

Old Covenant *versus* New Covenant

Old "Will" *versus* New "Will"

Law *versus* Grace

Law and grace are opposing principles. Christianity has always suffered from man's attempt to mix it with legalism. The Lord Jesus taught that the two are incompatible. How can you have a relationship based on legalism: *"I'll do this, if you'll do that."* It would never work in marriage and it can never work in our relationship with God. We're not in a religion but in a relationship with God. As believers we're part of this body of Christ Jesus called the Church (Col. 1:24).

If a person is in Christ Jesus, then the Scripture says that the law has been annihilated. You are no longer under the law but under grace (Rom.6:14) because you now are INDWELLED by the Spirit of God, whose role is to lead us into all truth (Jn. 16:13). The Spirit of God that came to live in you brought with Him the righteousness of Christ Jesus so that you are now clothed in the righteousness of Christ Jesus (Rom.8:9-10).

Why do I need Christ's righteousness? Because in Galatians 2:21, it says, *"I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing."* The law could never give man righteousness. The law is a reflection of God's righteousness – not ours. That is why no man will ever be declared righteous or justified in the sight of God through obedience to the law. The law cannot give life, for if the law could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. I ask you, "If God wanted obedience through law, why would He send Christ Jesus to suffer and die on a cross?" It would make absolutely no sense for Jesus to sacrifice His life for nothing, if you could obtain salvation through obedience to the law. Why all

this talk I hear about keeping the law; it's impossible – no one can keep the law. The only ONE that could is the sinless Lamb of God (Jesus), who came to take away the sins of the world.

This is why we are told clearly in the second part of Galatians 2:16, of the one thing which the law cannot do: *"For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."* Most people of our day try to use the law to justify themselves before God, and yet God says, *"For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."* How can God make it any more simpler or clearer than this? How then is sinful man to be justified before a holy God? The first part of Galatians 2:16, provides the answer: *"Knowing that man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ..."* Jesus took our place and bore the judgment that should have fallen upon us and in Him we have forgiveness of sins and an open door into heaven.

I think for some reason men fall very easily into the assumption that if they try to KEEP the law of God, they have somehow gained points with God. This is why for most folks they don't have a relationship with God. Yes, they have religion but they don't have a relationship. They've read God's old will and have tried to live up to His standards. But His standards are out of their reach. As a result, all they expect to get from God is condemnation and punishment whenever they do wrong. Yet, you have to remember that you are not under God's Old Covenant. He loves us and has written a brand-new covenant, and it is this New Covenant that we live under today. Remember, there is nothing that will save you in the Old Testament (law), so don't try and if there was; then Jesus came and died for nothing and you know that isn't true.

The law could not do anything for man except show him his sinfulness (Rom.3:20) and the consequence of sin which is death (Rom.6:23). The Mosaic Law that God had established with Moses and the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai was given so that we would know what sin was. Before the Mosaic covenant people didn't know what sin was or that they were sinners. By the way, the Mosaic Law was given only to the Jewish people, the Israelites,

and was not intended for us Gentiles. Gentiles or non-Jewish believers came onto the scene after the death of Christ Jesus and the witnessing of the apostles and were under the New Covenant. And yet today we see these legalistic religious organizations and religious people who have gone over and taken the law from the Jews and want to try to follow it today. Such travesty!

The most important purpose of the law is in leading man to salvation; to show us our sinfulness. The law of God is like a mirror. The purpose of a mirror is to reveal to you that your face is dirty, but the purpose of the mirror is not to wash your face. When you look into a mirror and see that your face is dirty, you do not proceed to take the mirror off the wall and attempt to wash your face with it. The purpose of the mirror is to take you to the water. In the same way, the purpose of the law was given to reveal to you that you are "*dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1)*" and that is the condition of every one of us, apart from the grace of God. We are spiritually dead and separated from God; in need of salvation and in need of a Savior.

The law demands perfection. No mercy at all. This is why the apostle Paul described the Old Covenant as the ministry of condemnation, and the ministry that brought death (2 Cor.3). Because of this there is no hope under this Old Covenant. Because we are all born in sin, it is impossible for anyone to live up to the righteous requirements of the law and we experience fear and guilt, and as a result could never draw near to God. But God's intent was not for us to try to live up to the law. His intent was to show us where we have failed, our sinfulness and our need for salvation. This is all that the Old Covenant can show us. It revealed our sinful nature and showed us how far we are from God's standard of holiness. That's the purpose of the law in our lives.

The law did some good; that's what the law was there to do, to show me my condition which prepares me for God's provision. That's what prepares you for the Cross; if I don't recognize that I'm a sinner, what good would His forgiveness do? If I didn't realize that there is a consequence to sin called death; spiritual death, then

why would I come to Him for spiritual life. So, in order to recognize the provision; you have to recognize your condition and that's precisely what the law did and once that has been accomplished, the law has done its work. You have now repented from your state of unbelief and have come to put your faith in the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross and in His resurrected life, which freed you from the consequence of sin; which is death. Now, having put your faith in Christ; you are born again (spiritual rebirth) and being BORN AGAIN is being freed from the law.

That's why it says in Scripture, that those who have come to Christ are no longer under the supervision of the law. It is very clear that Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes because no one will be declared righteous in the sight of God by obedience to the law. Romans 10:4, verifies this: *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."*

We still should not forget that the law is still in effect for the lost, the UNBELIEVER. But the moment you come to Christ by faith you are freed from the demands of the law and are now being led internally under the supervision of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God. You can't be controlled by the law and the Spirit of God at the same time. You can't trust in what you do and in what Christ has done at the same time. It takes only one law to spoil the entirety of God's grace. Most people, who don't understand this, have never been taught the difference between the Old Covenant and New Covenant.

In regards to the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, the Holy Spirit also testified to us about this New Covenant. First He says: *"This is the covenant I will make with them after that time (Jesus' death), says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts (no longer written on tablets of stone), and I will write them on their minds (Jer.31:33, 34)."* Then He adds: ***"Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."*** ***And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:15-18).***

The Old Covenant provided animal sacrifices that served as an annual reminder of sins which lead to death. Christ's DEATH ushered in the New Covenant. He died in our place to take God's punishment for our sins. As a result, God remembers our sins no more. No other sacrifice is required to gain more forgiveness. We have everything we need under this New Covenant of Grace. Jesus Christ has done it all. Jesus Christ was the sinless Lamb of God; the ultimate and final sacrifice for our sins and He said, "*It's finished.*"

It's over, Christ died for all your sins: past, present and future and you are now a forgiven person. You need to spend the rest of your days thanking Him for what you have instead of begging for what in Christ you already have – FORGIVENESS. If you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are living in a New Covenant as a forgiven person. When you rest in that fact and grasp what that really means in your life – the guilt and shame just lifts off your shoulders and for the first time you can experience freedom in your relationship with Christ Jesus. This is what people need to hear because it is life changing truth not clouded in religious confusion and deception. It is this truth that will set you free.

There is no more shedding of blood, there is no more forfeiture of life (sacrifices), there is no more **1st. John 1:9's** and there is no more need for **confession booths**. It is finished, it is done, it is over and it is paid in full by the sacrifice of Christ Jesus on Calvary's cross. This is the New Covenant.

Under the Old Covenant, forgiveness was conditional. If you don't forgive your brother here on earth, your Father in heaven will not forgive you. That's the law and Jesus taught under the law because He was born under the law. So why did He teach under the law when He came to usher in the New Covenant? Because the law has to do its work before you're ready for the New Covenant. Jesus also came to fulfill the law and usher in a New Covenant at His death.

The purpose of the law is that it had to show you your sinfulness, so that you can turn to Christ for salvation. The law is what prepares you for salvation. It shows you that you're a sinner and it shows you that there is a consequence to sin which is called death, spiritual death or separation from God. Those two issues have been solved when you understood what the law taught you.

Now if I've got a brain in my head, I'm going to ask the question, "What do I need to do, to be saved?" Because I know I need to do something. Because if I'm dead, I need life and if I'm a sinner, I need forgiveness. So what do I need to do? This line of questioning prepares you for the Cross which is the New Covenant. It's the death, the burial and the resurrection of Christ Jesus.

The Cross: dividing line of human history

The Cross is the dividing line of human history. Jesus Christ is the central figure in human history. The world acknowledges this fact by dividing history at His birth. Events are either dated B.C., meaning before Christ, or A.D., anno Domini, in the year of our Lord. From God's vantage point, however, history is divided at the Cross. How God dealt with mankind before the Cross is different from how He deals with you and me today. Before the Cross, God dealt with man on the basis of obedience to the law. Today, God deals with man on the basis of His love and grace. The reason for the change is that Christ's death ushered in a brand-new covenant. This New Covenant had been prophesied throughout the Old Testament, and the day Christ died it went into effect. Through His death and the shedding of His blood on the cross, Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant and ushered in a New Covenant in which we live in today.

"In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when someone has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living (Heb.9:16-17)." This is why even the Mosaic covenant was not put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of

calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, "*This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep.*" In the same way, Moses sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law required that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood (sacrifice) there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:16-22). Therefore, for the New Covenant that God had promised to go into effect; Christ had to die and shed His blood.

A will is a covenant; a testament. You have Old Testament – New Testament; old will – new will. You had an OLD agreement and now you have a NEW agreement between God and man. So, there is the answer as to what Jesus taught while He was alive under the law. He was born of a virgin, under the Mosaic Law. He taught under the law in order to do what? To bury us under the law! That is what prepared Him for what He was coming to do, which was to take away the sins of the world forever from the eyes of God. This one act of obedience (sacrifice) on the cross and then through His resurrection, He gave eternal life to all of us who were otherwise spiritually dead and separated from God for all eternity.

Much of the New Testament is devoted to the subject of law and grace. Law and grace is something we live every day, whether we know it or not. It involves how we approach our entire Christian lives, and the effects are far-reaching and profound. We persist in bringing the law into our Christian lives because we have not come to grips with its real meaning and purpose. In the simplest of terms law and grace is the issue of God's acceptance. How are you and I made acceptable to God?

It's as clear as a bell as to what the Scriptures taught in regards to the Old Covenant and the New Covenant – law versus grace. Its truth will set you free if you grab hold of it. As long as you are trying to co-mingle the two; you are going to be a mess for the rest of your life and you're going to be bouncing back and forth between law and grace. As for myself, I want to walk boldly into the Throne of Grace, calling Him, Daddy, Father (Heb.4:16), and

having a relationship with God and experiencing and receiving mercy in my time of need and to be totally free and experiencing the abundant life that Jesus promised.

Conclusion:

Old Covenant: Man reaching up to God with self-effort to be accepted by God.

New Covenant: God reaching down to man through Jesus Christ with love and acceptance.

Question: Are you willing to put aside all forms of religion and rest in the sufficiency of Christ?