



NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY

An Introduction and Overview



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CHAPEL ADULT BIBLE EDUCATION
Study - Student Guide

New Covenant Theology

An Introduction

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Thinking Biblically about Covenants

Genesis 8:20-9:17

The Bible's Many Themes

The Bible has many themes and analogies in it.

Covenant is one of the many themes/analogies in the Bible. Some of the others are kingdom, priest, tabernacle/temple, dwelling, blood, sacrifice, garden/city, etc

Christ is the central theme of the Bible. All of the Bible is ultimately about Him. All of the themes and analogies ultimately are fulfilled in Him.

The Bible's Promise-Fulfillment Structure

The Bible is written to show the unfolding of promise to fulfillment.

The Bible's Covenant Idea

Covenants are an important means by which God carries forward the promise-fulfillment structure. There are many covenants in the Bible: marriage covenants, treaties, covenants between people. *For our study, we will be looking only at the Covenants God has entered into.*

A Covenant is a recognized, formal agreement made between two parties binding one or both to promises sometimes entailing conditions on one or both with an accompanying sign uniquely connected to that covenant that is ratified by a sacrifice.

A Covenant is Recognized

The Bible declares when a covenant is to be treated as one. "And God made a covenant with..." is the common language.

A Covenant is Formal

A Covenant is an Agreement

A Covenant involves Promises

A Covenant may involve Requirements

If God does not require anything of the person or people, then the covenant is unconditional. God will simply fulfill the promise as God intends and as understood in relation to Christ.

If God requires the person or people to do something, then the covenant is a conditional one. Its fulfillment depends upon the obedience of the people. In essence, God promises not to give them the blessing if they do not keep their side of the covenant.

The person or people may be required to promise to do what God requires. If so, then God promises punishment and judgment if the people fail to keep their promise to God.

A Covenant has a Sign or Seal

Biblical Covenants all have a sign or a seal that is uniquely attached to that covenant.

A Covenant is Ratified by a Sacrifice.

Every covenant made by God is authenticated or ratified by a sacrifice.

A Covenant has a New Testament Fulfillment in Christ

All Old Covenants are fulfilled in Christ.

Centrality of Christ in the Covenants

Jesus is the full and final revelation from God. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Jesus is the culmination and the fulfillment of the Old Testament and the Covenants.

Luke 24:25-27

Luke 24:44 -49

John 5:37 -47

Interpreting the Scriptures

We teach a *promise-fulfillment hermeneutic*. The Old Covenant(s) are fulfilled in Christ who is also the sum and substance of the New Covenant.

Thinking it through...

The key to understanding the Bible is Jesus Christ. It is not Israel. It is not the church. The Bible is ultimately about Jesus.

The covenants are part of the way that God has revealed Himself to us. It is an important way, but not the only way.

The New Testament tells us what the Old Testament means. The Old Testament points us to Christ. The Old Testament Covenants then must be understood as the New Testament interprets them.

While some of this may be new to you, it is not hard. Once the Lord helps you to see it and to understand it, then you will be better able to handle the whole Bible.

All this must bring us to worship, love, believe and obey Jesus more.

The Noahic Covenant

Genesis 8:20-9:17

This is the Bible's first Covenant that is identified as a covenant. We have already discussed the issues surrounding whether there is a previous covenant with Adam and whether Genesis 3:15 constitutes a covenant. In the scriptures, this is the first clearly identified covenant.

Context:

Moses writing to Israel during the wilderness wandering

Giving them their identity: they are not pagans

Countering the pagan myths and religions around them

Relating the true history of what happened.

Noah's Pleasing Sacrifice (8:20)

The Lord's Inner Determination (8:21-22)

The Noahic Covenant (9:1-17)

This is a universal covenant under which all humans live

Its Law (v. 1-7)

There is a parallel structure

A - General precept to fill the earth with people (v. 1)

B - Protection for humans from animals (v. 2)

C- Permission to eat meat and plants (v. 3)

C' - Forbidden to eat blood (v. 4)

B' - Protection of human life from humans (v. 5-6)

A' - Personal precept to fill the earth with people (v. 7)

Its Promise (v. 8-11)

Recipients

All human and animal life. This covenant is a unilateral promise to all humanity.

Content

God will never again to destroy all life by water

Peter makes allusion to this in **2 Peter 3:1-13**

Its Sign (v. 12-17)

The Rainbow on Earth - Judgment is past...

It is a natural, existing physical reality...

It is assigned a special, spiritual meaning...

It is to comfort man...

It is to remind God (in human terms)...

The Rainbow in Heaven - Judgment is coming...

Over Christ on His Portable Throne (Ezekiel 1:26-28)

Over the Throne in Heaven (Revelation 4:1-3)

Around the Head of the "Mighty Angel" (Revelation 10:1-3)

Thinking it through

Be sure that your understanding of the covenants is directly from the text and Biblical. It is very easy to have a framework, a grid, a confession, a creed which governs how we understand the Bible.

There is grace and mercy in the midst of judgment for God will always deliver His people from His wrath.

When you see a rainbow in the sky, do you remember the promise of God? There is a double promise – the earth will never be judged by water again. But we await the fire of the final judgment. Where then is your refuge?

The rainbow around Jesus' head reminds us that it is in Him alone that we are promised safety from the wrath of God.

The Abrahamic Covenant

Genesis 15:1-21; 17:1-14

As Given in the Old Testament

The Covenant with Abraham has two major components. There is the promise of a people and a place.

The key texts:

Genesis 12:1-7, Genesis 13:14-17, Genesis 15:1-21, Genesis 17:1-27, Genesis 22:15-18

The Development of the Promises

Before the giving of the covenant itself, God had already made promises to Abraham that would become part of the formal covenant.

Genesis 12:1-7

Genesis 13:14-18

The Promise of Descendant(s) (Genesis 15:1-6)

A Child - Isaac (v. 4)

A Physical People - Jews (v. 5)

A Blessing to Others

Many Descendants

His Son - Jesus (Galatians 3:15-16)

Paul sees the singular here as also referring to Jesus Christ.

The Abrahamic Covenant reaches its fulfillment in Christ.

The Sacrifice of the Covenant (15:7-11, 17)

The Prophecy of the 400 years (15:12-17)

The Promise of a Land (Genesis 15:18-21; 17:1-14)

God also promised Abraham the land his offspring were going to live in in.

A Geographical Place to Offspring (15:18-21)

- Initial fulfillment in conquest
- Literal fulfillment under David and Solomon
- Future fulfillment is an enlarged vision

Connection to the Garden/Land motif - Paradise

- Garden of Eden
- Land of Canaan
- Jesus
- The Church
- New Heavens and New Earth

The Sign of the Covenant (Genesis 17:1–15)

Later, the Lord gives the sign of the covenant.

The Review of the Covenant (17:1-8)

The Requirement of the Covenant (17:8-14)

The Abrahamic covenant was *not* unconditional. There was a sign that actually was part of the covenant command itself.

Circumcision was required for anyone to be a part of the covenant itself. It was required of all male children and any man who was a non-Jew yet wanted to join with God's people. Circumcision was given a special significance for Abraham and the covenant people.

As Interpreted in the New Testament

The New Testament explains the fullness and the fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham.

Abrahamic Covenant - The Plan of Salvation is Revealed

Purpose of the Abrahamic Covenant

The Abrahamic Covenant reveals God's plan to save a people. His plan is physically pictured by his bringing the nation of Israel into existence and giving them the promised land. His plan is fulfilled by redeeming a people through Jesus Christ and causing them to dwell with him in heaven

Key Passage: Galatians 3:1-29

Remember: The old is interpreted through the lens of the new.

¹ O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. ² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ⁴ Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵ Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— ⁶ just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

⁷ Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” ⁹ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

¹⁵ To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. ¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ. ¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

¹⁹ Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. ²⁰ Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

²¹ Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. ²² But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

The Seeds of Abraham

Natural

Special Natural

Unique

Spiritual

The Physical Fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant

Seed - Isaac (Genesis 17:15-22)

Nation - Israel (Romans 9:1-5)

Land - Palestine (Acts 7:1-7)

The Spiritual Fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant

Seed - Christ, true seed (Galatians 3:16)

Nation - Church, true nation (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Land - salvation rest, heaven, true land (Hebrews 4:6-11)

His Spiritual Descendants - All Believers

Paul also recognizes that all Christians are the spiritual children of Abraham through Christ. So we participate in the fulfillment of this covenant by being *in Christ*.

Galatians 3:7-9

A Heavenly City to Spiritual Seed

What Abraham Understood (Hebrews 11:8-12)

⁸ By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

What the Apostles understood

Peter – 1 Peter 2:9–12

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Paul - Romans 4:13

¹³ For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶ That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

John - Revelation 21:1–8

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

Summary

Promise	Text	Fulfillment	Text
Son	Genesis 15:1-7	Jesus	Galatians 3:15-18
Land	Genesis 12:7; 15:8	World	Romans 4:13; Hebrews 11:10; 12:22
Inheritance		Spirit	Galatians 3:14

How do the apostles understand the “land” promise to Israel? Do they envision the Jewish people being restored to Jerusalem? One looks in vain for such teaching in the New Testament. In Romans 4:13, Paul says that Abraham was promised the *world*! The text reads, “For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world.” We should not brush this off, but should pause and ask what the Holy Spirit, through Paul, is teaching here. Paul is what we could call a *biblical theologian*. He interprets the Old Testament in light of Jesus. After his experience on the road to Damascus, nothing was the same for Paul. Now he reads Israel’s Scriptures in light of the cross and resurrection. He sees everything in the Old Testament as *prophetic*, that is, pointing forward to Jesus and the new covenant he inaugurated.

So now, when Paul thinks about the “land” promise, he looks both backward and forward. The promise of land given to Abraham is rooted in God’s original creation purposes. And,

God's original creation purpose pointed to God's eventual new creation purpose. The original creation pointed forward to the new creation. Eden pointed forward to what God would eventually do: the *New Eden*. Jerusalem pointed forward to the *New Jerusalem*. Paul viewed the land as a *type* that pointed forward to the new creation, the whole world! The author of Hebrews agrees. He says that Abraham "was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God" (Heb 11:10). He was looking for Mount Zion, "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb 12:22).

The Fulfillment of Circumcision (Colossians 2:8–15)

What does the New Testament do with circumcision?

The circumcision of the heart is the true fulfillment of the Old Testament.

Baptism is *not* the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

Thinking it through...

Abraham believed God's promise. Righteousness was put to Abraham's account *through* his faith, his believing God's promises.

There were great promises for God's people: a nation, an inheritance, a land and a special Son.

God has made great promises for His people through the descendant of Abraham. The Lord Jesus is the true son of Abraham. He is and brings all the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham.

There are great blessings for God's people, both the physical descendants and the spiritual sons and daughters.

The fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise is ever so greater than expected. There would be blessings for all the nations, a land that would be the new heavens and new earth and a son who would be the great Redeemer and Ruler of God's people.

Abraham's faith saw a son named Isaac and descendants as stars of the heavens and sands of the sea.

Abraham's faith obeyed God in marking out the land; but his faith saw a heavenly city. How can we do no less?

Abraham's faith believed God's promise in an obeying way. Through His faith, righteousness was put to his account.

"How beautiful are the feet those who bring the gospel, the good news." Why feet? Why not mouth? Because when we go with the gospel in obedience to the great commission, we are bringing forth the sons and daughters of God and everywhere that men and women believe, there is the beginning of the new heavens and new earth.

Notes

The Davidic Covenant

2 Samuel 7:12-16

The Giving of the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-16)

⁸ Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹ And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, ¹⁵ but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.' " ¹⁷ In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

The provisions of the Davidic covenant include, then, the following items:

David is to have a child, yet to be born, who shall succeed him and establish his kingdom.

This son (Solomon) shall build the temple instead of David.

The throne of his kingdom shall be established forever.

The throne will not be taken away from him (Solomon) even though his sins justify chastisement.

David's house, throne, and kingdom shall be established forever.

The covenant is confirmed to Solomon at his ascension to the throne.

Confirmed and Developed

Psalm 89

Psalm 45:6-9

Hebrews 1:8-9

The Fulfillment

Christ fulfills the Davidic Covenant. The evidence is clear from the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. For anyone accepting the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures, the testimony of the angel to Mary is conclusive: ([Luke 1:31-33](#)). The promise of David's throne, David's kingdom, and all that is involved is transferred by this prophecy to Jesus Christ, "The Son of David" ([Matt 1:1](#)). The line that began with David has its consummation and eternal fulfillment in Christ.

Luke 1:31-33

Matthew 1:1

When does Jesus fulfill the Davidic Covenant?

During His Earthly Ministry

Jesus began to teach and inaugurate the kingdom during His ministry here on earth. He is primarily seen as the Messiah, the King of the Jews.

Matthew 4:17

Matthew 13

All the parables of the kingdom...

Mark 11:7-11

Matthew 28:16-20

At the Resurrection (Acts 2:29-36)

Peter clearly is declaring that Jesus was raised from the dead, ascended into heaven is now seated on the throne of David fulfilling the promises made to David.

Through the Obedience of Faith

Through the obedience of faith, Jesus, the son of David, extends His Lordship over all the nations and peoples.

Romans 1:1-6

1 Timothy 1:16-17

In the Church

This rule and reign has begun through the church during this age.

Colossians 1:11-14

Colossians 4:11

1 Thessalonians 2:12

In the Future Kingdom

This is the continuation of Jesus' ascension into heaven and his ruling in heaven. He will rule and reign over the earth.

2 Timothy 4:1, 18

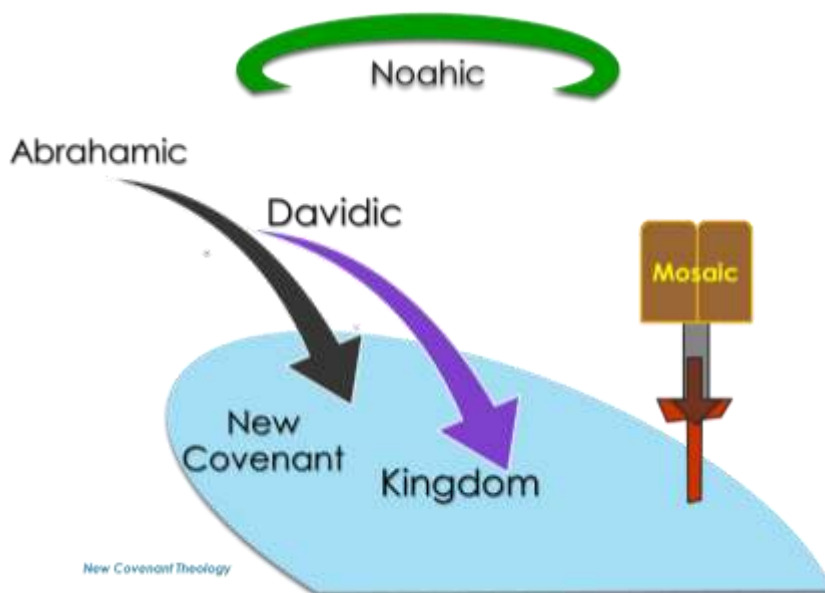
1 Thessalonians 2:12

In the Millennial Age (Revelation 20)

Some believe that this will not begin until a 1000-year reign on the earth after His second coming. This period is often referred to as the Millennium.

In Eternity

The Stream of the Covenants



Thinking it through...

Jesus is King - this all the Bible witnesses to and Christians agree with.

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Davidic promises.

We are living in the beginning of the eternal kingdom.

The kingdom and throne of David are forever.

Notes

The Mosaic Covenant

Our understanding of the Mosaic Covenant, commonly referred to as the Old Covenant, is a critical element of New Covenant Theology. At the heart of the difference with most other systems is our understanding of the giving, nature, fulfillment and relationship of the New Testament believer to the so called, Ten Commandments.

As Given in the Old Testament

The Giving of the Law (Exodus 19-24)

Covenant (Exodus 19)

Constitution (Exodus 20-23)

The Ten Words

The Civil Law

Confirmation (Exodus 24:1-8)

Communion (Exodus 24:9-16)

⁹ Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. ¹¹ And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

¹² The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." ¹³ So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. ¹⁴ And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. Whoever has a dispute, let him go to them."

Levitical System (Exodus 25 - 31)

God speaks the Levitical system to Moses

The Tabernacle

The Priests

The Sacrifices

The Festivals

The Skilled Craftsmen

The Highlight of the Sabbath as the sign of the Covenant (31:12-17)

¹² And the Lord said to Moses, ¹³ "You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, 'Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. ¹⁴ You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵ Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. ¹⁶ Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. ¹⁷ It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.' "

The Two Tablets written by God's Finger (v. 18)

¹⁸ And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

Corruption (Exodus 32)

The Law is Broken

Correction (Exodus 33-34)

The Threatening Word (v. 1-6)

God says, "Go but I will not go with you..."

¹ The Lord said to Moses, "Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your offspring I will give it.' ² I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ³ Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people."

⁴ When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. ⁵ For the Lord had said to Moses, "Say to the people of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.' " ⁶ Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward.

The Meeting Place (v. 7-11)

⁷ Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. ⁸ Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. ⁹ When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses. ¹⁰ And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door. ¹¹ Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

The Interceded Guarantee (v. 12-17)

¹² Moses said to the Lord, "See, you say to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' ¹³ Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." ¹⁴ And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." ¹⁵ And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. ¹⁶ For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?" ¹⁷ And the Lord said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."

The Hidden Glory (v. 18-23)

¹⁸ Moses said, "Please show me your glory." ¹⁹ And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." ²¹ And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, ²² and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

The Law has been broken so:

Covenantal Renewal (Exodus 34)

The Nature of the Law

The Purpose of the Law

¹⁹ Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. ²⁰ Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

*²¹ Is the law then **CONTRARY** to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. ²² But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.*

1 Timothy 1:3–11

³ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴ nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. ⁵ The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶ Certain persons, by swerving from

these, have wandered away into vain discussion,⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

⁸ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully,⁹ understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers,¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

Thinking it Through...

The Mosaic Law is one Law system. It is clearly interconnected. The Bible does identify the Ten Commandments and Tables of Stone, but never ever as separate from the whole. So, you can distinguish the Ten Commandments, the Levitical Code, the Civil Code, but even in the recording of them in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, they are deeply intertwined.

The Law demanded total and complete obedience. It promised death to those who disobeyed and life to those who did obey. Of course, no one but the Lord Jesus was able to keep the Law perfectly.

The Law provided for grace and mercy through the sacrificial system. Through a faith-offered sacrifice, the Old Testament person could have their sins covered and forgiven.

The Law was a national constitution that formed the nation of Israel. Without complete adherence to the Mosaic Law, there is no Biblically recognized nation of Israel. Just because Jews form together to create a nation, does not mean they are the people of God. They form a nation in rebellion against God, not in submission to God.

Do not misuse the Law. As we will see in our next session, the Law, has a very limited application to believers. We are not under law, we are under grace.

As Interpreted by the New Testament

One of the most difficult debates among Bible students going back to the times of the apostles is the question: what is the NT Christian's relationship to the Law? Is the NT Christian under the Ten Commandments?

The New Testament is very clear:

The debate *has always existed* in the church:

It was a major issue in the church at Jerusalem. There was a group/sect in the church at Jerusalem led by the Apostle James who sent people to many of the Gentile churches to try to get believers to live under the Jewish Law (Judaizers).

Paul had to deal with it in the church in Corinth, Galatia, Colossae and Rome.

The whole book of Hebrews is a long call to the church to see the superiority of Christ and the New Covenant. It is also a warning about not returning to Judaism/the Law/the Old Covenant.

The reason the debate has always existed:

The Law has been fulfilled by Jesus (Matthew 5:17–20)

¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Past Purpose of the Law (Galatians 3:10–4:7)

We are not justified because of keeping the Law. (v. 10-14)

¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

The Law does not nullify the promise of the Spirit (v. 15-18)

¹⁵ To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. ¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. ¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

The Law was added because of sin until Jesus came (v. 19-20)

¹⁹ Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. ²⁰ Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one.

The Law cannot give life which was our fundamental need (v. 21-22)

²¹ Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. ²² But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

The Law served as a guardian and teacher until faith came (v. 23-29)

²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as

were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Now we are no longer under the Law because we have received the promised Spirit (4:1-7)

¹ I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, ² but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. ³ In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. ⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

The Present Purpose of the Law (1 Timothy 1:3-11)

The Problem: *They were teaching believers to be under the Law (v. 3-7)*

*³ As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, ⁴ nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith. ⁵ The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. ⁶ Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, ⁷ **desiring to be teachers of the law,** without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.*

The Solution: *The Law is not for believers but for unbelievers (v. 8-11)*

⁸ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

The Law includes the Ten Commandments written on stone tablets. (2 Corinthians 3:1-18)

Not with ink, but with the Spirit

Not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of the heart. (v. 1-3)

¹ Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? ² You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. ³ And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Not of the letter which kills, but of the Spirit who gives life. (v. 4-6)

⁴ Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

A lesser glory because it came to an END

A greater glory because it is permanent. (v. 7-11)

⁷ Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? ⁹ For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. ¹⁰ Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. ¹¹ For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

**Not the restriction of the Law which cannot transform.
But the freedom of the Spirit who transforms us as we behold Christ (v. 12-18)**

¹² Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, ¹³ not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. ¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

We have died to the Law through union with Christ Romans 7:1–8:8

The Illustration: laws are binding only on the living (v. 1-3)

¹ Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? ² For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. ³ Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

We are released from the Law to serve in the new way of the Spirit. (v. 4-6)

⁴ Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. ⁵ For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶ But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

The real problem is the limitation of the Law and the problem of sin (v. 7-12)

⁷ What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” ⁸ But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. ⁹ I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. ¹⁰ The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. ¹¹ For sin, seizing an

opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. ¹² So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

If we try to live by Law, we set up an impossible struggle. (v. 13-20)

¹³ Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. ¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. ¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

We cannot live by Law because it cannot resolve the tension between the law of sin in our flesh and the law of God in our minds. (v. 21-25)

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law [legislation] of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another [kind of] law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

What the Law cannot do, Jesus through the Spirit does (8:1-8)

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Thinking it Through...

The Law has accomplished all it was intended to.

The Law has been fulfilled.

The Law is not for believers, but for unbelievers.

The Law has been brought to an end for believers.

Believers are not under the Law. We have died to the Law. We have been released from the Law. We have been moved from the realm where law (as legislation) rules to the realm of the Spirit where we are under grace and the law of Christ as life.

The Law includes the Ten Commandments, the Civil Code and the Levitical System. You cannot separate them. Period.

We have been given the life, the Word, the Spirit - what more could we want?

Brothers and sisters. Do not go back under the bondage of the Law or law king od living. Live in the freedom of the Spirit.

Live holy lives under the Law of Christ, the principles and precepts of the New Testament.

Notes

The New Covenant

Promise and Perfection

The Promise of the New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31-34

Open your Bibles to Hebrews 8:6-13. Here is the fulfillment of promise we study today.

But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. ⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.

⁸ For he finds fault with them when he says: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ⁹ like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. ¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹¹ And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹² For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

¹³ In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

And now, our text that the author of Hebrews was quoting:

³¹ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Its Declaration

(v.31)

The Lord declares His intention to enter into a New Covenant.

It is Future

It is New

It is Unconditional

It is Royal

Its Difference

(v.32)

³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.

Not a National Deliverance

Not a Breakable Covenant

Not a Disregarded Relationship

Its Details

(v.33-34)

God describes some foundational details of the New Covenant. This is not an exhaustive list of its features, provisions and blessings. But it is critical in announcing the New Covenant for this is the essence of its newness.

.³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD.

Transforms the Heart

Guarantees the Relationship

Secures the People

Its Design

(v.34b)

The New Covenant grounded in its marvelous design to effectively deal with our sins.

For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more

In Forgiveness

In Forgetfulness

God's forgiveness and forgetfulness leave a pattern for New Covenant people.

The Person of the New Covenant

So how does the New Covenant unfold?

First, it is inaugurated by the Lord Jesus Christ at the last Passover and Lord's Table.

Luke 22:14-20

¹⁴ And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant since He has died and raised again and so that we will receive the inheritance promised us. Consider Hebrews 9:15.

¹⁵ Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant."

The New Covenant was in-force so that the old covenant was obsolete and ready to vanish. And remember Hebrews 8:13.

¹³ In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away."

A ministry that gives freedom from the slavery of the old (v.17-18)

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

A ministry that is exercised with godly integrity (4:1-6)

¹ Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. ² But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Conduct of our Ministry (v.2)

² But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

There will be *no deception* in life and ministry.

There will be *no distortion* of truth in ministry.

In contrast, there will be *a full and complete disclosure* of truth that commends itself to in others conscience and before the face of God.

Why do these things become a temptation to us? Because of...

The Challenge in our Ministry

(v.3-4)

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

One of the great struggles in each sphere of the church's purpose is that people don't get it.

We must understand that the god of this world, Satan, is actively blinding unbelievers so that they cannot see the light.

And what a gospel it is that we have to proclaim. It is "the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (v.4b).

So how do these truths affect Paul's understanding of ministry? It shapes...

The Concepts for our Ministry

(v.5-6)

⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

I see two powerfully important ideas that are central to not losing heart in the glorious ministry of the gospel to a blinded and dead world.

There is the centrality of *the supremacy of Christ* (v.5).

There is the centrality of *the sovereignty of God* (v.6).

So here it is. The glory is great. The blindness is perverse and pervasive. But Jesus is supreme and God is sovereign and the good news is glorious.

Thinking It Through...

That we come to God through the New Covenant is a great delight. But it is also a solemn and serious responsibility. In closing, listen to Hebrews 12:18-25.

¹⁸ For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest ¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. ²⁰ For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." ²¹ Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear." ²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

²⁵ See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.

Rejoice in our great privileges in the New Covenant as we unfold them in our studies of God's Word and in future sermons and series.

Live in the person and power of the Spirit who indwells us because of the inward writing of the Word on our hearts in the New Covenant.

Minister in the confidence and competency granted by the Spirit's work through us as servants in the New Covenant.

With solemn joy, come to Mt. Zion in all the glorious array there. But take heed to hear Him who is speaking. His voice is your life.

How does my understanding of this text affect my worship and my walk?

Your thoughts...

Your struggles...

Your questions...

Your changes...

A Brief Summary of New Covenant Theology

By Russ Kennedy

I am a New Covenant theologian committed to a grammatical, literary, redemptive historical method of interpretation. I believe that the Old Testament is to be read and understood in the light of the New. The death, resurrection and ascension of Christ and His exaltation as King over all are New Testament controls on our understanding of the Old Testament. I do not believe in a future blessing for the nation of Israel – I believe the Bible teaches that the promises to Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and Solomon are fulfilled in Christ. Every person, Jew and Gentile, who is placed into Christ, receives the fulfillment of those promises as ultimately intended. God has established His kingdom in heaven and in the future. The glories of the future kingdom age, primarily spoken of as eternal life and the new creation, have broken into this age through the incarnation, resurrection and regeneration. The kingdom is expanding through the preaching of the gospel, the granting of eternal life through the Spirit in the new birth with the gifts of faith and repentance. At the end of days, there will be a great falling away accompanied by a final intrusion of the powers of darkness and Satan into this age through a Satan incarnating messianic figure who will attempt to rule the world. The Lord Himself will return from the heavens, reward His saints, crush His enemies, judge the unbelieving living and the dead casting them into hell. Just as the world was destroyed by water in Noah's day, the present world will be destroyed by fire with the new heavens and earth emerging when the final regeneration and glorification take place by the Word and Spirit filling all the universe with life eternal, and thus, righteousness.

What was Given and What has Come - John 1:17

Notice what John has done. By leaving out the 'but' John makes his point even stronger: 'The law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ'. Leaving out the 'but' actually lays more stress on the grace, and emphasizes the contrast between that and law. It lays more stress on the came, and emphasizes the contrast between that and the given. It lays more stress on Jesus Christ, and emphasizes the contrast between him and Moses:

The *law* was **given** through **Moses**

Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ

What is more, from John 1:17 we learn that whereas the law was given through Moses, Christ brought grace. Note the passive/active contrast. Note the contrast between given and brought. Above all, it is not simply that Moses received one thing, and Christ brought something else. Both Moses and Christ are associated with covenants, but the difference between their covenants is vast. Moses was given the law; Christ brought grace. Moses was given God's law; Christ brought his own grace. Moses was given the old covenant; Christ brought the new. Moses' covenant was written on stone; Christ's is written in the heart. It is not just that Christ gives his people the gospel, and Moses gave the Jews the law. Christ gives his people grace, he gives his people a heart to love his gospel, but Moses could offer no power to keep the law. This contrast of covenants is a major aspect of the debate on the believer, the law and sanctification.

David Gay, adapted

New Covenant Theology Distinctives

An Overview of Core Principles

New Covenant Theology has several core principles that distinguish its understanding of the structure of the Scriptures, the redemptive purposes of God and the relationship between the New and Old Testaments.

Seven NCT Essentials

New Covenant Theology (hereafter NCT) is a biblical-theological system that strives to use biblical language when possible, takes the progressive nature of revelation seriously, and sees the new covenant as the goal and climax of the previous biblical covenants. Here are seven essential points which define New Covenant Theology. The next section expands and explains New Covenant theology, though there may be some disagreement over different aspects and nuances.

There is one plan of God centered in Jesus Christ redeeming and ruling over His chosen people.

The Old Testament should be interpreted in light of the New Testament with special respect being given to the apostles use and interpretation of the Old Testament.

The Old Covenant, that is, the Mosaic Covenant or the Law, was temporary by divine design, promising, portraying and picturing the person and work of the Lord Jesus and the church.

The Mosaic Covenant, the Law, is an indivisible unit made of three distinguishable parts which were given together and came to an end together in the death resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Christians are not under the Law of Moses inclusive of the Ten Commandments but rather are under grace and subject to commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles.

All members of the New Covenant community, the body of Christ, have the Holy Spirit who has given them life, united them to Christ, given them a new heart, indwells in them, enables their obedience and gives them spiritual abilities to serve the Lord and His church.

Both Israel and the church were grafted into Christ who is the true vine, yet Israel stands to the church as promise to fulfillment, type to antitype, shadow to substance, prototype to reality. Thus New Covenant Theology asserts that the church is the eschatological Israel, not by replacing it, superseding it but by reaching the fullness of the people of God.

New Covenant theology rejects the superstructure of Reformed or Covenant theology in its formulation of an overarching covenant of works and covenant of grace; that the covenants in the Scriptures are simply administrations of the Covenant of Grace.

New Covenant Theology rejects the bi-fold redemptive purposes of Dispensationalism in its assertion that there are separate but overlapping purposes for Israel and the church which is derived from a failure to accept that the final word on the meaning of the Old Testament promises is in the New Testament's interpretation of them.

Expanded NCT Distinctives

As with any and all work like this, this is not our own, unique work. The original source is from *Christ My Covenant* by Chad Bresson, which he published which he drafted over time to answer questions put to him about New Covenant Theology. It is not simply a reflection of his thought, but others...especially those in the Earth Stove Society. We are also indebted to Gary Long, who drafted his own set of NCT tenets some time ago. This is an expansion and adaptation of the work done by each of these brothers.

Some of this is repetitive due to being asked questions from many different perspectives and angles.

General

1. New Covenant Theology insists on the priority of Jesus Christ over all things, including history, revelation, and redemption. New Covenant Theology asserts that the understanding and meaning of all reality is centered in Christ.
2. Christ in heaven has not only reached the goal of history and its reality, He Himself is the goal of history and reality, giving meaning to all that has occurred in human history and will occur in human history. Since it is Christ who gives meaning to human history, He is the One who interprets all of the deeds and acts of God in history.
3. Special revelation, comprised of the books that we call the Scriptures, not only informs us about God, but redeems us and makes God present to us, focusing on the person and work of Jesus.
4. New Covenant Theology interprets Scripture in the manner that Christ and the New Testament writers do, particularly in their use and understanding of the Old Testament. Jesus and the inspired New Testament writers, by their use of the Old Testament Scriptures, have left us a pattern by which to interpret not only the Old Testament prophecies, but its history, law and poetry.
5. The way that Jesus, the Apostles, and the prophets used the Old Testament is normative for this age.
6. The entire Old Testament, the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, point forward to and anticipate the WORD Incarnate, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). New Covenant Theology presumes that Jesus Christ, in his person and his saving acts, is the hermeneutic center of the Bible.

7. A careful study of the way Jesus and the New Testament writers understand and write about the Old Testament shows that the Old Testament's anticipated Messiah (and His work) is revealed in the types and shadows of the revelation of the Old Testament, both in God's speech-revelation and God's acts. The Old Testament provides the salvation context for the person and work of Jesus.
8. The Old Testament scriptures are to be interpreted in the light of their new covenant fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Jesus is not only the interpretive key to understanding the Old Testament, the terminology of the Old Testament must be understood through and defined in light of Christ's fulfillment.
9. The two testaments proclaim the same Christocentric message, but from differing standpoints.
10. New Covenant Theology is based upon a redemptive-historical approach to interpreting the Bible, understanding the fulfillment of all of God's promises in Jesus Christ as they are progressively unfolding from Genesis to Revelation.
11. The pinnacle of God's unfolding revelation comes to us in the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ himself, by the New Testament Scriptures.
12. New Covenant Theology presumes that the "already/now - not yet" principle of interpretation is essential to understand the teaching of the New Testament.
13. The organic historical connection, and the Christocentric unity that exists between the Old and New Covenants, guarantees the usefulness of the Old Testament for the church.
14. In the term *New Covenant Theology* we declare that God, for his own delight, has revealed Himself and manifested His glory ultimately in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His complete and perfect work on the Cross through which he has established the New Covenant in His blood. (Hebrews 7:22; 8:6; 9:11; 10:14)
15. The New Covenant documents, interpretive of and informed by the Old Covenant documents, are binding for the new people of God until the end of this age.

Covenants

1. God's redemption of His people is revealed and administered through the unfolding of biblical covenants in the flow of redemptive history.
2. God's promise of the New Covenant was that the Messiah would be Himself the embodiment of an everlasting covenant with His people. This promise, typified in the covenants, is fulfilled in Christ. (Isaiah 42:6-9; 45:21-25; 46:9-13).
3. The Old and New Covenants are two different covenants in terms of both form and function. The one is an administration of death, and the other is an administration of life (2 Corinthians 3:6-8).
4. The New Covenant is distinct from previous covenants in the Old Testament. The New Covenant is a new covenant in its own right. It is new in time and it is new in quality. The New Covenant is not the Abrahamic Covenant nor is it a recapitulation of the Abrahamic Covenant.

5. The New Covenant is not a new administration, a new expression, a new version of the Mosaic Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant had types and foreshadows in it of Christ, His person, priesthood, mediation and sacrifice.
6. Christ has fulfilled the Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants in his life, death, resurrection, and exaltation. While He has completely fulfilled them, they yet will be consummated in Him and thus in the church in the New Heavens and New Earth.
7. The New Covenant is not like the covenant made with the people through Moses. Embodied and personified in Christ, the New Covenant brought into existence through the life and cross work of Christ is made with His redeemed people through grace. God's people do not enter the New Covenant by works, but by grace through faith; it is radically internal, not external; everlasting, not temporary.
8. The tearing in two of the veil in the temple was a decisive, supernatural act that visibly demonstrated the end of the Old Covenant, that is, the Mosaic Covenant and the establishment of the New. This end of the Old Covenant was consummated in the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple.
9. As the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises of a New Covenant, Jesus Christ personifies, embodies, and incarnates the New Covenant. Thus, the New Covenant is in His Blood, that is, in His person and work. (Isaiah 42:6, 49:8, Luke 22:20).
10. All of Scripture is to be read, understood, and interpreted in light of the New Covenant, established in Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:17; Luke 10:23-24; 24:27, 44; John 5:46; 8:56; Hebrews 10:7). The New Covenant has become the interpretive paradigm for understanding the church's existence in temporal and redemptive history.
11. A biblical theology of the New Covenant recognizes that God's purpose was being unfolded and wove its way from Genesis to Revelation on the timeline of redemptive history, culminating in Jesus Christ.
12. Christ's inauguration of the New Covenant brings in things that are both qualitatively and historically "newer," expressed in developing the theological significance of such basic concepts as new wineskins, new teaching, new commandment, new creation, new man, new name, new song, new Jerusalem and all things new (Revelation 21:5).

The Law

1. The Law of Moses as a unit and in its totality was connected to a particular covenant people. It was codified after a specific act of national redemption, the Exodus.
2. In the ultimate purpose of God, this Mosaic economy was *temporary*, destined to exist "until the time of reformation" (Hebrews 9:10) when God would speak in a final way in His Son in the last days (Hebrews 1:1-2).
3. The history, covenants and the Law was of a *typical* nature, and was fulfilled in the person and work of Christ (Hebrews 3:5; 8:5; 9:8-9) who is the New Israel of God (Matthew 2:15).
4. The Ten Commandments are **not** an eternal moral law first written in the heart of man at creation and forever binding upon all mankind.

5. The Ten Commandments are not "transcovenantal"; that is, they do not exist as the common thread, the common moral basis, across all the covenants.
6. The church no longer has to do with the law in any other way than in Christ. The Old Covenant law, including the Decalogue, has been completely fulfilled in Jesus Christ which it typified (foreshadowed) in shadow and stone.
7. New Covenant believers are under grace through their union with Christ, and in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; they are not under the Old Covenant Law of Moses.
8. Because the Old Covenant law, including the Decalogue, has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, New Covenant Theology denies that the Old Covenant Law, including the Decalogue, is binding on New Covenant believers as a rule of life. Yet, as the special revelation of God as fulfilled in Christ, the Old Covenant Law, including the Decalogue, primarily functions as wisdom in the New Covenant.
9. All behavioral norms, including those detailed in the Decalogue, are ultimately defined by and expressed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. God's Old Covenant Law is fulfilled in Christ Himself
10. Just as the law cannot justify, the law cannot sanctify. Just as it is impossible to be justified by the law, one cannot be sanctified by the law. The background problem being addressed by Paul in different churches in 2 Corinthians 3, Galatians 3-5, and Romans 7 was the attempt to be sanctified by the law.
11. NCT does not teach that the Ten Commandments are the objective standard for evaluating the Christian life. Christ is now the objective standard by which all holiness in the Christian life is measured.
12. Regeneration does not change the inability of the law to transform. "Walking" in or by the law is the antithesis of "walking" in or by the Spirit (Galatians 5).
13. The New Covenant commandments of Christ and the Apostles, which may be referred to by the phrase "the law of Christ", are distinguished -- both in substance and in form -- from the Mosaic law.
14. New Covenant Theology insists that reference to the law of Christ is not a reference to the Decalogue, nor, is the law of Christ to be equated with that work of the law which was on the heart of Adam and all natural men.
15. The Old Covenant Sabbath commandment is typologically fulfilled by Christ for the people of God who rest in Him by faith (Romans 14:5; Colossians 2:16,17; Hebrews 4:9-10). New Covenant Theology denies that Sunday is a Christian Sabbath after the manner of the Old Covenant.
16. Christ has incarnated the new standard of holiness defining what from the Old Testament, including the Mosaic Covenant has abiding validity without placing the New Covenant people of God under the Mosaic Law (Colossians 2:17). The Holy Spirit is the indwelling holiness and representative of Christ, causing New Covenant members to obey Christ in conformity to His image.

17. God also promised that each New Covenant member would have His law written on their hearts. This promise is fulfilled by the Holy Spirit who dwells in believers to guide their steps and conform them to Christ.
18. Just as the Old Covenant community was structured by written revelation which centered in Moses, so the New Covenant community is ordered by the written revelation as personified and incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ, applied by the Holy Spirit, and given in the writing of the Apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20).
19. New Covenant Theology emphasizes that the indwelling Holy Spirit, the law written on the heart, is the norm for Christian living. The Holy Spirit both causes (Ezekiel 36:27) and enables the Christian to be conformed to and transformed into Christ's image, Who is the Imago Dei, the perfect image of God.
20. For the New Covenant believer, the law of God is no longer an external standard that demands compliance with the will of God. The indwelling Spirit is now an internal person who causes and inclines us to obey God's commandments from the heart.
21. The progression of history to a final New Covenant guarantees that the "law of Christ" in the commandments of Christ and His Apostles are sufficient for the church.

The Church

1. The dominion of Christ over His Kingdom (the church, Matthew 16:19, 18:17,18), typified and foreshadowed in Israel's Old Testament theocracy, has been inaugurated in the New Covenant, is expressed in the New Testament, and is effectively carried out in the life of the local assembly, the visible New Covenant church.
2. The visible and local New Covenant church is the primary means by which the invisible church is expressed and manifested in the New Covenant.
3. The church on earth is located in the local church. New Covenant Theology recognizes that Christ exercises his Lordship in and through the local church.
4. The New Covenant church is a local, visible colony of the universal gathering in heaven. The universal gathering of God's redeemed people has begun on earth in the form and expression of the local church. Thus by intent and design, the local church as a gathering of New Covenant people who participate in faith, mirrors the universal gathering of the redeemed.
5. It is through the New Covenant church that God's wisdom for the ages and his purposes throughout revelation and history -- having been fulfilled in Jesus -- are most visibly expressed.
6. New Covenant Theology asserts that the Church, which is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18), first came into visible existence in history when the Spirit descended and was poured out at Pentecost, not in past history under the Old Covenant. There is only one redemptive purpose for the people of God, which is the church, grafted into the true olive tree, Christ (Romans 11), who is the body of Christ (Ephesians 2:13-22; 3:1-12), the visible expression of which is the local church.

Israel

1. The New Covenant is now in force and finds its fulfillment in Jesus, who is the antitype or fulfillment of Israel.
2. New Covenant Theology sees, in the church, the consummation of promises that, in their Old Testament context, seem to be addressed to Israel as a nation.
3. New Covenant Theology denies that there is a one to one correlation between Israel and the New Covenant church. Israel was not the church in the Old Covenant. The nation of Israel was made up of a mix of those who had faith and those who did not.
4. Under the Old Covenant, Israel was the people of God. Under the New Covenant, the church is the people of God.
5. In the Old Covenant, Israel was a type of Jesus. Israel typified the New Israel and His redeemed new covenant people of God. That which was true of Israel, in type, is now true of Jesus as the Federal Head of his people and God's new covenant people in fulfillment. Thus, the supreme covenantal formula promised to Israel is now true of the church: Yahweh is our God, and we are His people.

Thinking it Through...

What are your challenges in your thinking?

How will you try to grow in your understanding of NCT?

What practical changes does this make in your use of God's Word?

