

Primarily Spiritual

The covenant made with Abraham was and remains primarily spiritual. If there is no active, personal fellowship between the believer and God, the outward rituals mean nothing. Instead of providing a guide to right living, they become a snare, enabling and even encouraging those who keep them to think they are saved when in fact they are living a lie. This was the problem which Jesus confronted and which his teaching was designed to overcome.

The ultimate aim of the law was to teach Abraham's descendants that there was a divine standard of behaviour which was expected of them. Behind every legal precept recorded in the Old Testament there is a spiritual principle which must be grasped if that precept is to be understood properly. This spiritual principle can be summed up under the heading 'love' - love for God first of all, and love for others next. If the law is applied in a way which contradicts the principle of love, then it is falsified and abused. At the same time, God also made it clear that the law was a temporary expedient, designed to instill in Abraham's people a longing to be more like God himself. Why God chose this way of teaching his people we cannot say; all we can do is recognize that when Moses gave the law at Mt Sinai a pattern was set which received divine sanction until the coming of Jesus.

(Excerpt from *Two Testaments but One Bible* by Gerald Bray)