

Understanding the Covenants

God made covenants with several individuals such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David; and His Son, Jesus. These were specific covenants with specific people for a specific purpose; however, He had two primary covenants for all mankind. A covenant of law and a covenant of grace; law administered by Moses and grace came by Jesus Christ. One written on stone and parchment with ink and the other in the heart of the believer. *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* John 1:17

In the first covenant of law which came four-hundred thirty years after Abraham, it was based on man's performance governed by commandments and statutes. God's blessings were exemplified if man obeyed the law and curses were the result of disobedience to the law. God set forth this covenant of law for the Israelites.

The second covenant was made between God and Christ and details what God will do for man; grace. In the first covenant man is obedient to the law to receive the blessings, while in the second covenant God provides a continuous supply of blessings through grace given in His Son.

It is important to recognize these two covenants and how God established them. What was the purpose of each, for whom, and how were these covenants fulfilled? First, let's understand what a covenant is and is not. A covenant is an irrevocable agreement and cannot be broken unlike a contract. A contract between two or more parties can be broken, or dissolved in a courtroom before a judge. However, a covenant is an agreement between two parties that cannot be annulled, revoked, changed, reversed, or recovered. It is final and only death of one of the parties terminates the agreement. God's covenants were sealed in blood. The first with the blood of a clean pure lamb, and the second by the blood of His Son. Man took the lamb to the priest for forgiveness of sins once a year.

Christ shed His blood for all sin for all time for the world.

The first covenant was between God and man and written on stone and parchment. The second covenant was between God and His Son with a new law written in the heart of the believer. The first covenant had six-hundred and thirteen laws and to break one was to break them all. *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* James 2:10 It was meant to be a strict guideline to reveal to man his need of a savior; that he was incapable of keeping the laws; and thus, saving himself. It pointed man to his self-righteousness and that he could never be righteous by his own merit. These laws were for the Jewish people only, not inclusive of the Gentiles.

In the second covenant, the blood of Christ, the *Lamb of God*, removed sin for all mankind; Jew and Gentile. One time, for all generations past, present, and future, Christ's blood destroyed the sin of man for anyone who believes in Him. *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* 1 John 2:2 One covenant provided a temporary cleansing of sin by taking a clean sacrificial lamb to the alter of the priest once a year, while the second covenant in Christ destroyed the sins for all one time, forever. Christ fulfilled the first that the second may become effective, for these two covenants cannot be combined. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* Matthew 5:17-18 Christ is the only man capable of fulfilling the first covenant which was His purpose in being born of flesh.

The first covenant was for the Jews whom God re-moved from slavery. Of these six-hundred and thirteen laws, the first ten were written on stone by the finger of God and the remaining on parchment with ink by Moses. God dictated to Moses when he was with God at Mount Sinai for forty days. There were dietary laws, worship laws, sacrificial laws, and so forth; all pertaining to how the Israelites were to conduct themselves as a nation.

The Gentiles were included later in the new covenant with Christ. *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.* Ephesian 2:11-13 This simply

states uncircumcised Gentiles (non-Jews) are not part of the first covenant, but in the covenant of Christ both circumcision and uncircumcision (Jew and Gentile) are partakers of God's new covenant with His Son. *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.* Romans 10:12

During this era when the Israelites were under the covenant of law, the Gentiles had no covenant with God; however, they did have a conscientiousness of right and wrong. *For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another; In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.* Romans 2:14-16 Though they weren't subject to the commandments and statutes, they understood their actions to be good or bad, right from wrong, and even so they chose to live a life of selfishness and lasciviousness.

The first covenant is also referred to as the Law of Moses, or Mosaic Law, existing for a period of fifteen hundred years from Moses to the death of Christ. The Israelites who followed God's law would present to the priest at the alter a sacrificial lamb that its blood be shed for the forgiveness of sin. For one year, their sins were temporarily forgiven by God. This was a blood covenant representative of the true Lamb of God who would shed His blood once for all sin for all mankind.

God had covenants with Adam, Noah, and Abraham, before Moses brought the law. These men weren't under a law of commandments. They had favor with God be-cause of their belief in Him. *For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.* Romans 4:3 Though each of these men sinned, there was no law to identify their actions as sin. For example, Cain was the first murderer, Jonah disobeyed a direct order from God, Abraham lied, and Sarah, his wife, laughed at God. They were all sinners, but had favor with God because they believed in Him and trusted in His Word. There was no law in place to hold them accountable for their behavior.

Adam started the entire sin nature of man by dis-obeying God in the first place. Under the law, these would be offenses that required punishment and even death; however, each person found favor and righteousness with God because they accepted Him to be their Almighty King. Adam had a very special

relationship with God, and though it was necessary for God to remove him from the Garden, He remained in communication with Adam. Adam's disobedience did not change God's love for him.

Adam was locked out of the Garden to prevent him from eating the fruit from another tree, the Tree of Life, for then he and Eve would live forever in the Garden with a sin nature. These two trees were significant for one represented death and one life. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil opened their eyes to death, while the Tree of Life is the representation of Christ who gives eternal life. Eating of the Tree of Knowledge and then the Tree of Life would present an eternal life of sin, disease, and hardship to all generations thereafter. There would be no redemption from sin.

Remember, a covenant is fulfilled or terminated by the death of one of the parties involved. The Israelites failed to keep the covenant with God by refusing to accept and follow His commandments. These laws were meant to show man he needed a savior, someone to redeem them from their wicked ways. The law was established that if man breaks one he has broken all and the result is curses and death. The law was never meant to save man, for no righteousness comes by the law. *Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.* Galatians 3:19 The seed is Christ who would fulfill the law, the only man who could.

No man was capable of keeping the law; and thus, all would perish under the covenant presented by Moses. No one would enter the Kingdom of Heaven and man would continue living in corruption just as in the time of Noah and in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Wickedness and evil would prevail and death the final outcome. There would be no children in the Kingdom of God. There is no justification in the law only condemnation, for the law could not make man righteous. *I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.* Galatians 2:21

God had a plan to save man. He made a new covenant with His Son, who would fulfill the first covenant with man. Man could never save himself from sin, nor was the first covenant meant to do that. It was a covenant between God and man with God knowing that man was incapable of keeping it. He wanted to show man they needed Him, a God, a King, and a Father who loved them regardless of their prodigal behavior. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,*

condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 8:3-4

To provide redemption for man, God made a new covenant with His Son who would come to earth born of flesh and blood as a Jew and live among the people. He is the man who fulfilled the first covenant by keeping all six-hundred and thirteen laws. He knew no sin, committed no sin, and in Him was no sin; and yet, became sin that man could be redeemed for an eternal life in the Kingdom.

How did Christ fulfill the first covenant and replace it with His covenant since death must occur to end a covenant? Jesus fulfilled the law of commandments by being the only man who kept all the law. To this day, no man can keep the law, only Christ and because of this, He qualified to absolve (set man free) from the first covenant with His blood and His death. His blood for the sins of man, and His death to terminate the first agreement. Remember, as the Son of Man, He was born a Jewish man (flesh) who kept all the laws and died (shed His blood) to fulfill the covenant that Moses administered.

It had to be His blood for the covenant is sealed with the blood of the One who kept all the law and it had to be death because death is the only way a covenant can be terminated. *In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.* Hebrew 8:13 As the first covenant was sealed by the hand of God, the second is sealed by the blood of His Son.

The first covenant was fulfilled in Christ in three ways: He knew no sin (kept all the law), shed His blood (sacrificial lamb), and death (died on the Cross). These three things were the requirement to end the first covenant of law written on stone and parchment and give man a new and better testament, a new covenant with God. *By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.* Hebrew 7:22 The new covenant is between God and Christ, and we are the beneficiaries of what is contained within this agreement.

It was God who established the first covenant with the Israelites and who fulfilled His second covenant as the Son of Man on earth. God's intent with the first covenant was to show man he needed God, that he was incapable of being righteous by following the law. The law can never make a man righteous before God. *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.* Galatians 3:11

What does the new covenant require of man? One thing: believe. Believe in Christ by being born of His Spirit, accept His gift of the Holy Spirit who testifies before God you are born in the righteousness of His Son and follow one command, love. *Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.* Matthew 22:36-38 Jesus was speaking to His disciples telling them what would be expected for all people: believe and understand the love God has for you by exemplifying the same to others.

Notice that the disciple who asked a question called Jesus, Master, not knowing that it was God, Himself, answering the question. Jesus was speaking to His disciples while under the first covenant, for He had not yet sacrificed Himself to fulfill the covenant of law. What He is telling the men around Him is that love is and will continue to be the one requirement of God. This will never change. Why? Because God is love. *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.* 1 John 4:8

How does this affect your life today? It greatly depends on which covenant you are following. If you are living under the laws of an obsolete covenant, then this covenant will apply to your life. The requirement of this covenant has not changed; therefore, it is the same for you as it was for the Israelites, keeping all six-hundred and thirteen laws, and if you break one, you are guilty of breaking them all and the result is curses and eventually death. Sickness, disease, disharmony, poverty, addiction, and so forth is the outcome under this covenant of law.

If you choose to follow the first covenant, you reap what is contained within it and you will not find God answering your prayerful pleas because He cannot address your issues through the means of a terminated agreement. He made a new agreement for the people and it is this covenant made with His Son that He honors.

In the new covenant of grace, you are not judged for your sins because Christ paid the price and destroyed sin on the Cross for anyone who accepts Him. In Christ, you are righteous. *Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whore-mongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is*

contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. 1 Timothy 1:9-10 A righteous person should not be living under an old covenant that is null and void by the blood of Jesus.

You can be a believer in Christ, but if following a covenant that is no longer in effect will leave you without the benefits of the new covenant. Healing, miracles, prosperity, and freedom from bondage is covered in the new covenant, not the old. The old covenant holds you in bondage with curses which is polar opposite to the new one. Sickness, addictions, and lack are evident in the old agreement.

Many doctrines teach the old covenant law of the commandments holding their congregation in bondage to live by the law. This teaching is a definite rejection of Christ's ministry. Believing you are to prove to God you are worthy by attempting to keep laws which weren't even written for you (unless you are Jewish), and no man can keep, will bring curses and not blessings because you are following the law and not living under grace. These covenants are not combined; law and grace do not mix.

Attempting to observe the commandments is a performance mentality to please God and get God to do something good in your life. Only one person fulfilled the law and it is Jesus, for no man can keep all the law and trying to do so separates you from God.

It is important to understand that the law brings lack in your life with sickness, disease, addictions, and poverty. These are all curses that come by following an obsolete agreement. God's grace and blessings are not given in this covenant. To receive the promises of God requires accepting and living in the new covenant of grace that Christ has given. God's new covenant with His Son unites you to the Father when you are born of His Spirit, and God sees you holy and righteous through His Son.

Religion has kept people living under a covenant of laws that were never meant for you and never meant to be fulfilled by you. People wonder why they are sick and can't seem to get a Word from God. God does not and cannot operate in the old covenant because it doesn't exist any longer for the person born of His Son's Spirit.

If you are living under the terms of a terminated agreement, its impossible to receive blessings and answered prayers from God. So what happens? You pray and wait on God, and then fault Him for not answering your prayers. Then to

make matters worse, you make inconsiderate statements against Him such as: *it must be His will*, or *God must be mad at me*, or *God doesn't care what I'm going through*. This is very wrong thinking!

The first covenant was a conditional agreement, man was required to perform, to follow laws, and be obedient without breaking any. Moses was a servant and man had a servants mentality. The second covenant in Christ is unconditional, whereby God only expects you to believe in His Son and all that He has done for you. We are now sons and daughters with an inheritance in the Kingdom. Before, man had to do something to get God to do something; however, now God is giving to you through grace provided through His Son, and you simply need to receive.

God knows exactly what is going on in your life, but He can't help you if you are living under the wrong covenant. God is operating under a new agreement and grace is the outflow that presents the same promises He made to Adam, Abraham, and to the Israelites. These promises and blessings are now for you. Anything you need from God, He has already DONE and it is available anytime you call upon Him in faith.

In this new covenant, all you need to do is believe and ask, and you shall receive because God established it this way. This is not a name it and claim it mindset, but a belief and trust in faith to receive the promises of God.

Its not a matter of will God do it, but that He has already done it, and you need to accept the gift that He has prepared for you. Therefore, which covenant are you living under? The law which brings curses, or grace with blessings. Everything in your daily life depends on this answer.

*Splendor in the
Holy Spirit*

THE POWER OF GOD



Patricia Marlett