



NEW COVENANT - NEW HOPE

Study 18

The New Testament

Why is the Bible divided into two sections – the Old and the New Testaments? It is because in ancient time the world lived in hope of a promise.

Then, at the climax of the ages God's promise arrived; hope became reality and a new era began! This is what the New Testament is all about. Write the first half of Hebrews 9:15 here.

The New Covenant was not unexpected. Throughout the old scriptures the prophets said it would come, an obvious example being Jeremiah 31:31-34 which is quoted word for word in Hebrews 8:8-12. Look at verse thirteen. If the covenant that came is called 'new,' what does that make the old one? _____

When we study Jeremiah we see a dramatic contrast between the old and new covenants.

New Covenant

Law written internally
in heart and mind. (Jer 31:33a) _____

I will be their God in the
sense of 'relationship.' (Jer 31:33b) _____

Knowledge of the Lord
personally experienced. (Jer 31:34a) _____

Sins forgiven and
remembered no more. (Jer 31:34b) _____

Old Covenant

Law written externally
on tablets of stone. (Deut 4:8,13; 2 Cor. 3:6)

I will be their God in the
sense of 'judge.' (Deut 17:2-5; Heb 10:28)

Knowledge of the Lord
dictated by written law. (Deut 6:8; Gal 4:24)

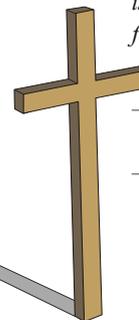
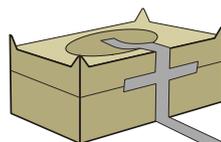
Sins covered but
not taken away. (Psalm 85:2-3; Hebrews 10:4,11)

Read the Jeremiah text and the contrasting scriptures opposite. Then add these extra ones next to the appropriate statement about the New Covenant. (1 John 2:27, 1 John 3:5, 2 Corinthians 3:3, Galatians 4:4-7)

HOW DID THE OLD COVENANT ATONE FOR SIN?

Sin separates us from God. We need to be reconciled and that is what 'atonement' means - to be **'at one.'** Under the old covenant the life of an animal was sacrificed in exchange for the life of the sinner (Lev. 17:11) and God accepted it inasmuch as it prefigured Messiah's ultimate sacrifice. God knew those who, in their offerings, saw the shadow of a greater sacrifice to come.

However, the word 'atonement' in the Old Testament is translated from a word 'Kaphar' which only means, 'to cover' so it did not actually take anything away. Therefore sins committed under the old covenant accumulated (albeit covered temporarily) until the cross put an end to them altogether. (Hebrews 9:26) Fill in the missing words in the diagram opposite.



New Covt. sin taken away immediately

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and

(1 John 1:9)

Old Covt. sin covered until the Cross

"... now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from

(Hebrews 9:15b)

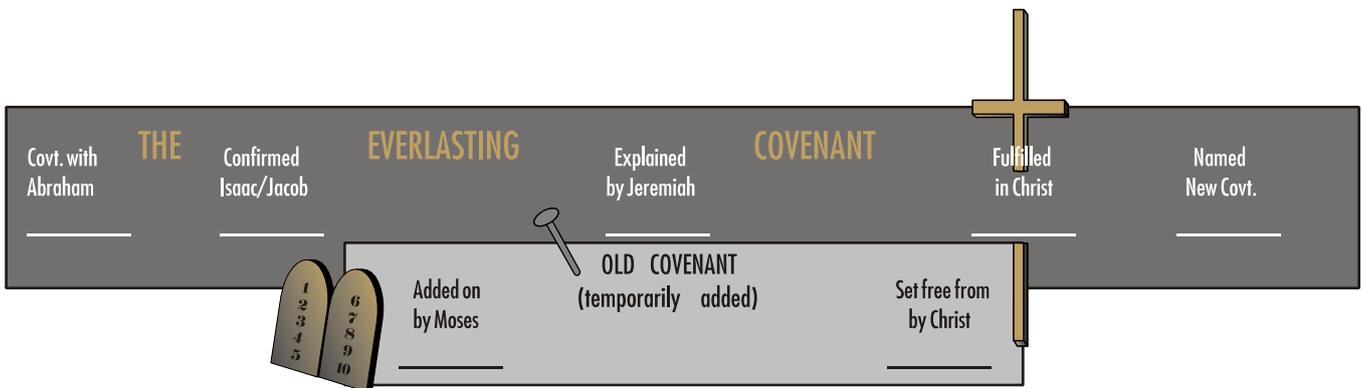


WHICH CAME FIRST - THE NEW OR THE OLD?

This question is not as silly as it looks. The old came first, right? Wrong! The new covenant was there in the form of a promise long before the old covenant was added. The original promise was given to Abraham but the old covenant was given to Moses later on. They are not the same covenant as God makes clear in Deuteronomy 5:1-3. With this in mind, study Galatians 3:14-19 then answer the following key questions:

- Which has most authority if there are two covenants, the first one or the second? _____
- How many years after the first covenant was the second one added? _____
- Why was the old covenant added to the original one? _____
- When was the old covenant added until? _____

Look up the following references to this subject and place them into the diagram spaces below. (Mark 14:24, Romans 15:8-9, Galatians 3:19, Galatians 3:25, Genesis 12:2-3, Genesis 28:13-15, Jeremiah 31: 31-34)



WHY WAS THE OLD COVENANT ADDED?

As noted before, it was added "because of transgressions" (Gal 3:19) but what does this actually mean? From Adam until Moses there was sin but there was **no transgression** because no law existed to transgress. (Rom 5:13) People died for their sin even though they had not broken a specific command. (Rom 5:14) For this reason the old covenant was added to **define sin in writing** as a systematic code of rules. Read Romans 7:1-13. Fill in the missing line from verse 13.

"So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But

it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful."

Therefore the law pinpointed sin, stripping away the excuse of ignorance and condemning those who committed it. Fortunately, with the law also came the sacrificial system. They were bundled together as an integral part of each other because the law produced wrath and blood was the antidote.

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So the old covenant was good; but the new covenant is better! Romans 7:6 says, "We have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code."

This new way of living was made possible by the blood of Christ when he confirmed what was promised so long before. From Ephesians 2:11-19 write down some of the things that the new covenant has done for us.