

BIB 251 The Gospels

Lesson 3 - The OT & NT Covenants

Intro.

“Failure to distinguish these Covenants is prolific of grave misinterpretation and misapplication of the Scriptures, and must result in obscuring the significance of the course of history.” Scroggie

“The two Covenants are interdependent; each is incomplete without the other. If revelation had ended with the First Covenant it would have been a lock without a key a track without a goal, a story without a plot, a promise without a fulfillment, a germ without a development.

If, on the other hand, there had been the revelation of the New Covenant without that of the Old, there would have been an end without a beginning, a fulfillment without a promise, a supply without a need, a superstructure without a foundation, a consummation without a commencement.” Scroggie

Key: The relationship between the two covenants is **fulfillment**.

The New is in the Old contained, The Old is in the New explained;

The New is in the Old concealed, The Old is in the New revealed.

Note: the word covenant is probably a better term than Testament. It gives a more precise and clearer picture of the intention of the scriptures and is used in Hebrews. Failure to understand this clear and simple division into two covenants has led people to attempt to divide the scriptures into more complex systems. i.e. dispensations.

Covenant = In theology, the covenant of works (OT), is that implied in the commands, prohibitions, and promises of God; the promise of God to man, that mans perfect obedience should entitle him to happiness. This do, and live; that do, and die.

The covenant of grace (NT), is that by which God engages to bestow salvation on man, upon the condition that man shall believe in Christ and yield obedience to the terms of the gospel.

1. Old Testament (Covenant)

- A. The Law - Unexplained ceremonies - tabernacle, sacrifices, and furniture
- B. The History - Unachieved purposes - the nation of Israel
- C. The Poetry - Unappeased longings - spiritual quest for God
- D. The Prophets - Unfulfilled prophecies - predictions of a coming Messiah

Trans. Jesus is the fulfillment of them all. “In the volume of the book it is written of me” He fulfills the ceremonies, He is the sacrifice. He is the fulfillment of the purpose of God. He is the mediator between God and men. He is the promised Messiah.

The purpose of the Old Testament was to create anticipation and expectation for a solution. We will be able to identify Him by all of the types, shadows, and predictions.

2. New Testament (Covenant)

- A. The Gospels - Covering the Life of Christ and the Gospel message
- B. The Acts - the spread of the gospel and the growth of the church

- C. The Church Epistles - the doctrinal teaching and foundation for the churches
- D. The Pastoral Epistles - Instructions regarding discipleship and the offices of the NT church
- E. The Hebrew Epistles - Explaining the transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. Instructions to Jewish Christians.
- F. The Revelation - The Consummation of the eternal purpose of God and this world.

Note: It is evident that God wanted to make a clear distinction between the covenants by giving a 400 yr. silence or interlude before beginning in the NT. He breaks the silence with the startling beginning of a hairy Nazarite boldly preaching in the wilderness pronouncing and heralding the coming of the Messiah and His kingdom.

3. The Law (OT) and the Gospel (NT) Mt. 5:17

Note: The great variance of theological systems will depend upon this single issue. The issue is manifold, but ultimately what you believe about the relation between these two covenants will determine how you understand the gospel, how you define the church and Israel, how you view eschatology, etc. This single question is dealt with heavily in the books of Acts, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Hebrews. Any preconceived understanding of this relationship will determine how you interpret key passages in these books.

- A. What was the purpose of the law (could anyone be saved by keeping it)?
 - 1. Gal. 3:11,21,24
 - 2. I Tim 1:5-11
 - 3. Rom. 3:19-20 10:3,4
- B. What are the Similarities between the Covenants
 - 1. Shedding of innocent spotless blood for sacrifice Adam, Abraham, Moses fulfilled in Christ Heb.10:6-10
 - 2. Salvation is by faith in both i.e. Hebrews 11:6 faith in Christ
 - 3. Together are one book

Note: the two covenants are not two separate plans of salvation rather the unfolding of the eternal covenant of redemption. Without the first covenant there would be no imputation of sin. Rom. 5:13 And without the second there would be no satisfaction of the law. Rom. 10:4.

- C. The Differences between the Covenants
 - 1. Old is primarily to the nation of Israel; New is primarily to the church
 - 2. Old reveals demand for righteousness; New provides the righteousness
 - 3. Old is the ministration of death; New the ministration of Life.
 - 4. Old is mediated by Moses; New mediated by Christ

Conclusion

You must clearly, scripturally, and firmly understand the difference between the two Covenants. What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.