

There are some strange doctrines about why there is an old and new covenant, but I hope to make the reason for the two clear. There are actually a number of covenants in the Old Testament, but the one we are referring to is the one made with Israel at Mount Sinai. The second time Moses brought the Ten Commandments down from the mountain, the people promised they would obey them. A total of 613 laws followed to explain how to live out those first ten. The people promised to obey (Exodus 24:7). If the people did obey, then God would bless them with prosperity in this life (Deuteronomy 11:13-15). If they disobeyed, then they would face a lack of prosperity (Deuteronomy 11:16-17). It was pretty straightforward. It seems simple enough. But there was one major problem. Their hearts were always going astray. In fact, before Moses could bring down the Ten Commandments, they had already broken them all.

Some people believe that salvation in the Old Testament was through obedience to the laws given through Moses. That was never the case (Hebrews 10:4). The law only promised physical prosperity. Salvation in the Old Testament can be shown to be by faith. We can see this explained by the apostle Paul in Romans 4. The types and shadows of the law only pointed toward a future substance. Moses even told them that God would raise up from among them, the Jewish people, someone like himself to whom they must listen (Deuteronomy 18:15). The Jewish sages speculated that this coming prophet would give them a new law, a much simpler one that summed the others up. This is what Jesus did when He reminded them that Moses told them that they were to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength and their neighbors as themselves (Matthew 22:37-40; Deuteronomy 6:5). Two weeks ago I shared with you how they saw Perez' birth as picture of the coming Messiah breaking out of the hedge of the law. It's also the reason we see in the Gospels the question about which law is the greatest (Matthew 22:36).

The idea of a new covenant in the time of Jesus was not foreign to the Jewish people, as the author of Hebrews will remind them. He has already shown them that the Psalm 110 prediction of a new priesthood would mean a change in the law as well (Hebrews 7:12). In our chapter today the author will make the same case from the prophets. Keep in mind that all this is meant to help this Hebrew church to see that they shouldn't return to Judaism to escape persecution. Not only is it impossible to keep the law that promises physical prosperity, but that covenant has been replaced by the reality of the new covenant. The new is spiritual in nature. It doesn't promise physical prosperity as the old covenant did. Instead, it promises something much greater, eternal spiritual blessing! It promises to transform us in to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29), to seat us with Him in the heavenly realm (Ephesians 2:6), to reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12), and that we can't imagine the things God has prepared for us who are in Christ (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Commented [PW1]: Exodus 24:7 (ESV)
⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient."

Commented [PW2]: Deuteronomy 11:13-15 (ESV)
¹³ "And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,
¹⁴ he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil.
¹⁵ And he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full."

Commented [PW3]: Deuteronomy 11:16-17 (ESV)
¹⁶ Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them;
¹⁷ then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there ... [1]

Commented [PW4]: Hebrews 10:4 (ESV)
⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Commented [PW5]: Deuteronomy 18:15 (ESV)
¹⁵ "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— ... [2]

Commented [PW6]: Matthew 22:37-40 (ESV)
³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ... [3]

Commented [PW7]: Deuteronomy 6:5 (ESV)
⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Commented [PW8]: Matthew 22:36 (ESV)
³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

Commented [PW9]: Hebrews 7:12 (ESV)
¹² For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.

Commented [PW10]: Romans 8:29 (KJV)
²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ... [4]

Commented [PW11]: Ephesians 2:6 (KJV)
⁶ And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Commented [PW12]: 2 Timothy 2:12 (ESV)
¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;

Commented [PW13]: 1 Corinthians 2:9 (ESV)
⁹ But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

I sometimes receive emails from third world believers who have been introduced to the prosperity gospel. They have been told that if they will give money to God (which usually means to the one who is preaching) and live a holy life, they will soon be blessed with physical prosperity. That is easy to preach from the Old Testament. But that covenant has been superseded by a much greater one that promises eternal spiritual blessing. I respond to them with Scripture from the New Testament and the example of Jesus' and the apostles' suffering. This is the same issue being addressed to the Hebrew believers. They may suffer persecution, and we might as well, but we must remember that Jesus said we should consider it all joy, for that is how the prophets were treated, and our reward in heaven will be great (Matthew 5:10-12). Notice Jesus said in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:1).

So then why did God introduce the law in the first place? The apostle Paul explains, ²⁴ *So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.* ²⁵ *But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,* ²⁶ *for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.* Galatians 3:24-26 (ESV) Jesus was sent in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4), in God's perfect time, but until He came and made it possible for us to be filled with the Spirit, the people needed guidelines and pictures to point them to godliness. The physical was a picture of spiritual truth. The sacrifices pointed toward the ultimate sacrifice on the cross. Since they weren't led of the Spirit they needed practical guidelines for their good. The Lord told them to obey the law for their good (Deuteronomy 10:13). Many of the laws were for health and way before man knew why they were the right thing to do. Others were for societal order and justice. As Paul said, the laws were a guardian until Christ came.

⁷ *For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.* Hebrews 8:7 Many of the Jews in Jesus' day were looking for a new covenant to be ushered in by their coming Messiah. But they expected Him to be a warrior like David, not a humble carpenter from a little town in Galilee of the Gentiles, which by the way is exactly where Isaiah said His ministry would be (Isaiah 9:1-2). As we saw in chapter 7, why would Psalm 110 predict the Messiah to be a new priest of a different order if we could be made perfect by the law? The law was telling people the best way to live, but they knew they couldn't keep it all. Their history was one of failure to abide by it. The repeated failures and the future promises were the reasons they looked for a second covenant.

Now the author moves to the prophecy in Jeremiah to prove His point. ⁸ *For he finds fault with them when he says: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,* Hebrews 8:8 If you say you are going to replace something, it implies that the old was not perfect. You don't replace something unless you have something better. So when God promises a new covenant, the implication is the old one was insufficient. It doesn't

Commented [PW14]: Matthew 5:10-12 (ESV)

¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Commented [PW15]: 2 Corinthians 5:1 (ESV)

¹ For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Commented [PW16]: Galatians 4:4 (ESV)

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,

Commented [PW17]: Deuteronomy 10:13 (ESV)

¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?

Commented [PW18]: Isaiah 9:1-2 (ESV)

¹ But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

mean it was not good. It revealed to man our need for God to do what we couldn't. It revealed our weakness. As the apostle Paul points out, ^{3a} *For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do.* Romans 8:3a The law wasn't the problem. The problem was that it was up to us to keep it. Our flesh, or you could say our old nature, was unable to love God with our all and our neighbor as ourselves. We can see we need a lot of help that comes from outside ourselves. Amen? We need more than rules; we need power to live the Spirit behind the rules. But even if we have Him, we still need our past sins removed.

⁹ *not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord.* Hebrews 8:9 This clarifies for us that God and the author are speaking of the Sinaitic covenant, not the covenants with Noah or Abraham. Here is another common area of doctrinal error. Some people claim the covenants with Abraham are replaced by the new covenant. We can see by this verse that the new covenant replaces the covenant connected to the laws Moses received on Sinai.

The Jews were taken by the hand through the wilderness to the Promised Land. That pillar of cloud by day and fire by night was God walking with them and providing their needs in a barren land (Psalm 78:52-54). They heard His voice and saw His miracles but they still refused to walk in the covenant. Every time Moses told them what God had instructed, they would turn around and break it. They were so hardhearted that they had to die in the wilderness and have the next generation enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14:29). What a warning to this Hebrew church and to us to continue in the new covenant!

¹⁰ *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* Hebrews 8:10 This is an act of God! It describes the new covenant as God transforming us from the inside out. How is that possible? First, we need to be a clean vessel so that the Spirit of God can indwell us with His thoughts and desires. That is only made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins. When we accept the forgiveness Jesus offers, we are made new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17). Then the Spirit of God can make His home in us (John 14:23). Our minds are renewed by the Word of God (Romans 12:2). Our hearts desire to walk in obedience (Romans 6:17). That is the life-transforming miracle of the new covenant.

Being our God and being His people is a promise from the old covenant (Leviticus 26:12). The problem was that it was conditional upon them keeping the covenant, and as we have seen, they lacked the power to do so. The new covenant is not based on the condition of us keeping any rules, but instead on the promise of what God will do for us. God puts His laws in our minds. We don't have to look up a law in Leviticus or

Commented [PW19]: Psalm 78:52-54 (ESV)

⁵² Then he led out his people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.
⁵³ He led them in safety, so that they were not afraid, but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.
⁵⁴ And he brought them to his holy land, to the mountain which his right hand had won.

Commented [PW20]: Numbers 14:29 (ESV)

²⁹ your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me,

Commented [PW21]: 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Commented [PW22]: John 14:23 (ESV)

²³ Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Commented [PW23]: Romans 12:2 (ESV)

² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Commented [PW24]: Romans 6:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,

Commented [PW25]: Leviticus 26:12 (ESV)

¹² And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.

Exodus, for we just know what is pleasing to Him. Sometimes we aren't sure what to do but we start to act and then have an uneasy sense from the Holy Spirit that it is not what God would have us do. It is written on our hearts. He is our God! That means He is the Lord over our lives. We want to do His will. To be His people means He will be a Father to us, guiding us, transforming our lives, disciplining us, and loving us through every phase of life (Isaiah 46:4).

Putting His law in your mind does not mean there is no need to memorize Scripture. Because we have His law in our hearts, we will want to memorize Scripture. It's not one or the other. It is both. I meet people who think you are legalistic if you encourage memorization and study of the Word. They say you should just let the Spirit flow. They forget that one of the fruits of the Spirit is self-discipline (Galatians 5:23; Colossians 3:16). The flow of the Spirit will give you a hunger for the Word of God. We can be mechanical about our relationship with God, and we can be lazy and undisciplined. We have to avoid either extreme. Spirit led people will "make every effort" (2 Peter 1:5) but will also enjoy spontaneity of the Spirit's prompting.

Continuing with Jeremiah's prophecy, ¹¹ *And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.* Hebrews 8:11 I have always thought of this part of the prophecy as being fulfilled in the millennium. No doubt that will be true then, however, the author is applying it to the new covenant and those who enter it. You don't have to tell your fellow believer to know the Lord for every person who has received Jesus as their Savior has a personal relationship with Him. The Spirit is our teacher. It does not mean that we do not have teachers, for that is one of the ministries given to the church (Ephesians 4:11). It simply means we won't be teaching our fellow believers to have a relationship with the Lord. They have one or they wouldn't be believers.

"From the least to the greatest." That is one of the wonderful things about the church. It is a gathering of people from every walk of life, but they all have their own relationship with the Lord. I've heard people try to tell others to have a relationship like they have, but each of us has our own unique relationship with Jesus. We all know Him uniquely and yet all share the same kind of love for Him and what He has done for us, the chief thing being the following verse.

¹² *For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.*" Hebrews 8:12 The new covenant does away with sins by applying the mercy of God's provision for sin, the blood of His only Son. By taking our punishment for us, Jesus has caused us to be sinless in God's sight. It does not mean that we are sinless presently, but that we are clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. The perfecting of our souls will happen when we see Him face to face (1 John 3:2). This is something the old covenant could never do. As we will see later in Hebrews, that is why they had to continue to offer sacrifices over and over, for the people knew they were not made perfect.

Commented [PW26]: Isaiah 46:4 (NIV)

⁴ Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

Commented [PW27]: Galatians 5:23 (ESV)

²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Commented [PW28]: Colossians 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Commented [PW29]: 2 Peter 1:5 (ESV)

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,

Commented [PW30]: 1 John 3:2 (ESV)

² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

This is the greatest difference between the two covenants and the reason the Hebrew believers could not return to Judaism. The old had no final solution for sin. It only pointed to it. The new makes us right with God now and forever. The psalmist asked God to not remember the sins of his youth (Psalm 25:7). Thank the Lord we don't have to ask that any more. We know they are forgiven forever. If we bring them up, God would have to tell us He doesn't know what we are referring to.

¹³ In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Hebrews 8:13 Now here is an amazing prophecy. Written less than a decade before the destruction of the temple, the author is saying that the prophecies of the new covenant that has come mean that the old covenant with its priests and sacrifices were ready to vanish away. He came to the correct conclusion through the understanding of the prophecies in Psalm 110 and Jeremiah. There was no more need for the shadow now that the fullness had come.

The author is so knowledgeable about Jewish customs and the temple that I wonder if he had heard of what we can read in the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud. The yarn placed around the scapegoat's head on the Day of Atonement had been turning from red to white in the past, to show that God accepted the sacrifice on behalf of the people. After Jesus died, the yarn no longer changed to white. The door to the inner sanctuary would open by itself each night and the eternal flame would go out. Even a rabbi of that day predicted that it meant the destruction of the temple. The ways of the old covenant had become obsolete and vanished within a decade.

While we are not considering slipping back into Judaism, we can see with renewed appreciation that we live under the new covenant. Are you experiencing its inward transformation of the mind and heart (2 Corinthians 4:11)? Are you experiencing the relationship of God as your God and being His own? Do you know Him? Have you experienced His total forgiveness? How joyful we should be if these things are ours! I am my Beloved's and my beloved is mine (Song of Songs 6:3). It doesn't get any better than that! How we should revel in it daily and appreciate it with all our being. Amen?

Questions

- 1 What were the Jews expecting?
- 2 What is the difference between the promises of the two covenants?
- 3 Why did God give the old covenant?
- 4 Why do we replace things?
- 5 What was the problem with the law?
- 6 Have you experienced verse 10? In what ways?
- 7 What happens when we enter the new covenant?
- 8 How do believers know the Lord?
- 9 What does verse 12 mean to you?
- 10 How did God demonstrate the change?

Commented [PW31]: Psalm 25:7 (ESV)

⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

Commented [PW32]: 2 Corinthians 4:11 (ESV)

¹¹ For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

Commented [PW33]: Song of Songs 6:3 (ESV)

³ I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he grazes among the lilies.

Page 1: [1] Commented [PW3] Paul 7/21/2016 8:32:00 AM

Deuteronomy 11:16-17 (ESV)

¹⁶ Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them;

¹⁷ then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the LORD is giving you.

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Deuteronomy 18:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—

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Matthew 22:37-40 (ESV)

³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

³⁸ This is the great and first commandment.

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

⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Page 1: [4] Commented [PW10] Paul 7/25/2016 8:42:00 AM

Romans 8:29 (KJV)

²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.