

SET FREE!

Volume 2, Issue 2

MOVE OUT

OF THE



OLD

AND INTO THE

NEW!

**What's old and
What's new?**

Unfortunately few these days seem to know the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament and as a result they get very confused, condemned and frustrated.

When you pick up your Bible you will see a nice heading page in front of the book of Genesis, which says: "Old Testament." We know that the word "testament" means will or covenant.

The Old Covenant didn't actually begin at Genesis 1:1. The history of God's dealings with man started then, but the first covenant He made, with an individual man, didn't appear until Genesis 15.

Genesis 15:18

*On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying:
"To your descendants I have given this land,*

Abraham was the first one that He made a **personal** covenant with. Although it was a personal covenant it also was one that would include the coming of the Messiah through the people of faith.

God did make promises to other men before Abraham, such as with mankind in general, when he told Noah that He wouldn't flood the earth again.

Let's look at Abraham's covenant and see how the benefits of that covenant are still in place today.

Genesis 17:2-7

² *And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."*

³ *Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:* ⁴ *"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations."*

⁵ *No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.* ⁶ *I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.*

⁷ *And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.*

Notice it said "for an everlasting covenant".

**How long is everlasting?
Forever!**

So does that mean it is still in effect today? Yes.

The **promises** are still in effect for Abraham and his descendant.

Galatians 3:15-29

¹⁵ *My friends, I will use an everyday example to explain what I mean. Once someone agrees to something, no one else can change or cancel the agreement.* ¹⁶ *That is how it is with the promises God made to Abraham and his descendant. The promises were not made to many descendants, but only to one, and that one is Christ.*

¹⁷ *What I am saying is that the Law cannot change or cancel God's promise that was made 430 years before the Law was given.* ¹⁸ *If we have to obey the Law in order to receive God's blessings, those blessings don't really come to us because of God's promise. But God was kind to Abraham and made him a promise.*

¹⁹ *What is the use of the Law? It was given later to show that we sin. But it was only supposed to last until the coming of that descendant who was given the promise. In fact, angels gave the Law to Moses, and he gave it to the people.* ²⁰ *There is only one God, and the Law did not come directly from him.*

²¹ *Does the Law disagree with God's promises? No, it doesn't! If any law could give life to us, we could become acceptable to God by obeying that law.* ²² *But the Scriptures say that sin*

*controls everyone, so that God's promises will be for anyone who has faith in Jesus Christ.*²³ *The Law controlled us and kept us under its power until the time came when we would have faith.*²⁴ *In fact, the Law was our teacher. It was supposed to teach us until we had faith and were acceptable to God.*²⁵ *But once a person has learned to have faith, there is no more need to have the Law as a teacher.*²⁶

*All of you are God's children because of your faith in Christ Jesus.*²⁷ *And when you were baptized, it was as though you had put on Christ in the same way you put on new clothes.*²⁸ *Faith in Christ Jesus is what makes each of you equal with each other, whether you are a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free person, a man or a woman.*²⁹ *So if you belong to Christ, you are now part of Abraham's family, and you will be given what God has promised.*

The first thing we see here is that Jesus is **the descendant** or seed of Abraham that was promised all of the blessings contained in the Abrahamic Covenant.

Today, because you have accepted Jesus, by faith, then all of those blessings, including the Holy Spirit, are yours. You are now in Christ, so today all of the blessings are yours.

In the time line of things there is the Abrahamic covenant then along came Moses and the Children of Israel. Israel was given a separate situation. As a nation it was promised certain things such as the land in which the nation is to rule and reign.

As New Covenant Christians those land promises are not literally for us. The physical land belongs to Israelites.

When you read on into the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, you will see future promises concerning that land that will come about during the Millennial Reign of Jesus here on the earth.

Getting back to Moses.

There was a set of Laws that were given concerning the Children of Israel when they were in the wilderness and even for when they took on the Promised Land.

These were laws that had to be kept in order to be **in right standing as a nation** with God. Those laws were summarized in the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

When the **nation** failed to keep the rules then they were in breach of their Mosaic Covenant. God had no choice but to allow the curses of the Law to come on them.

That's the way a covenant works. You keep up your part of the covenant and all the blessings come to you. You break the covenant and all the curses come on you.

This is dramatically set out in **Deuteronomy 28**. The first 14 verses are the blessings and the last 15 to 68th verses are the curses.

Look at verse 15:

(The Contemporary Version) Israel, today I am giving you the laws and teachings of the LORD your God. And if you don't obey them all, he will put many curses on you.

Who is Moses talking to? He is talking to the Nation of Israel. He's talking to a **nation** not to **individuals**.

In the Old Covenant God dealt with nations. Today, under the New Covenant He deals with us as individuals.

So perhaps you are thinking "How come you quote those verses from such passages as Psalm 91, about the blessings coming on us when they were addressed to the nation of Israel?"

It is because all of the blessings have been passed on down to the Body of Christ. The curses have been removed.

Galatians 3:13-14

*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),¹³ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*¹⁴

We are redeemed from the curse but we get the all of the promised blessings.

Now how good is that?

Referring back to that passage we looked at from **Galatians 3:15-29** about the Law and the Promises. The Law was given to Moses and the Promise or Covenant was given to Abraham and to his descendant, or Christ.

Note again these verses. **Galatians 3:18-19**

18 If we have to obey the Law in order to receive God's blessings, those blessings don't really come to us because of God's promise.

But God was kind to Abraham and made him a promise.¹⁹ What is the use of the Law? It was given later to show that we sin. But it was only supposed to last until the coming of that descendant who was given the promise. In fact, angels gave the Law to Moses, and he gave it to the people.

Paul is saying that the Law was like a layer over top of the Covenant. It was for a time **until** the “descendant” came.

**Who was that descendant?
Jesus.
Did Jesus come? Yes!
So is the time for that Law
now passed? Yes.**

Let's look now at what we call the New Covenant. Here is where many seem to get quite confused.

The New Covenant did not start at Matthew 1:1.

You might ask, when did the Old Covenant end and the New Covenant begin?

Hebrews 9:15-17

¹⁵ *Christ died to rescue those who had sinned and broken the old agreement. **Now he brings his chosen ones a new agreement** with its guarantee of God's eternal blessings!¹⁶ In fact, making an agreement of this kind is like writing a will. This is because the one who makes the will must die before it is of any use.¹⁷ In other words, a will doesn't go into effect as long as the one who made it is still alive.*

The New Covenant didn't come into effect until AFTER the death of Jesus.

If you have not studied the Gospels with the understanding that the New Covenant began at the cross, or in other words, following the death of Jesus, then take a look at them again.

What once may have seemed to be apparent contradictions between the teachings of Jesus and the Apostle Paul, should now make perfect sense in light of the covenants under which they each taught.

Jesus taught under the Law of Moses. Jesus held, among other things, the office of a prophet under the Old Law.

Jesus put the Law in its proper perspective by raising it to such a level that those who had ears to hear would realize their pending doom trying to live up to it.

His goal was to show the self-righteous that no one could possibly achieve the demands of the Law.

Jesus was born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those under the Law, and that we might receive the adoption as sons:

Galatians 4:4-5

⁴ *But when the time was right, God sent his Son, and a woman gave birth to him. His Son obeyed the Law,⁵ so he could **set us free** from the Law, and we could become God's children.*

The only hope those under the Law had for salvation was not through giving a superior performance **for** God but by simple faith **in** Him.

Galatians 2:16

¹⁶ *But we know that God accepts only those who have faith in Jesus Christ. No one*

*can please God by simply obeying the Law. So we put our faith in Christ Jesus, and **God accepted us because of our faith.***

Christ showed even the most self-righteous their need and then met that need in Him through the work of the cross.

Jesus was teaching the Old Law to the Jewish people and showing them that it was impossible for them to keep the Law and that He was going to be their Saviour from that Law.

Consider this. ...

Had Jesus already been crucified, buried and raised when He told the multitudes that (Matt. 5:20) *"unless **your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven**"?*

Was the cross a past or future event when He taught (Matt. 5:28) *"everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart"?*

Look at what some call the Lord's Prayer.

(Matthew 6:7&15)

⁷ *'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

¹⁵ *"But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

Meaning that if you don't forgive others then God won't forgive you of your sins. Well we know that He, through the cross **has** forgiven us of all our sins.

Those passages from the Gospels were clearly "under the Law teachings".

So the answer to these questions is no, He had not yet been crucified, buried, and risen. Jesus was preparing His listeners for the good news to come.

Were Jesus' teachings during His earthly ministry then not true? Of course they were true! Jesus is the truth! He taught the truth. But He taught under the Old Covenant, revealing it for what it truly was...the **ministry of condemnation.**

2 Corinthians 3:9

(KJV) For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

Therefore what you and I need to know is that the New Covenant began with the completion of one unique, never-to-be-repeated, event on Calvary in 33 A.D. The dividing line of A-L-L human history was the cross of Christ.

It was there that our sins were forgiven, we were released from the Law, we were **set free** from the power of sin, and we were made new creations in Christ, to name just a few of the blessings we have received in Him.

The cross of Christ is the ultimate demonstration of the awesome and matchless power of God.

It was at the cross, that through the power of God, the old is done away with and the new has come.

Does this mean that we don't read the Old Testament, which includes the Gospels? Does it mean that everything Jesus said was just for the Jews that He was addressing at that time

and that none of it has to do with us today? NO!

Along side of teaching the demands of the Law, Jesus was also teaching principles of holy living - and we should all desire to lead a holy life. Not by trying to keep the rules out of fear of Godly punishment, but instead we live a holy life out of love for God and man. Not out of fear but by faith in the ability of Christ living within us.

"The just shall live by faith"

We live by faith in His finished work.

Woven in amongst the teachings of Jesus concerning the Law were principles of faith, hope and love that are timeless.

Remember Jesus said:

John 13:34

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

He was speaking into the New Covenant that was to come.

In the life of Jesus we see the example, the template of a holy life fully surrendered to the Father.

He is our example of how a child of God should live - totally surrendered to the Word and love of God.

But if you go around picking out the Laws and try to live by those, you won't succeed. You can't do it.

James put it this way:

James 2:10

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

That's why we need grace. We can't keep the whole Law.

There are many powerful basics for Christian living laid out in the Gospels, and even in the Old Testament but for the day-to-day living as a New Covenant believer, recipients of the grace of God we have the New Covenant that ranges from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles to the Book of the Revelation of Jesus to John. Therein lie the goals and guidelines to live under grace rather than under the Law.

If you have been trying to keep all of the Laws that are stated in the Old Covenant, including those laid out in the Gospels, then you will be very disappointed and frustrated. You will constantly feel condemned at your inability to do it.

Stop living under the Old Covenant, move out and enjoy the grace and freedoms that are yours as a SET FREE recipient of the New Covenant.

SET FREE

Is a complimentary ministry, prepared

for you, by:

Ray Sargent

You may receive copies via E-mail simply by request.

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"Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand!

Never again let anyone

put a harness

of slavery on you."

Galatians 5:1 (MSG)