

## Impact of the New Covenant on the Old Session 2

**Teacher's Note:** This written lesson has the same information as the mp3 version, but in a different order.

**Review:** Last week we began a new series on NCT.

ESV **John 1:17** ... the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

What's new about the New Testament is that it is the difference between law and grace, between Moses and Jesus.

**Which is the higher revelation: The Law of Moses or the life and teaching of Jesus Christ?** In NCT the starting point for ethics is with Jesus, not Moses, with the Law of Christ, not the Law of Moses.

**What is NCT?** It is so named because of its emphasis on the New Covenant as the pinnacle (the zenith) of God's redemptive activity, the culmination of redemptive history.

**From Prophecy to Fulfillment;** NCT says it is so new it is like the difference between night and day, between shadow and blazing sunlight, between sign and substance, between prophecy and fulfillment.

**From Law of Moses to Law of Christ:** It is so named because NCT strongly emphasizes the New Covenant (as opposed to the Old) and the Law of Christ (as opposed to the Law of Moses).

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### The Old Testament

**What does the archaic English word "testament" mean (as in "Old Testament")?** It fundamentally refers a more or less one-sided covenant, contract or treaty. One example would be someone's "last will and testament" (such a document reflects one person's will).

**Appomattox**—Another example would be a treaty between a very powerful nation and a much weaker nation. General Lee signed a peace treaty at Appomattox Courthouse but the surrender was rather one sided. It was quipped that General U.S. Grant's initials stood for Unconditional Surrender.

**Clarification:** There are a number of different contracts/covenants/treaties/testaments recorded in the Bible between Jehovah God and various people (more than just the old one and the new one): Noah, Abraham, the New Covenant. Today we are going to study the covenant that constitutes “the” old testament: the covenant between Jehovah God and the nation of Israel. Our purpose in study is to contrast it with the New Testament.

God’s covenant with Israel was to the nation of Israel as the Constitution is to the United States. It was a legal document, the “law of the land.” These laws are recorded throughout Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The whole rest of the Hebrews Scriptures are built on this foundation of the Law of Moses, the treaty called the Old Testament.

**Background:** The children of Israel had been enslaved in Egypt 400 years. God rescued them by sending Moses to tell Pharaoh to let them go. Pharaoh refused. God sent ten plagues on the Egyptians to convince the Hebrews of His power and to convince the Egyptians to let them go. As part of their exodus from Egypt, God allowed Moses to part the Red Sea. They entered the Sinai Peninsula where they camped around at Mt Sinai *en route* to the Promised Land. Since the covenant was cut here at Sinai, the Old Testament is also known as the **Sinai Covenant**.

The mediator of this covenant was Moses. Thus, in addition to Old Testament, this covenant is sometimes called the Mosaic covenant. **Joke:** You might remember Moses from his role as director of the famous 1956 Cecil B. DeMoses movie, *The Ten Commandments*.

**Time:** God’s covenant with Israel was made in roughly 1500 B.C.

**\*\*\*\*What did God predict about Israel in Deuteronomy 31:15-18?**

ESV **Deuteronomy 31:16-20** ... this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them ...

**Where does the name “Old Testament” come from?** Everyone agrees that the New Testament is new in **contrast** with the Old Testament. It all started with Jeremiah.

**Joke:** “Jeremiah was a Bullfrog, was a good friend of mine, I never understood a single word he said, but I sure loved his cherry wine.” Even though I never understood a single word Jeremiah the bullfrog said, we can understand what he wrote:

ESV **Jeremiah 31:31-32** 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, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them ... out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke ...

In prophesying the coming of a new covenant, Jeremiah *implied* the Sinai covenant was **old**. One might also refer to it as the broken Testament. So the Bible is in two big parts: New Testament and the Broken Testament.

**Luke 22:19-20. During the Last Supper, what did Jesus say about the cup?** Jesus said it represented the new covenant in His blood. It is the fulfillment of Jeremiah 31.

**How did the Old Testament get its name?** The New Testament made the Sinai Covenant old. In speaking of unbelieving Jews, Paul wrote:

ESV **2 Corinthians 3:14-15** ... they read the old covenant ... whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts.

The NT writers referred to the Sinai Covenant as the old covenant. It is a biblical name.

### **What's so new about the New Testament?**

Quoting Jeremiah, author of Hebrews explicitly states the new made the old obsolete:

ESV **Hebrews 8:13** 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.

The author of Hebrews said the Sinai covenant was not only 1) **old** but 2) **obsolete**. So we could say we have the New Testament and the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Obsolete Testament, the New Testament and the 3) **Vanishing** Testament.

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Now let's look at some of the types and shadows that were fulfilled in the New Testament. We'll start by examining the various purposes of the covenant made at Sinai.

### **Purposes of the Old Covenant**

\*\*\*\***Based on Exodus 19:5-6, what was God's primary reason for making the Old Testament?**

ESV **Exodus 19:5-6** ... if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples ... you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.

**Peculiar People.** A major purpose of the covenant was to establish a God/people relationship, to make the Israelites a **peculiar people** and to make them into a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

KJV **Deuteronomy 14:2** ... the LORD hath chosen thee to be a **peculiar people** unto himself, above all the nations that *are* upon the earth.

**What new covenant fulfillment of Exodus 19:5-6 did the Peter proclaim in 1 Peter 2:9-10?**

**ESV 1 Peter 2:9-10** ... 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. 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.

**New Israel:** Peter picked up on Exodus 19:5-6 and applied it to the church, which he clearly saw as the **new Israel** (*ESV Study Bible*, p. 2408). Clearly, Peter understood God's purposes for OT Israel to be fulfilled in the church (**spiritual Israel**).

**NCT:** How the apostles interpreted the OT is the way we should interpret the NT. Peter read Exodus 19 and look how Peter interpreted it.

**Fighting Words:** Critics call this replacement theology; it is in reality fulfillment theology. The physical promises for ancient Israel were ultimately fulfilled in spiritual realities in the church. That said, God still has a plan for the Jews. It is that in every generation there will be elect Jews who believe in Jesus and come into the church.

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**\*\*\*\*Read Deuteronomy 4:40, 5:33, 8:1, 28:1-2 and scan Deuteronomy 28:3-14. What blessings were promised for obedience to the laws of the old covenant?**

**ESV Deuteronomy 8:1** The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers.

### **Possession of Property**

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**ESV Deuteronomy 28:7** The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you.

### **Protection from Predators**

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**ESV Deuteronomy 28:11** And the LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the fruit of your womb and in the fruit of your livestock and in the fruit of your ground, within the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.

### **Populous Posterity** (lots of kids & cows)

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ESV **Deuteronomy 28:12** The LORD will open to you his good treasury, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. And you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

## Physical Prosperity

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**Summary:** Possession of the land, Protection in the land, Prosperity in land, a Populous Posterity in land.

**Parallel or in Series?** Dispensationalism teaches Israel is God's earthly people for material blessings and the church is God's heavenly people for spiritual blessings. DT says both truths are valid today, running on parallel tracks. CT & NCT agrees that God offered Israel earthly, physical blessings but that was for back there and then; today God works through the church for spiritual blessings. The truths existed in serial (sequentially), not in parallel.

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**Eternal Life: Where is eternal life promised for obedience to this covenant?** Eternal life is never offered for obedience. It totally has to do with life on this earth.

**Application:** The New Testament offers something the Old Testament never did: Forgiveness of sins.

ESV **Jeremiah 31:31-34** Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant ... I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

ESV **Matthew 26:28** ... this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

## Conditional or Unconditional?

**Based on Exodus 19:5, is the Old Testament conditional or unconditional? How so?**

ESV **Exodus 19:5**... if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples ...

It is conditional; note the "if"; they had to "obey" (19:5). The Sinai covenant was based on the Law of Moses.

**What's so new about the New Testament?**

**Eternal Life!** In contrast with the Old Testament, the New Testament not only **1)** offers eternal life, but it is **2)** totally based on God's grace. Eternal life is granted to us as an undeserved favor.

ESV **Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

ESV **Galatians 2:21** I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Clearly, something new has happened.

### The Law

**Three types (or categories) of law are evident within the Old Testament (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). Read over Exodus 20-23; can you figure out what the three are and give an example of each?** Many theologians have concluded that the Law is divisible into three parts: Moral, Civil, Ceremonial.

1. The **moral** (ethical) law ~ “Thou Shalt Not Steal”, **Exodus 20:15** (KJV). The **moral** law establishes basic morality, right from wrong. (By the way, that which was ethical under Moses is still ethical under Christ).
2. The **judicial** (civil) law ~ if convicted of stealing, must pay back seven times the amount stolen, **Exodus 22:2-6**. The **civil (penal code, judicial)** law consists of rules for Israel’s civil government and the penalties to be imposed for breaking the law.
3. The **ceremonial** (religious) law (**Le 22:17-25**) ~ Examples include not eating pork or shrimp (**Leviticus 22:17-25**). The **ceremonial** law has religious rules concerning sacrifices, offerings, feasts, dietary regulations, etc.

However, having observed that there do indeed seem to be three categories of law, it should be pointed out that there is no grouping of law *by Moses* according to type. Instead, they are all woven together. The Bible itself does not separate God’s law into three parts: moral, ceremonial and civil. Historically, this threefold separation was not substantially taught until the time of Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century and then in the 16th century by John Calvin.

**Despite the fact that the law may be categorized into three types, what must we understand from James 2:10?**

ESV **James 2:10** ...whoever keeps the whole law [moral, civil, ceremonial] but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

Though there are clearly three types of Mosaic Law, the Law itself is indivisible. It stands or falls as a unit. Choosing cafeteria style to obey only parts of the Law is not an option.

**F.F. Bruce** wrote: “... it is sometimes said that Christ is the end of the ceremonial law... this ... has no place in Pauline exegesis. It has to be read into Paul, for it is not a distinction that Paul himself makes.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> F.F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1977), 192-193.

**What is a salvation application of James 2:10 for believers today?** If a person is seeking to be right with God based on keeping the Law of Moses, his is a forlorn hope. Just breaking even one tiny law makes him as guilty as if he broke all of it.

**Truth:** The Old Testament never offered eternal life as a result of obedience to the law.

**NCT:** NCT understands James 2:10 to mean we do not have the freedom to pick and choose, cafeteria style, which of the laws of Moses to obey. NCT holds that we are either under all of the Law of Moses or none of it. Some misguided applications of Mosaic Law have occurred when believers attempt to pick and choose which Mosaic laws are relevant under the New Covenant.

Writing to Jewish Christians, Paul declared:

ESV **Romans 6:14** ... you are not under law but under grace.

ESV **Romans 7:6** ... we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive ...

NCT declares those in Christ to be free from the Law of Moses.

### **Ultimate Purpose of the Law**

**We must let the NT interpret the OT. What did the apostles reveal about the ultimate purpose of the Law of Moses?** See *Romans 3:19-20*, *2 Corinthians 3:7*.

ESV **Romans 3:19-20** ... whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law [unbelieving Jews], so that every mouth may be stopped [no excuses] ... since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

ESV **Romans 7:7** ... if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

ESV **2 Corinthians 3:7** ... the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone ...

The ultimate purpose of the Law of Moses was to show unbelieving Jews their own sinfulness. It was a ministry of death designed to lead them to Christ:

ESV **Galatians 3:23-25** Now before faith came, we [unbelieving Jews] were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed ... the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we [believing Jews] are no longer under a guardian ...

It served to show them their sin and need for a salvation based on promise rather than law.

**New law!** We are under the Law of Christ, not the Law of Moses. Galatians makes mention of:

ESV **Galatians 6:2** ... the law of Christ.

## Blood Covenants

### What was the significance of a blood testament in ancient society of (Ex 24:1-12)?

*Compare Jeremiah 34:18-20.* It was said that treaties were “cut” because often animals were killed and cut up in the making of a covenant. This is still seen today in saying we “cut a deal”.

A blood covenant was the highest level of covenant, typically a life-or-death commitment. As is obvious from the penalties, this was a serious, binding, life or death contract. The seriousness of a blood covenant can be seen here:

ESV **Jeremiah 34:18-20** And the men who transgressed my covenant and did not keep the terms of the covenant that they made before me, I will make them like the calf that they cut in two and passed between its parts ... all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf ... Their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth.

### \*\*\*\*Treaties often have some sort of formal inauguration. How was the Old Testament inaugurated (Ex 24:5-8)? See *Hebrews 9:18-20*.

ESV **Exodus 24:5-8** ... Israel ... sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people ... And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Moses threw sacrificial blood against the altar (representing God), read the Book of the Covenant (the material in Exodus 20-23) to the people, and then threw blood on the people. It was a blood covenant.

### What's so new about the New Testament?

ESV **Hebrews 9:13-14** For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of ... bulls ... sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ ... purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

**Fulfillment:** The sacrifices of the Old Covenant were types foreshadowing the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to pay for our sins.

### What's so new about the New Testament?

**Why is it significant that Jesus described His death on the cross as the blood of the covenant (Mt 26:28)?**

ESV **Luke 22:20** This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

**Fulfillment:** The new covenant is also a blood covenant. As relates to ancient treaties, it might be said that Jesus alone passed between the pieces. It was Jesus alone who made the covenant. He Himself was the sacrificial lamb. He died not for His own sins but for ours. The New Testament is totally of God's own doing and not dependent on us keeping any part of the treaty:

ESV **Hebrews 9:15-17** ... he [Jesus] 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 [old] covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.

**NCT:** The New Testament is the Last Will and Testament of Jesus. The inheritance is eternal life and those named in the will are God's elect, those who have been called. If eternal life is dependent on anything we have to do, any act we have to perform, we will never get eternal life.

### Stone Tablets, Human Hearts

**Upon what did God record the laws of the old covenant (Ex 24:12, 31:18)?** The commandments were written on tables of stone.

ESV **Exodus 31:18** 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.

**Where were the laws of the Old Testament kept (Ex 25:10, 16)?** Remember the old movie, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*? That adventure movie was about the recovery of the Moses' ark (not Noah's ark). Ark just means box. The two tablets were kept in the ark (box) of the covenant. That's why it is named what it is called the Ark of the Covenant!

ESV **Exodus 25:10, 16** They shall make an ark of acacia wood ... you shall put into the ark the testimony that I shall give you.

**Google "suzerainty treaty" and summarize your findings.** The whole Sinai Covenant was typical of a **suzerainty** treaty common in that day. In it, a strong king (the **suzerain**) would make a treaty with a neighboring vassal state, making it a protectorate. The Old Testament followed the same legal pattern as a suzerainty treaty; there was sort of a standard legal format. There was a statement of all the things the Suzerain had done for the vassal state, there were laws, and there was a statement of various blessings and curses. There were two copies of the treaty, one for the king and one for the vassal state, each stored in that country's sacred temple.

**Why were there two copies (Ex 31:18)?** Not because there were 5 commandments on each, but because just like with a suzerainty treaty, there was one copy of the laws for the King (Jehovah) and one for the vassal state (Israel). In a typical Suzerainty treaty, each of the two

countries kept a set of the rules in his national cathedral (temple). In Israel's case, it was the same holy place for both Suzerain and Vassal: The Tabernacle and thus the ark of the covenant.

**NCT:** The new covenant is new in that God's laws are now written on human hearts, not on stone tablets.

ESV **Jeremiah 31:31-33** Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant ... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts ...

ESV **Hebrews 8:10** ... I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts ...

The law that is written on our hearts is the Law of Christ, not the Law of Moses!

### Sabbath Rest

**\*\*\*\*Every ancient treaty or covenant had some sign that went with it to remind the parties of their covenant obligations. Based on Exodus 31:12-17, what is the sign of God's covenant with Israel?** The sign of the Sinai covenant is observing the Saturday Sabbath.

ESV **Exodus 31:13, 17** ... Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations ... It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel ...

**What does the "Sabbath" mean?** From *shabbat* (7676) "to cease, desist, rest."

**What day of the week is the "seventh" day (31:15)?** The seventh day is Saturday. Sunday, the Lord's Day, is the first day of a new week. Jewish people today still worship on Saturday.

**NCT:** The fact that the early church met on the day after the Sabbath, on the first day of the week, speaks volumes about the newness of the New Testament. Some radical had changed.

Before concluding that the Sabbath sign should be observed today, ask yourself:

***Are you a citizen of physical Israel? (Are you a member of the tribe?)***

***Are you party to this covenant (suzerainty treaty)?***

***Do you intend to move to the Middle East to occupy Palestine, settling perhaps on the West Bank?***

We must allow the NT to interpret the OT for us: The Saturday Sabbath of the Old Testament is a type of the salvation Sabbath rest we have in Christ.

ESV **Hebrews 4:8-9** ... there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

**What does the New Testament have to say about Sabbath observance? See Colossians 2:16-17, Galatians 4:9-11**

**NAS Colossians 2:16-17** ... let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

The New Testament went from shadow to substance.

**ESV Galatians 4:9-11** But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.

The wedding ring is a sign of the marriage covenant. When a couple divorces, wedding ring is no longer worn. Regarding the Sabbath, why would you want to keep the sign of a testament you were never part of? Our covenant is not the old one with Israel, but the new one with Christ. Even if you are Jewish, if you believe in Jesus then:

**ESV Romans 7:4** ... you ... 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 ...

### Summary

**What does the word “testament” mean (as in OT/NT)?** It means covenant/treaty/contract.

**With whom did God make the Old Testament?** He made it with the physical descendants of Jacob (alias Israel) at Mount Sinai around 1500 B.C.

**What is the sign of the Old Testament?** The sign is the Saturday Sabbath.

**Is the Old Testament covenant conditional or unconditional? Why?** It is based on law, not promise, and quite conditional (if ... then).

**What are the physical purposes of the Old Testament? (What was the promised benefit)?** It established a God/People relationship (peculiar people) and offered possession of land, protection in land, prosperity in the land and a populous posterity.

### **What's so New About the New Testament?**

The NT is so new it made the OT obsolete. It is the substance of all the shadows in the covenant made at Mount Sinai.

OT centered on Moses; NT centered on Jesus.

OT was physical, NT is metaphysical.

OT is prophecy, NT is fulfillment.

OT concerned physical Israel, NT concerns spiritual Israel.

OT based on law; NT based on promise.

OT offered physical blessings; NT offers spiritual blessings.

You can hear this series taught at [SermonAudio.com/NTRF](http://SermonAudio.com/NTRF) under "New Covenant Theology."

Stephen E. Atkerson

NTRF.org

07/21/21