

Gospel Truth

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE
MISSION FIELD WORLDWIDE.

ALLEGORY OF THE TWO COVENANTS

(The following account is from Galatians 4:21-31 KJV).

Abraham, a patriarch of the Old Testament, had two sons. God had promised Abraham and his barren wife Sarah that He would bless them with a son in their old age. Due to a lack of faith, Sarah gave Abraham her maidservant, Hagar, to whom Ishmael was born. The son, promised by God, was later born to Sarah when she was ninety years old and Abraham was one hundred. Ishmael was born after the flesh to a bondswoman who was not free while Isaac was born to a free woman by the promise of God.

This is a beautiful allegory of the two covenants by which God has governed His people throughout the dispensation of time—the law system and the gospel. Hagar and Ishmael were as Mount Sinai where God instituted the first covenant and gave the law to Moses. The children of Israel were slaves to the rites, ceremonies, and commandments of the law. This first covenant, the law

system, was after the flesh just as Ishmael was born after the flesh. Hagar was not free and could only deliver her children into conditions of slavery. Likewise, those born under



the Mosaic law were in bondage to a system in which they were never able to fully measure to its obligations.

Isaac, born of faith, a child of promise by the divine intervention of God,

represented the new covenant that God made with mankind through His Son Jesus Christ. Isaac's position superseded that of his brother Ishmael. Isaac was a type of Christ, who was offered on the altar of sacrifice in obedience to the will of the Father. God's covenant with Abraham was fulfilled through Isaac from which came a mighty nation, God's chosen people.

A parallel is drawn between Sinai and Jerusalem. Jerusalem, while under the bondage of the Mosaic law and the political governance of the Roman Empire, was also the location of the temple where God was worshiped. It was the center of the new Christian faith. Spiritual Jerusalem, in contrast to Sinai, represents a place where all her citizens are born under the new covenant and are free.

“Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” (26). True Christians, living under the covenant of the gospel, are free from

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WHAT THE BIBLE Teaches About...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;

Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;

Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;

1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;

1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;

Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

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the bondage of the law with all its rites and customs. They are free from sin and condemnation. They are born not of the slave but of the free woman.

As Hagar and her son were cast out, so the apostle Paul instructed the church to cast out the old covenant. "The son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman" (30). Isaac was the son of promise, he was of faith, he was the fulfillment of God's plan for the Jewish nation, and he was the heir. The Mosaic law is to be cast out in favor of the new covenant. Christians, followers of Jesus Christ, are the children of promise.

Some people cleave to the letter of the Mosaic law or possess an old covenant mentality while living under the gospel. This yields itself to bondage. Cast out the old covenant and enjoy the liberty and freedom of the gospel covenant, for "we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free" (31). —mws

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THE GOSPEL TRUTH

The Gospel Truth periodical is published in the name of the Lord for all people of all lands in the interest of establishing and encouraging them in the truth of God's Word. This publication teaches and promotes the truths of the Bible that have been established since the time of Christ and the apostles.

The Word of God is the singular, acceptable rule of faith. It teaches salvation and deliverance from sin through the atonement of Jesus Christ; a subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit to lead, direct and empower; practical holiness in every area of life; and the unity and oneness of God's people. Acceptable service to God is through a personal relationship of love founded in truth.

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Editorial



But now hath he [Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. —Hebrews 8:6

It is a wonderful privilege to live in this dispensation of grace and truth. Jesus Christ, the mediator of the New Testament, established with mankind a better covenant with better promises. The old covenant had promises of secular good and earthly, national security. The new covenant promised both spiritual and eternal blessings.

My burden this quarter is on the two covenants that God established with mankind. It is an important subject and lays a foundation upon which we will build in future issues dealing with the subjects of tithing vs. giving, Sabbath-keeping, and fleshly worship vs. spiritual worship.

People often wonder if there is relevancy to the Old Testament since we live under a new covenant. The answer is a resounding yes. The Old Testament is the story of God and His relationship with man. We learn in the Old Testament about the holy nature of God and the sinful nature of man. It is a book rich in spiritual lessons, encouragement, history, and prophecy of the coming Messiah. The apostles and Christ Himself quoted from the Old Testament.

The old covenant is now passed away and we do not follow the Law of Moses nor are we bound to it. We do observe that many of the truths contained therein as the moral code from God did not change and were restated in the New Testament. While Old Testament scriptures are still very relevant for our understanding, one must not use the Old Testament in a standalone capacity upon which to build a doctrine in this day of grace. Some people pick and choose what they will practice from the Old Testament. They keep the Sabbath and use musical instruments, and yet they do not burn incense during prayer nor do they offer sacrifices. It is imperative that people understand the entire old covenant was replaced with another, better covenant.

Many of the patriarchs were examples of courage, faith, and devotion. We must keep perspective that they were under the law without the grace of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. Hence, it is improper to model everything they did in worship or behavior as an example today.

Outward observances of righteousness do not justify the heart. It is never compromise to enjoy the freedom from the law; but, living under grace truly brings us into a closer relationship with God. The standard of holiness now starts with the inward man.

Michael W. Smith

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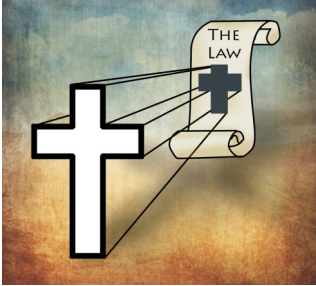
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BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

SUBJECT: THE TWO COVENANTS



Scripture Reading: *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. —Hebrews 8:10*

Summary: The old covenant, established by God through the law given to Moses, was imperfect to bring about true righteousness in mankind. A new covenant was established through the sacrifice and priesthood of Jesus Christ which brought about true freedom and holiness.

Note: While general headings are given, supporting scriptures overlap under different headings.

I. The Old Covenant Established

- A. Exodus 34:28 Words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.
- B. Deuteronomy 5:1-3 Covenant made with Israel.
- C. Malachi 4:4 Law of Moses = Old Covenant.

II. Purpose of the Law

- A. Galatians 3:24-25 The law was a schoolmaster.
- B. Romans 7:7-8 “Without the law, sin was dead.”
- C. Romans 3:19-20 The law is the knowledge of sin.

III. Allegory of the Two Covenants

Galatians 4:21-31 Hagar & Sarah; Ishmael & Isaac; Mount Sinai & Jerusalem; works & faith; bondage & freedom.

IV. A Superior & New Covenant Instituted

- A. Jeremiah 31:31-33 A new covenant prophesied.
- B. Hebrews 8:6-12 “I will make a new covenant.”
- C. John 1:17 Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.
- D. Ephesians 2:13-16 Reconciled to God through Christ.
- E. Matthew 26:27-28 Christ’s blood of the New Testament.
- F. Galatians 3:13-14 Redeemed from the curse of the law.
- G. John 8:31-36 Truth sets free.

V. Jesus—One Mediator/One Sacrifice/One Priest

- A. Hebrews 9:11-16 Christ a superior offering and priest.
- B. Hebrews 10:11-18 Jesus offered one sacrifice for sins forever.
- C. Romans 6:10 Jesus the final sacrifice for sin.
- D. Hebrews 7:20-22 Priesthood of Christ.
- E. I Timothy 2:5 Jesus is the only mediator between God and men.

VI. Imperfection of the Law

- A. Hebrews 10:1-4 The law was a shadow of good things to come.
- B. Romans 8:3-4 The Law was weak (Hebrews 8:7; 10:11).
- C. Hebrews 7:11-12 The Levitical priesthood and the law changed.
- D. Hebrews 7:17-19 Disannulling of the commandments.

VII. Old Covenant Passed Away

- A. Hebrews 10:9-10 First covenant taken away.
- B. Hebrews 8:13 Old covenant replaced with a new covenant.
- C. Romans 6:14 Ye are not under the law.
- D. Romans 7:6 Delivered from the law.

VIII. Fulfillment of the Law

- A. Matthew 5:17 Jesus came to fulfill the law.
- B. Romans 13:8-10 Love is the fulfilling of the law.

IX. A Higher Standard of Living Under the New Covenant

- A. Matthew 5:31-48 “It hath been said...but I say unto you.”

X. True Righteousness Through Faith

- A. Galatians 2:16 Justified by faith in Jesus Christ.
- B. Romans 9:30-32 Righteousness is of faith not by works of the law.
- C. Galatians 5:2-4 Christ is made of no effect through keeping the law.

Conclusion: *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.... —Galatians 2:16*

The Two Covenants

A DIVINE PLAN

From the beginning of creation, God had a plan for humanity. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God was working to bring mankind to a place of full redemption. The fullness of His design was not immediately evident; but over the course of hundreds of years, the beauty and power of the ultimate plan of salvation was revealed through the coming of Jesus Christ.

COVENANTS OF GOD

The Bible is a book about man's journey and his relationship with God. Through the various dispensations of time, God has required different things of different generations. It is vital to understand the system and principles under which God is dealing with mankind today. The foundational systems from which God deals with mankind are referred to in the scripture as "covenants." The scriptural covenants from God were much more than a mutual agreement between God and man. A covenant signified more accurately God's promises and counsel by which He conveyed His favor and blessings to man.

THE FIRST COVENANT

The first of two covenant systems was given to Moses on Mount Sinai. "And the LORD said unto Moses.... I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.... And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments" (Exodus 34:27-28). The covenant was composed of all the statutes and judgments which were given to Moses (Deuteronomy 5:1-3). This covenant, also referred to as the "law of Moses" (Malachi 4:4), was made specifically to the Jews and neither the law nor its benefits were given to all people (Romans 2:14).

The law of Moses contained guidelines pertaining to all manner of civil, moral, and ceremonial precepts. The Jews were told how to worship God and instructed to offer various sacrifices for their ongoing sins and transgressions. This covenant was given in preparation for the second and

final covenant that was given through Jesus Christ. The law was a "shadow of good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1-4), but it was not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin. There was only temporary atonement for committed sin. The people had fleshly, ceremonial worship to God, but their hearts were not purified by the works of the law nor by the sacrifices which they offered. The law was weak through the flesh (Romans 8:3) and made nothing perfect (Hebrews 7:19).

THE SCHOOLMASTER

While imperfect, the first covenant was given to mankind for a reason—to prepare mankind for the perfect offering of

Jesus Christ which reconciled man to God. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:24-25). The law brought the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:19-20). "Without the law, sin was dead" (Romans 7:7-8). It was the Mosaic law that revealed the sinfulness of mankind and his weakness and inability to overcome that sin through works and deeds of the flesh.

THE SECOND COVENANT

God had planned all along to make a better covenant with man. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.... But this *shall* be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:31-33). This new covenant was no longer dependent upon rules written on tables of stone. John 1:17 states that "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need of a second (Hebrews 8:6-12).

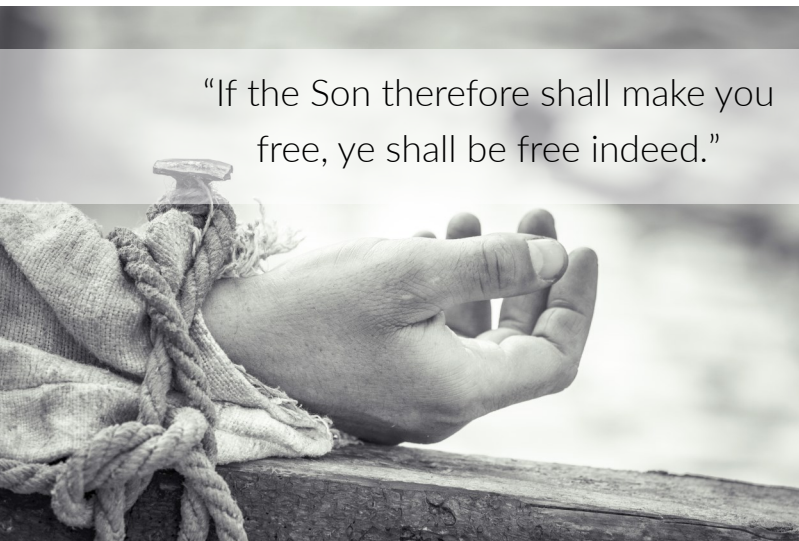
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"It was not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin."

SUPERIORITY OF THE NEW COVENANT

The New Covenant was superior to the old, for mankind was reconciled to God through the death of Christ on the cross. He abolished the law of commandments (Ephesians 2:13-16). He did away with the old covenant law, animal sacrifices, and ceremonial worship. The new covenant was based not in works but in an experience of faith in Jesus. He “redeemed us from the curse of the law” (Galatians 3:12-14). The death and punishment of the law was made void and an avenue of forgiveness and life was made available. Jesus shed His blood “of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:27-28). His perfect sacrifice did what the blood of bulls and of goats could not do. His



“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

blood purged the conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 9:11-16). “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.... where remission of these [sin] is, there is no more offering for sin” (Hebrews 10:11-18). The New Testament, or New Covenant, of His blood brought freedom from the very power of sin. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:31-37).

There was not perfection by the Levitical priesthood nor by the law. Jesus Christ is now the great high priest (Hebrews 4:14) of a better testament (Hebrews 7:20-23). As there was a change in the priesthood, so there was of necessity a change in the law also (Hebrews 7:11-13). “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be

fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:3-4).

OLD COVENANT ABOLISHED

With the introduction of the covenant of grace, the old covenant was passed away. “In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Hebrews 8:13). Hebrews 10:9 stated that “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” No longer does sin have dominion over mankind, “For ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14).

A HIGHER STANDARD UNDER GRACE

Jesus did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). While people are no longer under the Mosaic law, many of its principles were reintroduced in the new covenant. Under grace, the law was written on our hearts and there is power to live according to that law. Romans 13:8-10 very beautifully demonstrates how the true love of God is actually the fulfilling of the law. Many people rejoice in their freedom under grace, and well they should; but, a relationship with God in grace enables and requires true righteousness. There is a higher standard of living under the new covenant as demonstrated by Christ when He contrasts the law with requirements under grace in Matthew 5.

SALVATION ATTAINED

True righteousness was never attained under the Mosaic law nor was man ever justified by the good works of the law. Man is justified by the faith of Jesus Christ alone (Galatians 2:16). Salvation is of grace through faith and those who still seek for justification by works under the old or new covenant make Christ of no effect and they are fallen from grace (Galatians 5:2-4).

The old covenant to the Jews is passed away with a new and better covenant which is to all people. Under the new covenant through the blood of Jesus, people can not only find forgiveness from sin but also the power to live righteously and godly. The Old Testament is still important as it teaches much about God and sin, but the covenant itself is void. Thank God for the grace and liberty which is in Christ Jesus.

—mws

Old Covenant

New Covenant

1. For the Israelites
2. Written On Stone Tablets
3. Covenant of the Letter
4. Levitical Priesthood
5. Earthly Tabernacle
6. Law of Works
7. Law of Sin & of the Flesh
8. Brings Bondage & Death
9. Many Animal Sacrifices for Sin
10. Yearly Atonement / No Salvation
11. Tithing
12. Sabbath Observance
13. Fleshly Worship
(Incense, Musical Instruments)
14. A Shadow
15. Abolished

1. For All People
2. Written in People's Hearts
3. Covenant of the Spirit
4. One High Priest—Jesus Christ
5. Spiritual Tabernacle
6. Justification by Grace & Faith
7. Law of Righteousness & of the Spirit
8. Brings Freedom & Life
9. One Perfect Sacrifice—Jesus Christ
10. Eternal Atonement / Eternal Salvation
11. Giving
12. Every Day Holy to the Lord
13. Spiritual Worship of the Heart
14. The Reality
15. Everlasting

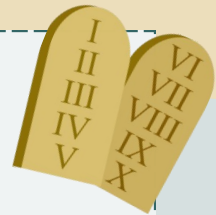
*For if that first covenant had been faultless,
then should no place have been sought for the second.*

Hebrews 8:7



DID YOU KNOW?

The Ten Commandments were the rules that governed the covenant relationship between God and the Israelites. While those laws have been abolished, the truths of nine of the ten commandments were reinstated in the New Testament under grace.



The fourth commandment, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8), was the only commandment not to be reiterated. That principle was a shadow of a time to come in the New Testament when EVERY day was to be kept sacred and holy to the Lord.



A Word In Season

Stand Fast in the Liberty

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Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. —Galatians 5:1

Paul was entreating the Christians to stand fast in the freedom and liberty that they had in Christ Jesus. He was not encouraging them to live shoddy, unholy lives but was cautioning them to not be entangled with the yoke and bondage of the law.



Many well-meaning Christians today are in bondage to a “law spirit” while they still espouse an experience of grace through faith. They take a legalistic approach to spiritual issues and the weightier matters of a relationship of love and personal faith get lost in the quagmire of “do this and do not do that.” They have not yet learned that the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. The Holy Spirit desires to deliver these legalistic, New Testament saints.

Ministers of the truth, enjoy your freedom and fear not to rejoice at this wonderful experience of grace in this dispensation of the gospel. This liberty is not found in bondage to the law nor to the spoken and unspoken rules of the saints. Liberty and freedom is found in serving the Lord in holiness because of the righteousness of God within. The heart seeks to please God out of devotion and love. A “legalistic saint” and a “grace saint” may come to the same conclusions in practical living, but the one is in bondage while the other cheerfully experiences liberty through the daily working of God’s grace.

—mws

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD