fields with mixed seed, and the wearing of a garment of mixed fabrics.

Leviticus 19:19

*19 ‘You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you.*

This is the primary passage from which most make their case against the mule and nearly always on the basis that it forbids the creating of “sterile” hybrids caused by breeding **unrelated species** (as first created by the Lord), with sterility being the capstone of the case.<sup>7</sup> Upon close examination, however, I believe it will be

shown that this is not what this passage prohibits, but is actually far stricter, as it prohibits the interbreeding of **different kinds of the same species** of livestock, a valuable practice that not only creates new breeds, but helps improve the vigor, virility, and health of domestic animals. One example of this type is the breeding of the Black Angus with the white-faced Hereford (both established breeds themselves being the results of the same type of interbreeding in the past), which union produces the much touted white-faced Angus, a hearty seedstock for beef producers. This was the type of animal husbandry that was banned under Leviticus 19:19.

To make my case it is necessary to study a few key words from Leviticus 19:19, seeking to find their true meaning and purpose within the context of Scripture.

1. *You shall not let your **livestock** . . .* The word livestock is translated from the Hebrew word *behemah*, which has been translated variously as beast, animal, or cattle, as is the case with the King James and the Geneva Bible – *Thou shall not let thy cattle gender with others of divers kinds*. But since there are Hebrew words more specific to cattle such as *baqar* and *showr*, the broader term livestock is likely accurate, which then would include cattle, sheep, goats, horses, mules, asses, and camels, etc. Nonetheless, a case can be made that it was limited to cattle, specifically the red heifer, for the purpose of maintaining its purity as a biblically proscribed animal for temple sacrifice (Num. 19:1). By law it was to be without spot, having no mixture of any color, which meant no interbreeding with other kinds of cattle. But what about the purity of the other animals required for temple sacrifice, how was their purity to be maintained if *behemah* referred only to cattle? Expanding that question, what about the purity of the various plants used in temple offerings such as wheat and barley? What if two different but related wheat kinds were sown in the same field, would the fruit of a successful cross pollenization be an acceptable grain offering to the Lord? No, *You shall not sow your field with mixed seed*.
2. *Breed with another **kind***. This is where it gets real interesting. The sterile hybrid argument defines the phrase *another kind* in Leviticus 19:19 as *another species*, in an attempt to tie it back to the creation account where God said, *Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its **kind*** (Gen. 1:24). There is a significant problem with this interpretation, however. *Miyn*, the Hebrew word for kind in the Genesis creation account, which means to portion out, is the not the same Hebrew word translated kind in Leviticus 19:19, which is *kil'ayim*, which (properly) means two separations or diverse things. In fact, the Hebrew word translated kind in both the creation account and the Levitical dietary laws (Lev. 11, Deu. 14) is the word *miyn*. If this were a prohibition in breeding unrelated species of the (original) creation than surely the word *miyn* would have been the correct word to use as it would have tied it back to the creation account where the species were first created by God and named by Adam. But there is no need for such a prohibition as it was already built into creation itself through DNA<sup>8</sup>, as in the case of the shark and dolphin that, although they are both carnivorous which look and act similar (like fish), they cannot interbreed, as one is a fish and the other a mammal. Some think mules are the result of the same type of breeding, which is not the case. Mules are the result of breeding two diverse kinds of the same species *Equus*, the genus name of all living species of horses.
3. The word *kil'ayim* is used only twice in the Scriptures, in Leviticus 19:19 which we have examined, and Deuteronomy 22:9, *You shall not sow your vineyard with different **kinds** of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be **defiled***. The word *defiled* gives us a real clue to the meaning of kind as used this passage (and Lev. 19:19) and the cause for the prohibition on mixing different kinds of seeds. Defiled is derived from the Hebrew word *qadash*, which means to sanctify, consecrate, dedicate, or separate, and is important to note that it is translated only once this way in the Scriptures. Israel not only was required to make offerings to the Lord of animals, but of plant products made from wheat, barley, olives, and grapes. Their kinds were to be kept pure, as well, since they were also separated by the Lord's decree unto the divine service of His tabernacle. To mix these hallowed kinds with other kinds, no matter how related, would defile them or make them un sanctified. This was done to teach them, through examples or types, to distinguish between clean and unclean that

they would understand the greater truths of spiritual cleanness in their hearts, as a holy people separated unto the Lord.

Leviticus 20:24-26

24 'But I have said to you, "You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the Lord your God, **who has separated you from the peoples.** 25 'You shall therefore **distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean.** 26 'And **you shall be holy** [qadowsh – sacred, set apart] **to Me, for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.**

The same truth applies to making garments of mixed fabrics, as they would no longer be pure or sanctified. These pure garments prefigured (as a type and shadow) the pure garments of Christ's righteousness, which He clothes His holy people with under the New Covenant, which holy garments are not interwoven with the filthy fabric of man's righteousness, no matter how pious and good it may appear to him. Likewise, the children of Israel were not to mix their holy seed with the uncircumcised seed of surrounding nations, though they were closely related.

4. A new question arises from understanding the totality of the interbreeding ban. How did Israel acquire mules? First, they likely bred them or traded for them up until the establishment of the Mosaic Covenant. We must remember that God blessed the interbreeding of sheep by Jacob, which included streaked, speckled, and spotted sheep. Through God's gracious providence he developed very healthy herds. By the time of the exodus from Egypt the Lord's people were a mixed group of idolaters (Exo. 12:38), having adopted the gods of Egypt (Exo. 32:7-10), which came to a head when Moses delivered the law against such idolatry (Exo 20:3-6). Being a stiff-necked people that followed the dictates of their own hearts in determining good and evil for themselves, which included worshipping a number of gods besides the One True God, not unlike the worship of mammon today by the Lord's people, they needed to learn what it meant to be holy in faith and practice. Thus the introduction of the many Levitical *fleshly ordinances* (Heb. 9:19) that taught the children of Israel holiness, separation, and cleansing, one of which ban the interbreeding of their livestock.

In complying with Leviticus 19:19 the children of Israel likely acquired mules through trading with the surrounding nations and we know that they received them as tribute (1Kings 10:25), and at times the lawful spoil of war (Deu. 20:10-15). In like manner they were allowed to acquire servants from among the surrounding Gentile nations, but were banned from mixing with them in taking spouses for themselves.

5. Another argument has been made, however, that since horses, asses, mules, and camels were animals of burden not sanctified for animal sacrifice that they did not fall under the ban against mixed breeding.

### **From Shadow to Substance**

As Leviticus 19:19 was not a ban on the breeding of different, unrelated species, but a ban upon the breeding of different kinds within the same species, the same principle held true with mixed marriages. Obviously, Israel was not to seek husbands and wives from an animal species such as the chimpanzee<sup>9</sup>, as this was an abomination (Lev. 18:23), but neither were they to seek wives from the surrounding pagan nations, no matter how closely related, healthy, or virile they were. The issue was the purity of a holy people before the Lord by the terms of His holy covenant with them.

Exodus 19:5-6

5 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.6 'And you shall be to Me a **kingdom of priests and a holy** [*qadowsh*, sacred, set apart] **nation.**' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Deuteronomy 7:1-8

"When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you,2 "and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. **You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.**3 "**Nor shall you make marriages with them.** You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.4 "For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.5 "But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. 6 "**For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.**7 "The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;8 "but because the Lord loves you, **and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers,** the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Ezra 9:1-4

When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.2 "For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the **holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands.** Indeed, the hand of the **leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass.**"3 So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished.4 Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.

Do the same purity standards apply to the Lord's people under the new Covenant? Yes, even more, but not according to the shadows and types of the fleshly commandments of the Levitical law—which **prefigured the substance realities of the glorious reign of the Lord Jesus Christ**—but according to the power of His endless life as the High Priest of the New Covenant after the order of Melchizedek, Who mediates this glorious everlasting covenant (Heb. 13:20-21) based upon better promises according to a new creation. Crucial to this apologia is the fact that with the priesthood having changed, there was by necessity **a changing of the law of the priesthood**, as it has changed from the law of the Levitical order of Aaron, which foreshadowed the good things to come, to the law of the Melchizedek order of Christ, by Whom those good things are administered.

Hebrews 8:6

6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, **which was established on better promises.**

Hebrews 7:11-22

11 Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 **For the priesthood being changed, of necessity**

*there is also a **change of the law**.<sup>13</sup> For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. <sup>14</sup> For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.<sup>15</sup> And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest<sup>16</sup> who has come, **not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life**.<sup>17</sup> For He testifies: <sup>1</sup> “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.” <sup>18</sup> For on the one hand **there is an annulling of the former commandment** because of its weakness and unprofitableness,<sup>19</sup> for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, **there is the bringing in of a better hope**, through which we draw near to God. <sup>20</sup> And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath<sup>21</sup> (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: “The Lord has sworn And will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek’ ”), <sup>22</sup> **by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant**.*

Colossians 2:16-17

*16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,<sup>17</sup> which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.*

We must remember that this was written by Paul during the transitioning years between the Old and New Covenants when the Levitical order with its priesthood, tabernacle, and divine service – which dealt with food, drink, the feasts, new moons, sabbaths, etc. – was still operative though rapidly vanishing, which subsequently disappeared by 70AD.<sup>10</sup> It’s been nearly two thousand years since the Lord moved His people on from the shadow of the Levitical system, which prefigured the good things of the coming Messiah (Heb. 10:1), unto the very substance and good things they pointed to: the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah (John 1:41), **Who has come** in His kingdom to govern His people in truth and righteousness. We also know by the Lord’s unchanging laws of physics that it is the substance which casts the shadow, not the other way around. Yet, many sincere believers in keeping various fleshly ordinances of the Old Covenant bear false witness to the very opposite, that the shadow has the preeminence over the substance which cast it, which not only diminishes and denigrates the **present substance realities** of Christ’s Kingdom, Priesthood, and **Rule (law)**, but it greatly dishonors His exalted majesty as Lord of Heaven and earth. Just as we are not to put asunder what God has put together (Mat. 19:6), neither are we to keep that for which He has clearly ended, especially since it belittles the Son of God and His work on the cross.

This penchant of the Lord’s people to set in stone certain commandments of the Lord which He purposely instituted as temporary types and shadows is due in part to the old man of their flesh which has a strong, inherited tendency to give preeminence to the earthly things that are **seen, tasted, or touched** and to any fleshly commandments that would exalt it through diet, clothing, holidays, genetic elitism, etc. This is why religions like Mormonism and Islam are so attractive to the flesh because they deal primarily with external things (holy garments, washings, set prayers, special rituals, special blessings, etc.) as a means of salvation and sanctification . . . things the flesh can easily grasp unto as an anchor of hope, to no avail, however, for no man is justified by the works of the law, God’s or man’s (Gal 2:16). But we of the new creation are not to look upon the temporal, shadow things of the Old Covenant, which have passed away, but upon the substance, eternal things of Christ, which never fail or pass away with the using.

2 Corinthians 4:18

*18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. **For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal**.*

Colossians 2:20-23

*20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—<sup>21</sup> “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,”<sup>22</sup> which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of*

*men?23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.*

Neither is the Lord Jesus Christ a High Priest after the order of Aaron that He should serve (minister) the copy and shadow of heavenly things, as did the Levitical priesthood under the Old Covenant.<sup>11</sup>

Hebrews 8:4-5

*4 **For if He were on earth**, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;5 **who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things**, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the **pattern** shown you on the mountain.” **But now** He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as **He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established** on better promises.*

No, the Lord Jesus Christ ministers the heavenly things of God from His throne in Heaven where He, as the Son of David, is seated forever in His kingdom, which king David’s throne and kingdom prefigured as a shadow and type.

Psalms 89:3-4

*3 “I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to **My** servant David:4 ‘Your seed I will establish forever, And build up your throne to all generations.’ ” Selah*

Matthew 1:1

*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, **the Son of David**, the Son of Abraham:*

Luke 1:31-33

*31 “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.32 “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God **will give Him the throne of His father David**.33 “And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and **of His kingdom there will be no end.**”*

Mark 1:14-15

*14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, “**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand**. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”*

Acts 2:29-36

*29 “Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch **David**, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.30 “Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, **He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne**,31 “**he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ**, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.32 “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.33 “Therefore being **exalted to the right hand of God**, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.34 “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “**Sit at My right hand**, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’ ” 36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*

Colossians 1:13-14

*13 He **has delivered** us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into **the kingdom of the Son of His love**,14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*

Hebrews 9:11

*11 But Christ **came** as **High Priest** of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.*

Hebrews 9:15

*15 And for this reason **He is the Mediator of the new covenant**, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*

Hebrews 10:12-13

*12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, **sat down at the right hand of God**,  
13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.*

The testimony from the Scriptures is irrefutable; the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of David is **presently** (and permanently) seated on His throne in Heaven in His Kingdom administering the New Covenant as its mediating High Priest, just as the Scriptures foretold. Incredibly, however, there are many that firmly hold that both the New Covenant and Kingdom have yet to be established, let alone that Christ is seated on the throne of David. Given such clear evidence to the contrary, just how do they hold to this? In order for the Kingdom to come and the New Covenant to be established, a new *earthly* tabernacle and *earthly* throne must be built on the *earthly* Mount Zion in the *earthly* city of Jerusalem. This is the same substance denying error that takes the Heavenly things of Christ and His kingdom and reduces them to an earthly, carnal fulfillment, as though Heaven is but a shadow cast from the earth.

The popular “endtimes” belief that the Jews must first rebuild another earthly tabernacle in Jerusalem complete with animal sacrifices before Christ can come to rule from His throne in His Kingdom stems from a failure to realize that **all** of the Old Covenant tabernacles (temples) were nothing more than shadows, copies, and patterns which prefigured the **true tabernacle** which, as the Scriptures make clear, the Lord **has built**, having been exalted to the right hand of the Father as both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:34-36). *Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man* (Heb. 8:1-2). God is finished once and for all with the prefiguring shadows and types of the Old Covenant, which He made abundantly clear when He tore the thick temple veil in two upon the death of the true Passover Lamb, the Son of God, upon the bloody cross of Calvary (Mat. 27:50-51).

So which tabernacle does Christ mediate within under the New Covenant? Is it the one He erected upon ascending to His throne (and mercy seat), Himself being its chief cornerstone (Eph 2:19-22), or is it another Levitical tabernacle made by the hands of men, which has yet to be built? The answer is both obvious and logical, yet it has everything to do with this apologia for it leads to another equally important question for which the answer is not so logical for many believers, given their propensity to keep Levitical law. Which law are we to keep as commanded by our High Priest, Jesus Christ (John 14:15, 1John 5:3), the law of the Old Covenant tabernacle or the law of the New Covenant tabernacle?

In the same manner we are not to go back to the earthly mountain that burned with fire to receive the law of the Lord, nor to the covenant made thereon in the days of Moses, nor to the earthly tabernacle built upon it, for we have come to the true Mt Zion in Heaven where our Lord is seated on His throne within the city of the Living God, the heavenly New Jerusalem, His bride, the tabernacle of God.

1 Peter 2:6

*6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,<sup>1</sup> “Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on **Him** will by no means be put to shame.”*

Hebrews 12:18-24

18 For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.”) 21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”) 22 **But you have come** [past tense] **to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,** to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 **to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant,** and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Revelation 21:2-3

2 Then I, John, saw the **holy city, New Jerusalem,** coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, **the tabernacle of God is with men,** and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

It cannot be emphasized enough that the Levitical law contained in fleshly ordinances has served its purpose in prefiguring Christ and His Kingdom, which when He came in His Kingdom, became obsolete and quickly vanished away. This includes Leviticus 19:19 and all the various fleshly ordinances of like kind. But what of the moral equity of these laws, that is, the eternal righteous truth behind these ordinances, did it end as well? No, it came into its full substance in the New Covenant. Here is an example: We briefly looked at the Levitical laws which forbade the children of Israel to unequally yoke themselves through marriage with the uncircumcised Gentile nations that surrounded them. We see from the doctrine taught by the Apostles that these laws were abolished with the coming of Christ, Who by His death on the cross abolished the enmity, that is, the “commandments contained in ordinances” that created the walls of separation and distinction between Jew and Gentile, the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision, and the clean and the unclean.

Acts 10:28

28 Then he said to them [Cornelius & household], “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. **But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.**”

Acts 15:4-11

4 And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. 5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.” 6 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. 7 And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth **the Gentiles** should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 “So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, 9 “and **made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.** 10 “Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ **we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”**

Ephesians 2:11-22

11 Therefore remember that you, **once Gentiles in the flesh** [past tense, now new creations in Christ] — who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from

*the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made **both one**, and has broken down the **middle wall of separation** [the purity laws],15 having **abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two**, thus making peace,16 and that He might reconcile them both to God **in one body** through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. 19 **Now**, therefore, you are **no longer strangers** [no longer unclean, uncircumcised “Gentiles” – Phil. 3:2] and foreigners, **but fellow citizens** with the saints and members of the household of God,20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple [tabernacle] in the Lord,22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

Since the Old Covenant ordinances that separated the Jews and Gentiles have been abolished by Christ’s death on the cross, what became of the moral equity behind these Levitical purity requirements? It came into its substance application, as the true separations and distinctions we are commanded to make under the New Covenant are no longer those made between the Jew and the Gentile of the old creation, but those between the **new creation** and the **old creation**, the **regenerate** and the **unregenerate**, and the **clean in Christ** and the **unclean** dead in their trespasses and sins. And as Hebrews 7:12 makes it clear that the priesthood law changed (from shadow into substance) with the changing of the priesthood, it should not surprise us that our Lord and High Priest, Jesus Christ, should give specific commandments to His holy children to keep themselves, as His holy seed (Gal. 3:26-29), clean through proper separation. So what is unclean today that all these various fleshly ordinances prefigured? **The depraved, fallen nations of Adam . . . the unbeliever and his depraved ways, his culture, economics, and all things pertaining to life that are not according to the true holiness and godliness of Christ.**

John 15:19

*19 “If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*

1 Corinthians 10:21-22

*21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons.22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?*

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

*14 Do **not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers**. For what **fellowship** has righteousness with lawlessness? And what **communion** has light with darkness?15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? **Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?**16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. **As God has said:** “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” 17 **Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.”**18 “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.”*

James 4:4

*4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be **a friend of the world** makes himself **an enemy of God**.*

The Old Testament quote found in 1 Cor 6:17, *Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you,* was not given by Paul to merely bolster his point about how serious it is for a believer to be unequally yoked to an unbeliever. No, this is a direct

commandment from the Lord to His covenanted people – a holy nation and priesthood under Christ the King – to separate themselves from the surrounding **unregenerate** peoples and touch them not, that is, not unequally yoke themselves to them through any covenant (religious, marital, civil, economic, etc.) or unbecoming relationship. This is but one example of many in the New Testament where a commandment has transitioned from its shadow type under the Old Covenant to its full substance under the New Covenant.

It must be said, however, that this is not a “legalistic” commandment for the Lord’s people to retreat from the world in pietistic monasticism, as some Christians have, but rather a call to proactively live out to the fullest extent the eternal truths of God concerning holiness and sanctification, which were first prefigured in all of the Levitical fleshly ordinances that called for purity in the things concerning the flesh (touch not, taste not, handle not). Yes, most undoubtedly, we are to go into the world as salt and light and advance the kingdom of Christ by taking the Gospel to the unbelieving nations in calling them to faith and obedience. But we are not to be of this world in mixing with its unregenerate peoples by unequally yoking ourselves to them in seeking their wealth, peace, or way of life (Ezra 9:12). Most regrettably, this is precisely what has happened in America over the last several generations, as American Christendom has wholeheartedly embraced the pagan economic system of the corporate state and central bank (Federal Reserve), wherein our Lord from His throne in Heaven has brought His just wrath upon His people by making them the tail under the harsh dominion of the wicked in accordance with His word (Deu 28:15, 43-44). God’s people today, far more than they ever were under the Old Covenant, are to be a holy nation separated unto Christ in bringing the nations to Him and His law (Mat. 28:18-20, 1 Thes. 4:1-8). The Church is the pillar and ground of truth on earth (1Tim. 3:14-16) – not science, technology, Hollywood, or the United Nations – and as she walks by faith in obedience to her King, she embodies His righteousness as the sole standard for the whole of culture, for the whole of mankind.

## The Substance Reformation of Christ

The Levitical order with its specific laws ended forever with **the paradigm shifting reformation** of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:19-20).

Hebrews 9:9-10

*9 It was **symbolic** for the **present time** [under the levitical system] in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—10 concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances **imposed until the time of reformation.***

Hebrews 8:7-8, 13

*7 For if that **first covenant** had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.<sup>8</sup> Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make **a new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. . . .**13 In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.***

Though we talk about the urgent need for “reformation” within American Christendom and we refer to the historical event known as *The Great Reformation*, the one true **SUBSTANCE REFORMATION** of all times and ages was the coming of the New Creation through Jesus Christ—the **firstborn among many brethren** (Rom. 8:29), those that are regenerated by the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:4-7), who are *the general assembly and church of the firstborn* (Heb. 12:22-24), *who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God* (John 1:13). Talk about total reform! Unlike mankind’s innumerable futile attempts to “save the world for a better tomorrow,” Christ didn’t implement more “new reform” by turning over a new leaf for Adam. Contrary to mankind’s strong delusion that as his own savior and lawgiver he controls his own destiny, God has utterly cut off his future (Psa. 37:38) once and for all in that He condemned “sin the flesh” through His Son’s death on the cross (Rom. 8: 3-4). The new creation is the creation of substance that will prevail unto victory in fulfilling

the original creation mandate, not the fallen one of Adam. First comes the earthly man (temporal – Psa. 103:14-16), then comes the spiritual man (eternal – John 11:25-26).

1 Corinthians 15:45-49

*45 And so it is written, “The **first man Adam** became a living being.” The **last Adam** became a life-giving spirit.<sup>46</sup> **However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.**<sup>47</sup> **The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.**<sup>48</sup> As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.<sup>49</sup> And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*

Jesus taught the same truth when He spoke of being born again.

John 3:5-7

*5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.<sup>6</sup> “That which is **born of the flesh** is flesh [old creation], and that which is **born of the Spirit** is spirit [new creation].<sup>7</sup> “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’*

The Lord’s people, the Church, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles born again from above (as new creations) are now the holy people and priesthood of the Lord, whom He purifies and sanctifies as living stones which He sets in the true tabernacle made by His hands and not man’s (Mark 14:58, Acts 15:16-17, Eph. 2:19-22, 1Pet. 2:1-5).

Under the Old Covenant the Circumcision (Israel after the old creation) had tremendous advantage with God, being His covenanted people (Rom. 3:1-2), while the Gentiles had tremendous disadvantage *being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world* (Eph. 2:12). That is no longer so under the New Covenant for **in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails** [has power, prevails] **anything, but a new creation** (Gal. 6:15), *for God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all* (Rom. 11:32). Only the new creation in Christ prevails with God today.

There are many passages and examples from the Scriptures on the transition from the shadow of Old Covenant to the substance of the New Covenant, from the shadow laws of the Levitical priesthood to the substance laws of the Melchizedek priesthood. To go through them all would require writing a book. I highly suggest, however, that you read the best book written on this glorious transition, **the Book of Hebrews**, which gives tremendous detail and practical application on this most important subject.

It was necessary to digress briefly in studying this important transition as it relates to the law of God and His people under the GREAT REFORMATION of Christ. Without laying this foundation, it is difficult to rightly understand the status of Leviticus 19:19 and the many similar fleshly ordinances of the Old Covenant and its Levitical priesthood. Having vanished long ago with the coming of Christ, the High Priest of the New Covenant, we know with biblical confidence that we are no longer bound by these laws.

### **But what if Leviticus 19:19 was still the law for today?**

Having carefully studied the specific words used for kind used in Leviticus 19:19 and Deuteronomy 22:9, I believe the Scriptures make it clear that it is not a ban on the breeding of livestock of different species (per the original creation), but was far more strict, a ban on the breeding of different kinds of livestock within the same species, which includes not only breeding mules, a cross between two kinds of horses – *Equus Asinus* and *Equus* whatever – but all interbreeding of horses, cattle, and other kinds of livestock. If this law was still in

force today what impact would that have for us? For one, all animal husbandry would be banned, except for the very strict breeding of specific seed stocks, even on the small farm where interbreeding happens incidentally like when the chickens crossbreed, the neighbor's dog gets into one's kennel, or the neighbor's ass jumps the fence and impregnates a mare in heat.

What would become of the highly productive Guernsey cow, the powerful Belgian draft horse, the hearty Anglo-Nubian goat, and the meaty Cornish Cross chicken that are so popular with Christian Agrarians across the nation, and all of which were developed through careful breeding of different though related kinds . . . in violation of Leviticus 19:19? If the ban was still in force then as an act of minimal repentance they would need to cease the breeding and use these animals, put them away, and commence a never-ending search for the original steed stocks to start anew. This would be a severe trial that would soon bankrupt many Christians. And if you think that God would just wink in His grace and allow them to keep and use what was created in direct violation of His law, think again. When the children of Israel were brought to repentance for taking wives from the surrounding pagan nations, they were required (by the same Levitical law) to not only put away these pagan wives, but to send the offspring of these mixed marriages along with them (Ezra 10:2-4).

Just how would we begin to repent from the many centuries of violating Leviticus 19:19, which also includes repentance in the planting of our gardens and fields and the wearing of garments made from mixed fabrics? To be biblically consistent it would be necessary to use the same Levitical laws for adjudication and restitution, which among many things means setting aside certain pure livestock to be given to the Levitical priest for a trespass offering? There are even far more serious implications than this. Not only would we need to repent from centuries of violating Leviticus 19:19, but from centuries of violating all the other Levitical ordinances including circumcision, animal sacrifices, and such, for the Scriptures make it emphatically clear that we are a debtor to keep the whole of the law, not just certain parts of it that fit our particular religious convictions (Gal. 5:3). Take for example Leviticus 19:20-21, the very next verses that follow the smoking gun passage of Leviticus 19:19.

Leviticus 19:20-21

*20 'Whoever lies carnally with a woman who is betrothed to a man as a concubine, and who has not at all been redeemed nor given her freedom, for this there shall be scourging; but they shall not be put to death, because she was not free.21 'And he shall bring his trespass offering to the Lord, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, a ram as a trespass offering.*

Are concubines still permitted? Are scourgings, stonings, and animal sacrifices still required under the New Covenant? **Why not if the previous verse, Leviticus 19:19, is still binding, as many claim?** And if not, by what specific biblical directive does verse 19 remain in force while verses 20 & 21 do not, especially since they are not only ordinances common to the same Mosaic covenant, but are bound together in the same section of the same book of the law? More so, verse 30 states *that you shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the Lord.* To be thoroughly consistent ought we to also keep all of the Old Covenant Sabbaths while also reverencing the sanctuary, specifically the one designated in the same Levitical law? Once again, by what biblical directive does verse 19 remain in force for God's people today while verse 30 does not? The answer is that there is not one, if you seek to keep one, you are indebted to keep them all. Well men, this means that besides putting away those beautiful Belgians, you better break out the ancient Hebrew calendar and look for your cement trowels. You've got sabbaths to keep and a sanctuary to build, and they best not conflict, less a greater judgment come for working on a holy day. While you are at being totally thorough, don't forget the surgical scalpel . . . and you need not worry; it's a simple procedure that takes only a few minutes.

Acts 15:4-10

*4 And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them [in bringing the gospel to the Gentiles].5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to*

***circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.***” 6 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.7 And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.8 “So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us,9 “and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.10 “Now therefore, ***why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?***

No, as the Scriptures make clear, to put a believer back under the Levitical fleshly ordinances is to test God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the believer that our fathers under the Old Covenant could not bear. The Hebrew title for the book of Leviticus is *Wayyaqra*, which means “and He called.” The Talmud refers to it as the “Law of the Priests” and the “Law of Offerings.” Its English name is derived from the Greek title in the Septuagint, *Leuitikon*, which means “That which pertains to the Levites.” Therefore, in rightly keeping the body of **Levitical law** intact, if verse 19 is still binding then so are all the verses contained within it. This means among many things that animal sacrifice is would still be required by God. This is truly frightening given the very dire warnings of the 10th chapter of Hebrews, which declares that such animal sacrifices made by those who believe and trust in Christ **tramples underfoot the Son of God, counts the precious blood of the Lamb by which they are sanctified a common thing** (equal to the blood of sheep, goats, bulls, and pigeons), and that it **insults the Spirit of grace** (Heb 10:26-31). Is God the author of such contrary, damning confusion?

Sadly, like the judaizers<sup>12</sup> in Paul’s time, there are some pharisaical Christians today that staunchly believe that all true Christians are to keep certain ordinances of the law of Moses as part of their obedience to Christ. Are those that believe that Leviticus 19:19 is still in force willing to keep the whole body of the Levitical law?

Galatians 5:1-3

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised [Lev. 12:1-3] **that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.***

## The Moral Law

There is one last issue that needs to be covered, less in teaching on the annulling of the Levitical law contained in ordinances that I would lead one to believe that the moral law of God, as embodied in the Ten Commandments, was also annulled, which I most certainly do not. In fact, I wholeheartedly concur with Paul that our faith in Christ does not make void the eternal law of God, but, *on the contrary, we establish the law* (Rom. 3:31). Likewise, I also believe with him that *the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God* (1Tim 1:8-11). The Ten Commandments were given separately to the children of Israel, written by the finger of God in stone, and placed within the Ark of the Covenant as a memorial of His righteousness and love. The Levitical law, on the other hand, was written by Moses on parchment and placed outside the Ark of the Covenant. These laws are not the same. However, the moral law, as the preexisting, presuppositional basis of the Mosaic covenant, was brought into specific application with the children of Israel through both the Levitical law and the civil laws specific to the nation-state of Israel under the Old Covenant. In like manner, the Ten Commandments of God are brought to bear in far greater substance under the New Covenant through the law of the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ and the civil laws of His government and Kingdom.

## Conclusion

Many well meaning Christians, because of a limited understanding of Old Testament law and covenantal theology, end up straining at tiny gnats while swallowing copious camels when it comes to making the transition from the shadows and types of the Old Covenant to substance of the New Covenant. Some can't get past the shadows and are ever seeking to be in greater compliance to them, hoping that this pleases the Lord. Still others, though they are not caught up in shadows, are, nonetheless, oblivious to the far weightier matters of the substance of the New Covenant, especially as it applies to the present Rule of King Jesus over Heaven and earth. Bottom-line: we must all study to show ourselves approved unto God that we learn to rightly handle the whole of God's word. Likewise, we, as bondservants of Christ, also must learn that it is to God alone that we answer to for our conscience and deeds, and both require that we be doers of His Word as genuine lovers of Christ who keep His commandments by grace through faith.

Having spent the last thirteen years in intensive study of biblical covenantalism and God's law (as it is found both in the Old and New Covenant), I believe my understanding of Leviticus 19:19 stands true to God's word for which my conscience is clear to wit: that the *fleshly ordinances* specific to the Levitical system of divine service and the sanctuary (Heb. 9:1), which dealt with sabbaths, days, food, drink, clothing, washings, etc., ceased being imposed since the time of the reformation of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the substance by which these laws were prefiguring shadows. That Leviticus 19:19, being also a fleshly ordinance that deals with the clean and unclean aspects of the works of the children of Israel crucial to sanctification under the Levitical system, also vanished with it when it was displaced by the Melchizedek priesthood of Jesus Christ.

This ends my formal apologia, such as it is. I now will quickly address some issues brought to my attention that relate to my apologia. These responses are not a formal part of my argument, though they are compelling.

## Related Issues

Many have raised the sterility issue of mules as evidence that their breeding is a violation of God's law, which largely comes from misinterpreting Leviticus 19:19, which makes no mention of sterility.

1. Not all sterility in animals is a result of breeding species foreign to each other, as interbreeding within a specific kind can also lead to all kinds of health problems, such as sterility, blindness, deformities, etc., as we see with certain dog breeds.
2. There are animals that are sterile by God's created design like the female worker bee, which also happens to make up the overwhelming majority of the hive population. If sterility was an automatic sign of God's cursing (a consequence for violating His law, Daniel 9:11) than why would He create animals sterile, such as the female worker bee?
3. Human sterility can come for a number of reasons, for which it is hard for some to accept, especially when it runs contrary to their rigid legalism and self-righteous perfection.

Isaiah 56:3-5

*3 Do not let the son of the foreigner Who has joined himself to the Lord Speak, saying, "The Lord has utterly separated me from His people"; Nor let the eunuch say, "Here I am, a dry tree." 4 For thus says the Lord: "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, 5 Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.*

Matthew 19:11-12

*11 But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given:12 "For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."*

In fact, the Scriptures teach that it is better in serving the Lord that one not marry (make themselves a eunuch).

1 Corinthians 7:37-38

*37 Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well.38 So then he who gives her [his virginity] in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage **does better.***

The point I am making is not that we should all remain single, for every man has his gift from God, but that those that keep their virginity for the kingdom's sake (as self made eunuchs) can excel in serving the Lord in His kingdom, just as sterile mules can excel in serving man, as he serves the Lord in stewarding His earth.

4. Though most mules are sterile, not all are, as there have been many documented cases where female mules have been bred with purebred horses or asses and produced living offspring. There is the case of Old Beck, a mule at Texas A&M that was successfully bred in the 1920's by their Animal Husbandry Department, which produced two normal foals.<sup>13</sup>
5. Though sterility comes with mules, they are not unhealthy animals, by any means. In fact they generally live quite a bit longer than horses and have less health issues, are heartier and, thus, can handle hot weather better, which is why they were so popular in southern states. They are precision plow and cultivator animals that can walk a perfect line without stepping on a single plant. When it comes to economy, mules do very well on plain grass and other field plants, which are far cheaper than high octane alfalfa that many purebred horses require. They cannot be beaten for long distance speed and endurance and they fair far better on less food and water than ever a horse. General George Custer and Buffalo Bill Cody once challenged each other to an informal race across rough country, which ended in a draw. The next morning Cody visited the General and discovered that his horse had died over the night, Cody's mule was just fine.

There are some folks that believe that mules are strictly a manmade invention<sup>14</sup> and, thus, a violation of God's creative order, which deems them "unlawful to use." This is another mule myth, as mules occur frequently in nature. There are a number of wild mules that can be found mixed in with the wild mustang herds of Nevada due to the incredible aggressiveness of the wild male ass, which also roam those parts. More so, there are many avid mule owners that didn't become that way voluntarily. Unbeknownst to them, when their favorite horse mare came into heat, nearby male asses whose sense of smell is equally as good as their ability to jump, would leap their fences and those of the mare, impregnate them, and then sneak back. Usually also having had the same mare bred with a stallion that cost a fortune for the breeding privilege, when the time came for horse to foal, they were more than shocked when out came a long-eared mule. Nonetheless, the mule's noble, endearing face and incredible loyalty, intelligence, and obedience usually wins over the (former) horse owner to his side.

From the book, *The Natural Superiority of Mules*, I leave you with these interesting mule facts:

1. George Washington, one of the Christian fathers of our country, was also the father of the mule business, having started with a large jack from Spain, which he later sent on a thousand mile breeding

tour of the South. He believed that horses, “ate too much, worked too little, and died too young” to be any good for productive farm work.

2. When Abraham Lincoln heard the bad news that an army general and forty mules had been captured by rebel forces, it is reported that he said that “he was sorry to lose those mules.”
3. By 1850 there were 600,000 mules in the United States, by 1920 there were 6 million, and today there are fewer than 800,000.
4. Alexander the Great rode a mule into battle and had 12 mules pull his chariot. 64 mules adorned in gold harnesses pulled his funeral bier.
5. In Switzerland, all mules, like all young men, are enlisted in the army and are given serial numbers.
6. During the war in Afghanistan in the 1970’s and 80’s, the United States sent mules to the freedom fighters, who used them to outmaneuver the Soviets with their tanks and helicopters.

### --- The Missouri Rev

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<sup>1</sup> All quotes are from the NKJV unless otherwise noted, GB stands for the Geneva Bible.

<sup>2</sup> Though I do not agree with everything in this book, it does an excellent job expounding on the use and basis of God’s law under the New Covenant.

<sup>3</sup> Some believe the name *pered* was derived from the mule’s separate or lonely habits, but the mules we have are highly social animals. The phrase “wild ass” (found 9 times in the KJV) comes from the Hebrew word *pere* or *pereh*, which is derived from the word *para* – to be fruitful.

<sup>4</sup> I wonder if David named his mare mule Ruth like that of the old TV western character Festus Hagan of *Gunsmoke*? That stout mule had an excellent gait, smooth and easy, even when running.

<sup>5</sup> This raises the question for those who seek to keep the Sabbath day according to Old Covenant law, should they not also keep the myriad of other sabbath laws that are an inseparable part of it? How do they justify separating it out from these other laws?

<sup>6</sup> The Hebrew word *chuuqqah* is variously translated as statute, ordinance, custom, and manners.

<sup>7</sup> The word hybrid is derived from the Greek word *hybrida*, an accusative of the (lost) noun *hybrys*, which means mongrel, a mixture of breed, race, or origin. Not all hybrids are sterile, as evidenced by the typical mongrel dog that multiplies like a rabbit. Not all sterile animals are hybrids, either, as evidenced by sterility and other sub-lethal problems (like blindness or deafness) caused by the incorrect breeding of a purebred species, such as with the merle patterned Chihuahua. I deal more with the sterility issue in the section entitled, *Related Issues*.

<sup>8</sup> Groups of created life (organisms) that have a specific gene pool portioned to it by the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> Pagans, however, because of their depraved nature (Rom. 1) and virulent hatred of God’s law (Rom. 8:7) often seek to make animals equal with themselves as in the case with a group of Austrian animal rights activists that are petitioning their courts to have a particular chimpanzee declared a person, which could set a global legal precedent in opening the doors to various legalized abominations.

<sup>10</sup> It was 70AD when the Lord finished all that He declared concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, its service and law (Mat. 23:34-24:2), wherein the kingdom was given to a holy nation (1Pet. 2:9-10), comprised of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (Rev. 5:9-10) who, as new creations (2Cor. 5:17), would bear fruit unto His glory and honor (Mat. 21:33-46).

<sup>11</sup> If Christ does not serve the copy and shadow of heavenly things, then what justifies those born in His image to keep the ordinances that specifically belonged to these copies and shadows?

<sup>12</sup> The **Judaizers** were a Christian sect of converted Pharisees that still adhered to the Jewish Law, as a part of their salvation.

<sup>13</sup> *The Missouri Mule, His Origin and Times*, Melvin Bradley (Extension Publications, Columbia, Missouri, 1993, Volume 1, page 115)

<sup>14</sup> Mules are bred naturally, which is much different than those plants and animals created through genetic engineering and other creation defying actions of mankind.