

### The Covenants

The entire Christian world believes beyond the shadow of a doubt the New Testament is full of doctrines about which the Old Testament says nothing; that the salvation by faith we have access to today was something Jesus created specifically for the New Testament Christian Church.

But if that is true, why did Paul tell young Timothy to study *“the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”* (2 Timothy 3:14-16)?

Paul seemed to think the Old Testament scriptures alone – the only ones which had been written when Timothy was a child – were able to make someone wise unto salvation. But more than that – salvation THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST! But how could the Old Testament teach you the principles of New Testament salvation?

Jesus seemed to think it was possible, for He told the Pharisees, *“For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me”* (John 5:46). If they had believed the doctrines of Moses – the doctrines in the Old Testament – then they would have believed the doctrines of Jesus *because Moses wrote about Jesus!*

And it must not have been that hard to understand, because the disciples knew that Moses wrote about Jesus: John 1:45. Other people realized it too, in John 6:14, a reference to the promise Moses made in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. So for some reason, although the Old Testament wrote about Jesus and His doctrines, **some people understood it and some didn't – or wouldn't.**

But surely in the works of Paul many new doctrines are found which Moses did not teach in the Old Testament... or so assumes most of Christianity. But ask Paul – is that true? WHERE did Paul get his doctrines? Acts 26:22-23.

Paul said he taught NO OTHER THING than what the Old Testament said! The New Testament does not in any way disagree with the Old; it clarifies, expands, and builds on the Old – but it never contradicts it. **The only things the New Testament abolished were the things in the Old Testament that God never wanted in the first place!**

So where did the Old Testament teach these things Paul taught? Why didn't the people in the Old Testament “get” them, if Paul and other New Testament converts did? I guess you'll have to dig into the Bible for yourself and uncover the truth about...

### LESSON 21: THE COVENANTS

A testament and a covenant are not the same thing; a covenant is, simply speaking, a contract. On the other hand, a testament is a witness to that contract. There are many covenants in the Bible, but the two most famous are called by Paul the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

The modern division between Old and New Testaments is arbitrary, and not inspired by God. In other words, there is NOTHING in the Bible that says what we call the Old Testament only talks about the Old Covenant or that the New Testament only talks about the New Covenant.

Since we'll be using these terms a lot, let's make some abbreviations up front; OT=Old Testament. NT=New Testament. OC=Old Covenant. NC=New Covenant. That should save a page or so of paper.

Most people know the OT taught about Jesus; prophesying the virgin birth, betrayal, death, resurrection and many other events in His life. But what almost no one knows is the OT also taught *the SAME teachings He taught!*

Most people believe the OT only talks about the OC, with perhaps a few prophetic references to the NC; and the NT talks only about the NC, and only mentions the OC to disparage it; almost everyone believes there is little or no real crossover between the two. But by now you have studied enough to see the Bible is ONE witness, ONE revelation, it is a complete package.

For example, in **Matthew 5:5**, people assume Jesus coined a new blessing; but He was just quoting **Psalms 37:11**. Likewise, people assume the OT teaches only “an eye for an eye” – but does it also teach loving your enemies? **Exodus 23:4-5**. Did David love his enemies? **Psalms 7:4, Psalms 35:12-15**.

Did it displease God, even in the OT, when you rejoiced at the calamity of your enemy? **Proverbs 24:17**. Did Job rejoice at the destruction of His enemies? **Job 31:29**. Did he even curse them? **Verse 30**.

The world has the idea the OT God was a law-obsessed monster with a brutal system of justice – though few dare say it, that's what all their beliefs portray. So it shocks them to discover the very same God also commanded people to love their enemies! But it should come as no surprise to you, for you know by now the God of the OT was none other than Jesus Christ!

Most people assume Paul invented the idea of feeding your enemies in **Romans 12:20-21**. But whom was he quoting – word for word? **Proverbs 25:21-22**. Does the OT teach “finder's keepers”? **Deuteronomy 22:1-4**. Does it teach that we should give to the poor? **Deuteronomy 15:11**.

Just as there are many NT concepts in the OT, there are also many concepts in the NT that sound just as harsh as the OT; for example... how should you treat a lazy person begging for food? **2 Thessalonians 3:10**. The average Christian is shocked to hear Paul make such a callous statement!

Does Paul support the death penalty – an OT concept – in the NT? **Romans 1:32**. What does the NT say about obligations to your family? **Luke 14:26**. Did the apostles curse certain heretics, or did they only “entreat them with love”? **Acts 13:8-12, Acts 5:1-11**.

Did they teach that you should patiently reason with heretics? **Romans 16:17-18**. Was there a definite limit to the patience you should show someone unwilling to accept the truth? **Titus 3:10-11**. Did Jesus ever show anger? **Mark 3:5**. Does the NT encourage you to be angry? **Ephesians 4:26**.

There is a place for anger in the heart of a true Christian – but notice the same verse also says “let not the sun go down on your wrath” – in other words, deal with your anger before the sun sets. Subjects like this will be covered in the next series of lessons, but for now it's enough to realize the NT teaches many OT-like concepts – just as the OT has many obviously NT teachings. Why is that?

## BUILDING ON THE OLD COVENANT

What did God prophesy that Jesus would do? **Isaiah 42:21**. When you magnify the law, you make it larger – so that finer points of the law are more easily understood. Details that would otherwise be missed are clearly visible when the law is magnified! For example, read **Matthew 5:27:28**.

Jesus said “of old time” – that is, in the time of Moses – it was said “thou shalt not commit adultery”. That is the covenant most people believe He abolished; but if that is the case, in the next verse He should have said, “thou mayest commit adultery now”!

If He was abolishing the Old Covenant law “thou shalt not commit adultery”, in favor of a new law, **then adultery should have been permitted now!** But instead, He went BEYOND the original commandment and ADDED to it, by saying *not only* can you not commit adultery – which is all the old law required – but you must IN ADDITION not yearn to commit adultery with a woman in your heart!

In this way, you see that Jesus’ new law did not REPLACE the old law – it BUILT UPON IT. This is the core of everything you will learn today. In **Matthew 5:21-26** He did the same thing, showing even though the OC permitted you to hate your brother – provided you didn’t kill him – Jesus didn’t even allow you to hate your brother, MUCH LESS kill him!

**Matthew 5:31-32** shows the same is true of divorce, and **verses 33-37** make commandment #3 even more binding than before; then **verses 38-42** talk about “an eye for an eye”. Here again, the NC is much “tougher” than the OC to keep. In the OC, you could retaliate – take vengeance – on your enemies. **You were not permitted to slap them, but if they slapped you first you could slap them back!**

But in the NC, not only can you not slap them *first*, but if they slap you, you can’t even slap them back! **You have to trust God to take vengeance for you (Romans 12:19)**. That requires faith, which is one of the principle differences between the covenants as you’ll see later.

Finally in **Matthew 5:43-48** Jesus wraps up with the bottom line of all these commandments. In the OC, you were required to love your friends and only permitted to hate your enemies. **Even in the OT, God never COMMANDED them to hate their enemies! But He allowed it.** But not in the NC! Now you must not only love those who love you, but ALSO love those who hate you!

So you see, all these NT laws and principles are BUILT on the foundation of Moses and the prophets. And these new laws are not easier, they are MUCH HARDER to keep than the old ones. **Not that they are different laws, but they have gone BEYOND the old laws.** They MAGNIFIED them, so “thou shalt not kill” applies to such tiny things as hating your brother without a cause.

If you look closely, you’ll see the one thing all the OC laws have in common is *they only apply externally*. And you’ll see all the NC laws apply BOTH externally and internally. For example, to break the law in the OT you had to actually, physically, commit adultery. Something you actually DID, that took place OUTSIDE your body, was required to break the covenant.

You could dream of this married person, fantasize all you wanted, and under the OC that wasn’t a sin! But the NC also applies to you INTERNALLY – in your mind. You can break the NC *merely by dwelling on thoughts of adultery!* In the NC, the laws apply NOT ONLY externally – to your body – but ALSO internally – to your heart.

This is one of the most fundamental differences between the covenants; **the OC required external obedience to the letter of the law; the NC requires that AND requires internal obedience to the SPIRIT OF THAT SAME LAW.**

## THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED TO THEM

We were raised to believe the gospel is a new thing, something to which those poor people in the OT had no access; something God just invented for those of us lucky enough to be born after Jesus was.

But did God tell Israel the word of God was near to them? **Deuteronomy 30:11-14.** Did Paul say that verse was talking about **the SAME WORD OF FAITH he preached?** That Moses was talking about BRINGING CHRIST to them? **Romans 10:6-8.**

**They didn't need to ascend to heaven to get the word of faith – “to bring Christ to them” – because it (He) was already there with them!** Read **1 Corinthians 10:4.** Was the gospel preached to ancient Israel? **Hebrews 4:2.** Had Jesus been preached to the Jews in the distant past? **Acts 3:20-26.** Was the gospel preached to people who were (at the time Peter wrote) dead? **1 Peter 4:6.**

Some make a big deal about that verse, but it's really simple; remember, “*the dead know not any thing*” (**Ecclesiastes 9:5**). All Peter meant was the gospel *was* preached (in the past) to people that are *now* dead (**but who were alive at the time**). For example, did Abraham have the gospel preached to him? **Galatians 3:8.**

This tells us as an absolute fact that both ancient Israel and Abraham heard the SAME NEW COVENANT GOSPEL we have heard. No church today realizes that, even though it's right there in everyone's Bible, easy to read and understand.

So what was this “gospel” preached to Abraham? According to **Galatians 3:8**, that gospel told Abraham “*in thee shall all nations be blessed*”, which is a direct quote from **Genesis 12:1-3, 7.** There God promised Abraham a covenant, but no covenant was made with him until later.

At the time, God basically said, “Obey me, and I will bless you and make a covenant with you”, and Abraham believed God and obeyed Him! (**Hebrews 11:8**). And because he believed God there, God later made the covenant a reality in **Genesis 15.** Go ahead and read the whole chapter.

God made the same promises here He made in **Genesis 12.** It's the same contract, the same covenant, but now God is actually going to sign the contract and seal the deal. But what makes this covenant so special is **Genesis 15:6** – God made these promises to Abraham, **and Abraham believed Him!** Abraham had FAITH in God (**Romans 4:3, 9**), and received righteousness without works (**Romans 4:4-8**) – **Abraham received grace!**

In **Genesis 15** God made a list of promises to Abraham; and when Abraham believed Him – had faith – God ratified the covenant by passing between the parts of the sacrifice Abraham had made (**verses 17-18**). The covenant was MADE that day – a covenant of FAITH!

So God preached the gospel to Abraham, Abraham believed God and His gospel, and that was “*counted to him for righteousness*”. When he later died in faith his reward as a part of the first resurrection was assured (**Hebrews 11:39-40**).

Did Abraham pay tithes? **Hebrews 7:1-6.** [Remember: Melchizedek was the Being who became Jesus]. Was Jesus alive before Abraham? **John 8:58.** Did Jesus see Abraham? **Verse 57.** Did Abraham see Him? **Verse 56.** Did Jesus tell Abraham the truth? **John 8:39-40.**

Abraham “*saw Jesus’ day, and was glad*” – in other words, Abraham knew Jesus was returning “*in the day of the Lord Jesus*” (**2 Corinthians 1:14**), and he understood that he would be among those to receive the inheritance of Christ at that time – the first resurrection. Something other OT patriarchs, such as Enoch and Job, also knew (**Jude 14, Job 19:25-27**).

Bottom line, Abraham believed the same gospel which was preached to us; he had faith and received grace. He understood the teachings of Jesus, we are told by Jesus Himself. There is no escaping the conclusion that **Abraham was a New Covenant Christian** – a fact which Paul harps on over and over, and yet no one realizes!

In fact, Paul *defines* a New Covenant Christian as someone who does the things Abraham did! (**Galatians 3:6-9**). And what was the subject of Abraham’s covenant with God? **Verse 17**. This verse is translated poorly when it says “*confirmed before of God in Christ*”; Barnes commentary says of the translation here... “...the phrase ‘in Christ,’ does not quite express the meaning of the Greek *eis Christon*. It means rather ‘unto Christ;’ ... **[that] the covenant had respect to him.**”

In other words, this should read “the covenant that God had made [with Abraham] *ABOUT CHRIST*”. Paul was saying God had made a covenant with Abraham regarding Jesus Christ! Which is just what these other verses had been saying!

Do we, the NC Christians, receive the same promises Abraham had? **Galatians 3:6-13**. What was the blessing of Abraham? **Verse 14**. To whom is this blessing offered? **Verse 16**. If you demonstrate faith, will you receive the inheritance God promised Abraham? **Verses 26-29**.

So you see that Abraham was given the covenant of faith; the same covenant of faith we have, that God would be our shield, and our exceeding great reward (**Genesis 15:1**) – which as you read in Lesson 11, was the promise of receiving the spirit of Christ. **God living in us is our exceeding great reward – and the key promise of the New Covenant.**

To fulfill the conditions of this contract – this covenant – did God require Abraham to perform rituals, washings, or sacrifices like Moses did? **Romans 4:13**. No – the promises that were part of this covenant were made to Abraham not based on physical works of the law such as sacrifices – but based on SPIRITUAL works of the law – believing God and obeying God’s spiritual law (**Genesis 18:19**).

How do you receive grace? **Romans 5:2, Ephesians 2:8**. Can you have faith without keeping the commandments? **Ephesians 2:8, 1 John 3:19-22**. Did Abraham keep God’s commandments? **Genesis 26:5**.

So to recap, Abraham kept God’s commandments; and when God said something, Abraham believed God – Abraham trusted God to do it. That faith brought grace to Abraham, so God could overlook the sins Abraham committed through ignorance. So it says, “*Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*” (**Romans 4:3**).

God made this covenant with Abraham, the gospel was preached to him, and he accepted it and became the father of the faithful (**Romans 4:11-12**). So in a real sense, according to Paul, Abraham was the first NC Christian – shocking as that is to most people today.

## WAS THE SPIRIT GIVEN IN THE OT?

King David found salvation by faith in the same way that Abraham did, Paul tells us in **Romans 4:6-8**. But did these men have the spirit of Christ? Was the spirit first given at Pentecost in A.D. 31, or did it

exist in the Old Testament? **John 7:39** seems to state clearly that “*the spirit was not yet given*” circa A.D. 30, but many equally clear scriptures seem to contradict that; for example:

How did the prophets in the OT receive their inspiration? **2 Peter 1:21**. Did Joseph have the spirit of God IN HIM? **Genesis 41:38**. Were the workers in the tabernacle given the spirit of God? **Exodus 31:3**. Did everyone in Israel have the spirit of God? **Numbers 11:29**.

Clearly, not everyone in Israel had it – only certain ones, and not many of them. How does God determine who receives His spirit? **Acts 5:32**. How did Balaam prophesy? **Numbers 24:2**. Did Joshua have the spirit in him? **Numbers 27:18**. Did the spirit of God inspire the various judges in Israel? **Judges 3:10, 6:34, 11:29, etc.**

Did God give Israel His good spirit? **Nehemiah 9:20**. Was His spirit INSIDE of the prophets? **Verse 30**. Was God annoyed that Israel didn’t cover their sins with His spirit? **Isaiah 30:1**. Did Daniel have the spirit of God in him? **Daniel 5:11**.

Did David fear God would take His holy spirit from him after he had sinned? **Psalms 51:11**. Doesn’t this mean David must have HAD the spirit, to fear losing it? (Common sense). Did David know the joys of God’s salvation? **Verse 12**. Was the spirit free then, just as it is now? (Same verse, compare to **Luke 11:13**).

Was His spirit everywhere, then as now? **Psalms 139:7-12** (and **verses 1-6** are worth reading too). Did Israel rebel against, and vex, God’s holy spirit? **Isaiah 63:10-11**. Was the spirit of God striving with man even before the flood? **Genesis 6:3**.

Now ask yourself this: If the holy spirit “was not yet given”... then how did ALL these people have access to it? How could Daniel and Joseph and others have it, David fear to lose it, prophets speak by it, Israel reject and vex it, IF IT WASN’T YET GIVEN?

Clearly there is a contradiction here. We have literally hundreds of verses that speak of the holy spirit of God being actively involved in the salvation of the righteous men in the Old Testament – **and remember the rule, many clear verses must be used to interpret one or two unclear verses.**

What spirit inspired the OT prophets? **1 Peter 1:10-12**. **Peter clearly told us the spirit of Christ was in those prophets!** And those prophets prophesied of grace! So obviously, the spirit of Christ was given in the OT – so what did John mean when he wrote “*for the spirit was not yet given*”?

## THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN JESUS’ LIFETIME

Ironically, the holy spirit is mentioned often in Jesus’ lifetime, even though “*it was not yet given*”. For example, how did Peter understand what he did? **Matthew 16:17**. Notice it was the FATHER – the FATHER’S spirit, not Jesus’ spirit – who revealed it to Peter.

Who inspired the disciples to speak before crowds and defend themselves before judges? **Matthew 10:20**. Did Jesus have the spirit of God? **Matthew 3:16**. Was He FULL of the holy spirit? **Luke 4:1**. How did Jesus cast out devils? **Matthew 12:28**. Who revealed truth to people in the time of Christ? **Luke 10:21**.

Throughout Jesus’ lifetime, there is not a single reference to the spirit of Christ doing ANYTHING. No miracle was wrought by the spirit of Christ. No understanding was revealed by it. Every time the “spirit of God” was mentioned in the gospels, it spoke of the spirit of the *Father*.

Why? Because Jesus' spirit was busy – **busy keeping His body alive!** His spirit is what made Him, Him; just as your spirit makes you, you. If your spirit were plucked from your body, what would happen to your body? **James 2:26**. So Jesus' spirit had to stay IN His body or He'd die!

Who gives man the holy spirit? **Luke 11:13**. [Note: Since the Father gives the spirit, it must be the Son's spirit which is the subject here]. So how did the Father get the Son's spirit, to enable Him to give it to us? **Luke 23:46**. Did the disciples know the holy spirit? **John 14:17**. Did He (the holy spirit) dwell with them? (Same verse). Did they have it in them? (Same verse).

This verse is SO simple, and SO informative, if you just read it for EXACTLY what it says! It says plainly **THEY ALREADY KNEW** this spirit. It says this spirit **LIVED AMONG THEM**, in the present tense! And it said this spirit **WILL** be in them!

Now they already had the spirit of the Father working in them; so this must be speaking of the spirit of Christ! And Jesus' spirit was **INSIDE HIM**, or He wouldn't have been alive! And since they knew Jesus, they knew His spirit, because, again, His spirit made Him who He was!

Remember, He was fully human, just like you or me. **He couldn't give us His spirit while He was alive, any more than I can give you my spirit.** All Jesus was saying is they knew Him; He lived *with* them; and He was going to live *IN* them *once His spirit was no longer needed to power His own physical, human body!* This is why Jesus made the statement that confuses so many in **John 16:7**.

Trinitarians are confused by that, because **WHY** was it necessary for Jesus to leave them before the comforter – the holy spirit – could come to them? Do Jesus and the holy spirit not get along? Why can't they be in the same place at once??

Easy – *because they're the same Being in two different forms – human and spirit!* He was with them as a man, but He was coming back to them as the holy spirit! **He couldn't be WITH them as a man and IN them as a spirit at the same time! Jesus had to DIE (leave them) so His spirit would be free to live IN them.** It was **FOR OUR GOOD** that He died, in order to give His spirit to His Father who in turn could give it to us!

This is why Jesus said in **John 16:16** after a time they wouldn't see Him, then they would see Him again; *because He was coming back to them as the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost!* Because in Joel, the God of the OT – Jesus – said, *"I will pour out MY spirit [the spirit of Jesus] upon all flesh"* (**Joel 2:28**), which Peter said was fulfilled in **Acts 2:16-18**.

Jesus knew we would be comfortless after He left; what was His solution for us? **John 14:18**. Jesus was not going to leave us comfortless, **HE** was going to come back to us! Read **verses 19-20**. They were going to see Him again – when **HE** was in them! This is very important; He wasn't going to send some third part of the Godhead back, **HE PERSONALLY WAS RETURNING TO US!**

Then read **verses 25-28**. Notice again that Jesus was going away, **AND COMING AGAIN** to them – **AS** the holy spirit! The holy spirit was to be sent **IN JESUS' NAME**, or **IN JESUS' PLACE**; a new comforter (**verse 16**). Since Jesus was no longer going to be with them as a man, He was going to live in them as a spirit!

What will this spirit of truth speak of, when it comes? **John 16:13**. What did Jesus speak about, when He was here? **John 8:28, 12:49, 14:10**. What will the comforter do? **John 16:14-15**. Just like in **John 15:26**, this comforter speaks of Jesus *because it is Jesus!*

This means that in the Old Testament, Jesus' spirit was in David; it was in Abraham; it was in the prophets who spoke for God, it was in Moses and Joshua and the judges; **and it was offered to all of Israel but they rejected it. (Isaiah 30:1, Isaiah 63:10-11).** And THAT'S why God said the gospel was preached to them just as it was preached to us! (**Hebrews 4:2**).

But when Jesus was born, it was necessary for Him to give up His existence as a God and become fully human; so the Father placed the spirit of Jesus in an egg in the womb of Mary and for the next 35 years or so Jesus' spirit was not available to mankind – Jesus was on Earth in person, and His spirit was no different from yours or mine, except that it managed to resist the temptation to sin.

The Father's spirit continued to be available, and it is what did the miracles. But at the time of the events in **John 7:39**, Jesus' spirit "had not yet been given" to mankind again. That's why the apostles were told they would "*be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence*" (**Acts 1:5**), about 10 days before Pentecost. It's why Peter was not yet converted (**Luke 22:32**), because it is impossible to be converted without the spirit of Christ (**1 Corinthians 2:9-16**).

This is the only explanation that makes 100% of the verses make sense. And that's the test of truth.

## NOT MIXED WITH FAITH

You read above that Israel rejected the gospel, but when exactly did they do it? Read **Hebrews 3:7-11**; notice what God offers "today if you will hear His voice". Did Israel hear His voice on Sinai? **Deuteronomy 5:22-24**. And did they want to continue hearing that voice? **Deuteronomy 5:25-27**. When God spoke to Israel *they were afraid of Him and begged to have Moses instead of God!*

Hebrews tells us that after seeing God's works for 40 years they *still didn't trust Him*. They STILL didn't "know His ways", **because they refused to "hear His voice". They chose Moses' voice instead!**

The rest of **Hebrews 3** underlines the idea they died in the wilderness *because they had the chance to trust God, had seen plenty of proof He was trustworthy, and had every reason to trust Him... but they wouldn't*. Why? **Hebrews 3:19**. What can we learn from this? **Hebrews 4:1-2**.

They didn't enter into the Promised Land because when they heard "the gospel which was preached to them", "it was not mixed with faith in them", and so they would not "hear His voice". So when did Israel hear this "gospel" preached to them? Hebrews gives us three clues;

1. It was the same gospel we've heard
2. They heard it from the voice of God
3. They rejected it by refusing to hear God's voice again

Now the only time all of Israel **EVER** heard the voice of God – in the entire 40 years of the Exodus – was when God spoke to them from Sinai. That ONE TIME! The giving of the Ten Commandments is the only possible time they could have heard this gospel!

## WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

From Lesson 11, you should remember the gospel of God is the good news about the Kingdom of God. It is the good news that GOD will rule the Earth in the future *and He will rule in your heart now if you let Him!*



The gospel is about surrendering your will to His, and acknowledging Him as “bishop of your souls” (**1 Peter 2:25**). It’s about allowing His spirit free access to your heart: and humbling yourself before His commands – specifically, His Ten Commandments.

God gave Abraham this gospel when He said “*I am your ... exceeding great reward*” (**Genesis 15:1**). And Abraham both obeyed (**Genesis 26:5**) and believed God (**Genesis 15:6**), which Paul says was faith and brought him grace (**Galatians 3:6**), and that grace brought him salvation (**Titus 2:11**).

Today, we obey the gospel *by following the exact same path*. We hear the truth, obey it, have faith, receive grace, and then salvation. But notice that it is only *after we believe that we receive the holy spirit of Christ!* (**Ephesians 1:13**). **To receive the spirit of God you must first trust God!**

And Israel was started on that same path at Sinai; they heard the truth from God’s own lips. **The gospel Israel heard was what God spoke to them on Sinai.** And they were willing to obey the letter of the law but demanded that Moses, not God, explain it to them!

So when they rejected 1-on-1 contact with God *they rejected the offer of the spirit of God*. And when they rejected the spirit of God, *they could no longer be given the covenant of faith*, which is a SPIRITUAL covenant!

## THE COVENANTS AT SINAI

Now let’s study that spiritual covenant God offered them at Sinai. In **Exodus 19:3-6**, God tells Moses that He is going to offer Israel a covenant, and tells them what He will do if they keep His covenant. In **verse 8**, Israel said they would – but notice, they hadn’t heard the terms of the covenant yet! **They foolishly accepted it sight-unseen!**

All they knew is that God said “obey me”, and they said “OK” – but they did not yet have any idea what obedience to God would entail! In **verse 17**, Moses took the people to meet God. This is very important! They MET God; up until now they had dealt with God only through Moses; God spoke to Moses, Moses spoke to Israel. But now Moses was introducing them so they could actually deal with God 1-on-1!

In **Exodus 20:1**, you see that GOD spoke these words. Moses did not speak the Ten Commandments to Israel, God did it personally. This is a key to understanding this lesson. God continued speaking until **verse 17**; then in **verses 18-19**, you see that Israel accepted the covenant... but not on the terms God offered it!

In this original covenant, God dealt with man directly, just as He does with you today. He gave them His spiritual law (**Romans 7:14**), but Israel rejected God and demanded a mediator – someone to run interference between them and God – they demanded Moses!

**The law of Moses was ISRAEL’S idea, NOT God’s! I cannot emphasize that enough. The PEOPLE chose that arrangement, after God offered Himself to them personally with no mediator!**

So in **Exodus 20:22**, you see that God accepted their request and spoke to Moses, telling him to relay God’s words to the people. In the next three chapters, God gave Moses the “judgments”; sample applications of the Ten Commandments to everyday life.

## BUT WHY DID ISRAEL REJECT GOD?

Israel had been obeying the commandments of Moses since they left Egypt. They had not known God except what Moses said about Him. But now Moses had taken them to God and introduced them *and Israel was terrified of God!* Why?

The answer is in the parable of the pounds, **Luke 19:11-27**. The summary is that Jesus gave ten servants one pound – let's say a hundred dollars to make it easy to understand. Some servants made a good profit while He was gone, but one didn't. Read why in **verses 20-21**.

These servants had all been trusted with an equal amount of money; most took the money, made good investments, and made a profit. But this one was afraid to invest it; why? The BBE says it was because "I was in fear of you, for you are a hard man", or as Rotherham puts it "a harsh man".

This guy believed God was hard; cruel; harsh. Just plain MEAN! He was afraid, not of God's punishments for sin – a wise fear – but of God's *unfairness!* The other servants knew that if they were taking care of God's pound as if it was their own, that if they lost it God would be disappointed *but would understand and forgive them*. But this guy was afraid of God's meanness; His unfairness; His cruelty. He was convinced God would be only too happy to execute him for accidentally losing a cent of His money!

So to make sure there was NO CHANCE of losing God's money, he didn't even trust a bank – he buried it in the backyard so he wouldn't lose it! Israel at Sinai did the exact same thing. They were afraid God was a "harsh God" who "reaped where He did not sow".

They believed He was sitting up there in heaven on the edge of His seat, eager for one of them to step out of line the tiniest bit so He could send a lightning bolt aimed at the seat of their pants! But God isn't like that – we know God is a merciful God, and slow to anger (**Psalms 103:8**). *But to believe that you must trust Him! And Israel didn't!*

Moses had taken himself out of the loop, but Israel was afraid of God's capriciousness so they put Moses right back in the loop! They chose Moses because they trusted him more than God! (**John 5:45**). They rejected the first covenant *because they were afraid God would kill them because they had no faith in God*.

Why did Paul say the gospel did not profit them? **Hebrews 4:2**. We both heard the SAME gospel. But when God told YOU that if you stopped sinning He would bless you, you must have said "OK!" or you wouldn't be here. You must have TRUSTED that God would bear with your mistakes, and overlook your sins **because your intentions were right**.

But when God told Israel to stop sinning they said "Ok, but don't talk to me again, send me Moses instead!" It wasn't mixed with FAITH in them! They were sure God was going to smite them with boils the first time they faltered in obedience! **Why did they feel this way?** Why didn't they trust that God would forgive them because their heart was in the right place? ***Because their heart WASN'T in the right place! Because in their heart, they didn't WANT to obey God!***

And they knew God would notice and punish them, because "*man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart*" (**1 Samuel 16:7**). **But they also knew that Moses couldn't see their heart, so they would only have to obey outwardly to satisfy Moses!**

Do you SEE how this ties back with Jesus' sermon in **Matthew 5**? Moses couldn't see their hearts! Moses couldn't enforce "thou shalt not look on a woman to lust after her"! God could have, because

God can see your heart! (**Psalms 44:20-21**). But Moses could ONLY enforce “thou shalt not commit adultery”, so **Israel chose a covenant with Moses as mediator instead of the spirit of Jesus Christ as mediator!**

Why? Because it required less obedience from them. It was much easier to obey the letter than the spirit! They could get away with more sin under Moses than under God, and that was what mattered most to them – getting away with their sins.

## WHY WERE THE JUDGMENTS NEEDED?

As you saw, in the beginning God intended to speak to Israel directly; so He gave ten basic principles by which they were to live their lives – the Ten Commandments. He then expected them, with His personal help – that is, with His spirit in them – to take the commandments and apply them to their lives as Abraham and David and others did.

That’s why in **Deuteronomy 5:22**, after retelling the story of receiving the law at Sinai, Moses said God “added no more” to these laws. **When God stopped speaking in Exodus 20:17, He added no more; that was the complete covenant He was offering! (Deuteronomy 4:12-13).**

God expected them to read “thou shalt not steal” and *with no other written laws*, to understand that kidnapping was ALSO **a form of stealing (Exodus 21:16)**; God expected them to understand that having a mean bull that you know is a danger to your neighbors is irresponsible; and if that bull kills someone, **it is a form of murder (Exodus 21:29)**. He expected them to take the commandments and MAGNIFY them, and APPLY them to their lives on every level.

And had they been willing to deal with God directly, God’s spirit would have interpreted the law for them, as it does for us, and applied it in all these situations. But when they rejected that covenant, God was forced to settle for the letter of the law.

But He knew the letter of the Ten Commandments could not possibly forbid all forms of harm, so He had to magnify the law on paper for them – not in their hearts, as He wished to do, but in a book. A very inefficient way of doing it, but the only way Israel would accept.

Since they refused to take the responsibility of interpreting the laws themselves, God allowed them to have Moses do it for them; so in **Exodus 21-24**, God gave Moses the “judgments”. These judgments were sample applications of the Ten Commandments. Moses then read them to the people in **Exodus 24:3-7**.

Then in **verse 8** he sealed the covenant – signed the contract – with an animal sacrifice. *There was no mention of animal sacrifices until after Israel rejected God’s first offer*, just as there is no animal sacrifice when you sign your covenant with God today by being baptized. After that first offer, God “added no more” until they rejected the first covenant. What did He do then? **Galatians 3:19**.

At the risk of repeating myself, **there was initially no animal blood shed at Sinai until AFTER they rejected God and demanded Moses as a mediator!** But after they rejected God and sinned, the animal sacrifices were initiated. In **Exodus 24:12-13**, Moses went to get the Ten Commandments; in **Exodus 31:18**, God gave Him the Ten Commandments; but notice who wrote them! God wrote these tablets *with his own finger*. But God didn’t write the law of Moses – the judgments and the sacrifices – *Moses did (Exodus 24:4)*.

## A COVENANT WITH WHOM?

God had never dealt with their parents directly. He had only dealt through Moses; but at Sinai (**Deuteronomy 5:4**), God talked with them FACE TO FACE, just like He talked to Moses! (**Exodus 33:11**). (He also talked to Jacob, Abraham, Abel and others that way, because they were under the same covenant).

So God offered Israel a covenant on those terms, where He would deal with Israel one-on-one. Now in that original covenant which God made with Israel, did He add anything else to it? Any sacrifices, washings, rituals of any kind? **Deuteronomy 5:22**. No! He spoke the Ten Commandments *and added no more!* Because with those laws – and direct contact with God – mankind needed no more details, he had everything he needed for salvation!

But ISRAEL added to that law; THEY modified the contract in **verses 23-27**. This made it a DIFFERENT contract – a DIFFERENT COVENANT! And God agreed to their new terms, BUT reluctantly! Read **verses 28-29**. God said they had spoken well BUT wished “there were such a heart in them”, a heart to “fear me, and keep all my commandments always”.

God knew this addendum was necessary *because they did not have that sort of a heart in them!* They did NOT have a heart to fear God and keep His commandments always, so He said “they spoke well” in requesting a physical covenant *because they didn’t have the heart for a spiritual covenant*.

So with whom did Israel make the “old covenant”? **Deuteronomy 29:1**. There is so much in that verse! First, God says they made this covenant with MOSES! At God’s command, and so ultimately the covenant was still with God, **but it was with God through Moses!**

Second, God makes it clear this is a DIFFERENT covenant than the one God made with them in Horeb (another name for Sinai). God plainly said there were TWO DIFFERENT COVENANTS that He made with Israel! All the verses you’ve read so far have indicated that, but here God point-blank says this covenant of Moses was a SEPARATE covenant from the one God made with them from Sinai.

I misled you slightly earlier when I said Israel rejected the covenant *because not everyone in Israel rejected it*. See **Hebrews 3:16**. Not ALL of them sinned. Who didn’t? **Numbers 32:11-12**. Only Caleb and Joshua entered the Promised Land; why? **Numbers 14:24**. Because only they *fully followed* God. What was the primary difference between them and the rest of Israel? **Numbers 13:30-31, Numbers 14:5-11**.

Caleb and Joshua trusted God. They BELIEVED God was able to help them defeat giants. They remembered all the signs God had done, and knew He both COULD and WOULD do it again! And for this, the rest of Israel tried to stone them!

And so unlike their brothers, Caleb and Joshua did *not* reject the covenant God made at Sinai. They accepted the covenant God spoke from Sinai, the covenant of faith! They believed God, and it was counted to them for righteousness! **And when they did that, they became what we would call New Covenant Christians!**

Everyone else didn’t trust God, and so they could only receive what we call the Old Covenant. A covenant they made with God THROUGH MOSES. A covenant for the faithless, a covenant that only required obedience to the letter of the law. You might say it was...

## THE BACKUP COVENANT

What was God's first offer to Israel? **Exodus 6:7**. When did God fulfill that offer? **Exodus 19:4-6**. When did God codify that offer? **Exodus 20:1-17**. What did Israel do to that offer? **Exodus 20:18-19**. How did they seek to please God instead? **Romans 9:32**.

What was His offer to Abraham? **Genesis 17:7**. What is His offer to you? **Revelation 21:3**. How is He dwelling with you today? **2 Corinthians 6:16**. What is His promise to the second resurrection people? **Jeremiah 31:31-34**. Notice particularly **verse 33** – that is the common thread through God's promises to everyone from Abraham to you; He will be a God to you, and you will be His people.

God wants to give you His spirit so you can become like Him; that is the only way He can build an incorruptibly righteous family. He wants to live in you, and have you deal with Him face-to-face like He did with Moses, or at the very least, spirit-to-spirit.

But God has a backup option: a covenant that doesn't require you to have faith or tolerate the spirit of God nit-picking at your thoughts. It requires only outward obedience to the letter of the law. It is a covenant, not of faith, but only of works. It is a much less demanding covenant, one much easier to obey.

But there are several drawbacks to this covenant. It requires only physical obedience *but can only provide physical blessings*. It requires no obedience to the spirit of the law as interpreted by God's spirit *but it also gives no spiritual blessings*. To learn all about it, we have to go back to the life of Abraham again.

## GENESIS 17 COVENANT

You've read about the covenant in **Genesis 15** which God made with Abraham; a covenant involving faith and obedience. And the rewards of that covenant were the spirit of God and eternal life.

But God knew that a man like Abraham was a rare find. And He knew there was no hope that all of Abraham's family would obey the spirit of the law as Abraham did, and love His law the way Abraham loved it. And yet God had bound Himself to bless Abraham's children forever (**Genesis 15:18**).

So God had to have a way for Abraham's children, who may not wish to accept the gospel – who may not want God in their hearts – to be able to have limited contact with God and receive at least some of the blessings God gave Abraham. So in **Genesis 17** this covenant was started. Read **verses 1-17** first.

You'll see that most of the same blessings were given as in **Genesis 15**, *with the notable exception of promises of the spirit of God*. He did not say "I am your exceeding great reward" in this covenant! You'll see that in **verse 4**, God said that He was already UNDER a covenant with Abraham; the covenant of **Genesis 15** was already binding, having been sealed 15 years earlier!

But now in **verse 7**, God makes ANOTHER covenant, on top of the first covenant; so that He could "*be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee*". God was already a God to Abraham under the terms of **Genesis 15**! But now God is making a covenant so He can be a God "to thy seed after thee"! This covenant was for Abraham's CHILDREN!

In **verses 8-10** God repeatedly states this covenant is primarily for Abraham's SEED – his CHILDREN, so they could inherit God's promises to Abraham. And as a token of this second covenant God made with Abraham, God commanded circumcision (**verse 11**).

Think of it like a wedding ring; a wedding ring is a token – symbol – of the covenant you made with your spouse. It is a constant reminder of your wedding vows. So also, circumcision is a symbol of the OC; to put it another way, circumcision is the signature on the dotted line of the contract between you and God.

What does circumcision bind you to do? **Galatians 5:3**. And what happens if you don't obey that covenant? **Deuteronomy 27:26**. If you obey that law, what will happen? **Galatians 3:12**. Being circumcised means you are bound to keep the whole law – what does that mean? **Galatians 3:10**.

Did God make the covenant with Abraham because of his works (circumcision), or his faith? **Romans 4:9-10, Galatians 3:18**. God made the **Genesis 15** covenant *before* the **Genesis 17** covenant; the **Genesis 15** covenant had no “works”, no circumcision, as a part of it. God made that covenant, not because Abraham was circumcised, but because he *“believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”*

Now read **Romans 4:13**. The REAL covenant – the first one God made with Abraham, the covenant of faith, the one that made him “heir to the world”, was not made because Abraham performed rituals like circumcision, *but simply because Abraham trusted God.*

## THE TWO COVENANTS

If you're paying attention, you've noticed these two covenants of Abraham **are the exact same two covenants from Mt. Sinai**. Caleb and Joshua believed God, and we can safely say their faith was counted to them for righteousness; they became “heir to the world”, and were allowed to enter the Promised Land.

Everyone else was bound up under a covenant of WORKS; the law was described to them, and they obeyed the letter only. But Caleb and Joshua had a different heart – a heart that WANTED to obey God. And so they automatically became a part of the BETTER covenant.

God prefers to deal with people under the spiritual covenant, the covenant of faith; because it makes people happier; it makes them more like Him, because they can truly understand His law. But if the people refuse to trust Him, He gives them a backup covenant; the covenant of works.

This backup covenant, also called the law of Moses, is the bare minimum God requires of humans to associate with Him at all. He cannot tolerate evil in His presence (**Habakkuk 1:13**), so to be around Him you must at the very least obey the law OUTWARDLY. He'll put up with you hating your brother around Him, **but He cannot allow you to kill your brother in His presence**. So you must, at the very least, obey the law as Moses defined it on paper.

Now the symbol of the covenant of Moses – called that, even though it obviously didn't originate with Moses (**John 7:22**) – was circumcision. But the new covenant also has a symbol – baptism. You probably remember from Lesson 19, but just add **Colossians 2:11** and **Romans 6:3-7** together for proof of that. But baptism is also a physical symbol of something much deeper; see **Romans 2:28-29**.

What God really wanted all along – the first covenant He made with Abraham, the first covenant He offered to Israel, and the covenant He has offered you – is for you to trust Him. Obey the Ten Commandments, allow His spirit to interpret them for you, and you will inherit the Earth and immortality and so on. Open up your heart to Him, and you can be the child of Abraham and be blessed with faithful Abraham (**Galatians 3:7-9**).

## SEMI-SUMMARY

What we have so far is a lot of information that all boils down to a few simple facts; God deals with man under two covenants; there are two levels of contact which He offers to mankind. These are called the OC and the NC. Those are the only offers available. To make a point-by-point comparison:

The OC...

1. Requires obedience only to the letter of the law
2. Is only an external covenant
3. Was written by Moses
4. Hears God only through Moses
5. Offers only physical blessings
6. Is sealed with circumcision
7. Is God's second choice
8. Will receive their reward in this life and in the second resurrection

The NC...

1. Requires obedience to the letter AND the spirit
2. Is an external AND internal covenant
3. Was written by God personally
4. Hears God's voice (the spirit of God)
5. Offers physical AND spiritual blessings
6. Is sealed with baptism
7. Is God's first choice
8. Will receive their reward in the first resurrection

I strongly recommend you review Lesson 3, page 9, section on "Two Laws", because I won't repeat everything that was said there, and it is very relevant to this subject. There you will see another list of differences between the two covenants.

## A COVENANT OF WORKS

Moses' covenant, the one Israel chose, was a covenant that only required works, no faith. Israel didn't have to obey the law of God in their hearts, only in their flesh. Their heart was free to do whatever evil things it wanted.

And when they sinned under this covenant, they didn't have to repent with their heart – just with their flesh. Depending on the sin or why they were unclean in God's eyes, they might have had to wash themselves, stay outside the camp, shave, or offer a sacrifice; something to remove the blame from them and put it on something or someone else.

Could you be forgiven without blood being shed? **Hebrews 9:22**. But could the blood shed under Moses (bulls and goats) make the people clean? **Hebrews 10:4**. Could the law of Moses make people perfect? **Hebrews 10:1-3**. When a sin is TRULY forgiven, is it gone forever? **Hebrews 10:18**.

Moses' covenant could purify your flesh from sins *but nothing else*. And animals had to be sacrificed on a bi-daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, seven-yearly, and fifty-yearly basis – in addition to holy days and personal sacrifices – to keep the people under that covenant clean in God's eyes.

Why? **Because that covenant addressed the symptom of the sin, not the cause!** The OC could forgive the sins of the flesh, **but it had to do it every year because they kept happening**. If the sins of

the heart are repented of and forgiven, then they only need forgiven once because **they are the real cause of all sins of the flesh!**

Now read **2 Corinthians 3:12-18**. It's hard to find a translation that does a really good job with **verse 13**, but Rotherham comes close when he says Moses wore a veil "*so that the sons of Israel should not look steadily unto the end of that which was to be done away.*"

As I said before, not all of Israel sinned and rejected God. Some few – two out of probably two million total Israelites, so literally one in a million – were able to look beyond Moses and see the truth. They were able to stare into the glory of what Moses gave them and see *it wasn't the ultimate goal of God*. They were able to look beyond what was to be done away **and see Christ behind it, and have faith in Him even though they started out under the OC!**

Even in the OT, what was a truly righteous man like? **Psalms 37:30-31**. What did Solomon tell his son to do with the law of God? **Proverbs 7:1-3**. Even in the OT, even with people who were circumcised and began their life under the law of Moses and the OC, there were a precious few who turned their hearts fully to God; and as **2 Corinthians 3:16** says, when that happened the veil was taken away and they could see the truth clearly, just as we can today.

## A COVENANT OF FAITH AND WORKS

What is the cause of sin? **Matthew 15:18-20**. Eating with unwashed hands isn't what made someone unclean! It was their HEART that made them unclean, because the HEART was the source of breaking the Ten Commandments.

What was the deficiency in the OC? **Hebrews 9:9-10**. What exactly could Moses' law clean? **Verse 13**. What couldn't it clean? **Verse 14**. Moses sprinkled bull's blood on what? **Verses 19-21**. And that cleansed ONLY the outside of their bodies!

For true conversion, for those under the covenant of faith, what must be sprinkled? **Hebrews 10:22**. And what must be washed? (Same verse). **We still need our bodies washed, just as they did – only we do it with baptism. But we ALSO must have our HEARTS, our CONSCIENCE, sprinkled with blood!**

If your body is unclean, you can offer an animal sacrifice to cleanse it; but that animal can't cleanse your heart. If your heart is unclean, you have to have a better sacrifice. What sort of sacrifice does God truly desire? **Psalms 51:16-17, Hosea 6:6**.

Your own repentance, changing your heart so it will not commit this sin again, is of far more value to God than all the sacrifices you could possibly offer. Because that addresses the real problem, killing some animal for your sins never can.

And once God sees that sacrifice you make in your heart, God will wash you with the blood of Christ and make your heart clean before Him once more. That's the NC. The OC never addressed the heart; it only addressed the body. But the heart was always the real problem.

In order to receive NC salvation, the heart must change; it must be rewritten with God's help into a copy of the spirit of God. That can't happen by the works of the law of Moses – it happens by repentance, and by faith, as it did with Abraham.

But remember, Abraham had TRUE faith in God; Abraham obeyed the commandments; otherwise he couldn't have had true faith. So in that sense, he had works. Read **James 2:18-26**. James speaks of



“works” here, not in the sense of the law of Moses as Paul usually does, but the works of the Ten Commandments.

James makes a statement that many Protestant theologians hate, saying of Abraham, “*his faith aided his works; and that by the works his faith was rendered complete*” (**James 2:22, Murdoch**). Philips translates it that his faith and his works were “partners”. Later, James says “*by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone*”. But this shouldn’t be shocking, for Paul himself said the same thing! **Romans 2:13**.

So it is not faith alone, but faith and works together! On the other hand, when Paul made statements such as in **Romans 3:28**, you’ll usually find a clear context that mentions either the law of Moses, or circumcision – **Romans 3:30**, in this case. The works Paul referred to were the works of MOSES’ LAW, that ISRAEL CHOSE, not what God originally offered from Sinai!

Today, we are under a covenant of works AND a covenant of faith. Not only must we believe God, but we also – as Abraham, David, and so many others were – are bound to keep the law of God, of which the Ten Commandments is only the briefest summary.

In the NC, our faith and works must be partnered TOGETHER, as James says, to make our faith perfect. Because God has “*created [us] in Christ Jesus unto good works*” (**Ephesians 2:10**). And... well, Paul says it best in **Acts 13:39**.

## ADAM AND EVE

You’ve studied the covenants at length now, so you should be able to recognize the terms of the covenant when you see them in your Bible. God only has two covenants – one, where He works with man personally, face to face or spirit to spirit... and one where He works through a mediator, whether it be Moses, a king, a judge or a prophet.

So read **Genesis 1:28-30, 2:15-25, 3:8-13**. What covenant would you say Adam was under at the time? Did God speak to Adam and Eve? Did they “hear His voice”? Did they obey Him at the time? Did they have sin to be ashamed of? In every sense, it looks like they were at first under the same covenant God offered Israel – the NC!

Adam and Eve trusted God; they had no reason not to do so! They surrendered to God the power to decide right and wrong for them – ***just as you must do, to inherit the promises of Abraham!*** You must acknowledge God as your King if you believe the gospel, because the gospel is about the Kingdom of God!

But in **Genesis 3:1-6**, they sinned; they chose to obey the devil instead of God. They rejected the rule of God and chose to obey the devil instead! In a sense, **the devil then became their mediator! Because now the devil stood between them and God!**

**The devil took the law of God “thou shalt not eat of that tree”, and interpreted for them!** He convinced them to take to themselves the power to decide good and evil, to determine right and wrong for themselves, with his help! It is because of this that God calls Satan “the god of this world” (**2 Corinthians 4:4**), because the world obeys him instead of the true God!

Just as Israel rejected God to choose Moses, so Adam and Eve rejected God to choose Satan. And since it was their free choice, God allowed it – but it wasn’t His plan. So as soon as they did that, God sacrificed animals (**Genesis 3:21**) to cover their sins ***exactly as He did for ancient Israel!***

So God had to expel Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, put them away from His presence because any future contact with God could only be, at best, under the “old” covenant! God sent an angel to block the way to Eden with a flaming sword and never again did God deal with Adam and Eve face-to-face.

But that’s not to say that Satan does the same job as Moses – far from it. Moses was the servant of God. Rejecting God to choose Moses was bad, but it wasn’t like rejecting God to choose the enemy of God. **Satan is the mediator of those who reject God completely. Moses is the mediator of those who reject God from their heart, but obey him with their body; Jesus is the mediator of those who do not reject God at all.**

It is only through Christ that man has been able to receive the NC since that day in Eden, and the damage Adam did in choosing Satan as his mediator will not be completely undone until God once again dwells with all men (**Revelation 21:1-4**). Only then, will there be no need for a mediator. At that day, even Jesus will no longer need to mediate between us and God (**1 Corinthians 15:24-28**).

## NEW COVENANT... OR REALLY OLD COVENANT?

Calling it the “new” covenant implies it was created after the “old” covenant, but that really isn’t the case. As you can see, the “new” covenant is God’s first, last, and favorite offer to mankind; the “old” covenant is God’s bare minimum requirement, His backup offer for those who simply refuse to obey Him from the heart.

From Paul’s perspective, it was “new”, because the OC had been the primary covenant in Israel for 1,500 years, but it really wasn’t a new covenant at all; in fact, the promise of the NC – that we will be like Him – is the sole reason God made Man in the first place.

Despite that, I will continue to follow Paul’s example of calling the covenant of works the OC, and the covenant of faith the NC.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION (finally!)

In **Jeremiah 31:31-33**, God sums up the difference between the covenants. Paul explains it a bit in **2 Corinthians 3:3**. Later, Paul expounds still more in **Hebrews 8:6-13**. That really sums it up best, so we’ll go through it slowly; **verse 6** says Jesus is the mediator of this better covenant, not Moses; also, this covenant has better promises – spiritual blessings (**Ephesians 1:3**).

In **Hebrews 8:7**, you see the first covenant wasn’t perfect – **how could it be, when it was Israel’s idea, not God’s?** But since it was based on God’s words, that covenant was still more than good enough, for even Paul admits “*he that doth those things shall live in them*” (**Galatians 3:12, Douay**). And plenty of people were able to “look beyond the veil” and see Christ through Moses.

In **Hebrews 8:8**, God says He found fault with “them”. Not with the covenant – but with THEM, the people with whom He made the covenant! **Verse 9** proves that. **Verse 10** describes the NC which God will once again offer to Israel in the second resurrection.

You see, that’s really the bottom line of all of this. Washings, sacrifices, faith, law, rituals, obedience – it’s all just fluff. What really matters – all that EVER mattered – was writing the law in your hearts. Which is just a way of saying your nature is patterned after the law of God, *and you would rather die than break it*. It means your instinct is to obey the law of God *in every possible way*.

Think of it this way; someone terrified of snakes or spiders would sooner die than touch one. It is so deeply ingrained in their nature it's actually a physical revulsion! And when the law of God is written on your heart, it would be far easier for that person to grab a spider than for you to sin!

And since the OC is a mere shadow of the NC, when the NC is observed by all, the OC will no longer have any place in the universe. **Hebrews 10:15-17** says it again. There are a thousand ways to express these covenants; one way is to say if you don't love anyone, you are Satan's child, and under his covenant – if any. If you love your neighbors and hate your enemies, you can be Moses' children, and under the covenant he made with Israel. But if you love even your enemies – then you can be God's children and under His covenant of faith (**Matthew 5:44-45**).

The OC is a contract between you and God where your body obeys God; in return, you get long life, peace, happiness. And it's a good covenant – it will bring people who obey it great happiness. But under the terms of the OC, God does not come into your heart, and His laws are not written there.

The downside is that you don't have direct access to Him. You know Him only secondhand, through an intermediary like Moses. This protects your heart from God's meddling and protects His throne room from your uncleanness.

The new covenant is not a *different* covenant, but *the very same covenant*; the only difference is it is applied INTERNALLY as well as externally. As a New Covenant Christian, you are bound to BOTH covenants; but because you are part of the new covenant, you are able to “see past” Moses' rituals, sacrifices and washings and have something better, something they could only dimly picture – faith in Christ.

So as I said in the beginning, the only things God did away with – or ever will do away with – are things God never wanted in the first place. God never wanted sacrifices – if He was hungry, He wouldn't ask you for food (**Psalms 50:12**). He never wanted silly rituals – all that was added because of the sin of Israel in rejecting God (**Galatians 3:19**).

What He wants from you is what He said in **Genesis 1:26**; that has never changed, and will never change. He wants you to look like Him, and act like Him. The OC can never make that happen. The only way it can happen is for you to write His laws in your heart with His Spirit. That's the only way you can take upon yourself the divine nature and find true happiness.

So now you understand, perhaps as fully as anyone ever has, the terms of the covenants; which one is the better deal?

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