

As Adam and Eve beheld their failure by eating of the fruit from the tree of good and evil, their minds could experience only confusion, darkness, worthlessness, and hopelessness. They had been deceived by the Serpent, and by believing the Serpent they had chosen him as their master. God knew their plight and would open a door of hope. God made a promise that He would send a Messiah who would be able to overcome the Serpent:

And I will put enmity between you [the Serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Genesis 3:15

God would place in man an ability to say “no” to the temptations of the Devil. **This process is a journey for every member of the human family to consider this promise of God and, in turn, believe that God’s words are always reliable and that He accomplishes everything that He said He would do.** God did not ask Adam or Eve to produce this hatred themselves, He merely stated that He, God Himself, would place this hatred in them. When we grasp this principle it becomes clear that a hatred of Sin can also be expressed as a love for God and the things of God. Consider the following texts:

We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

God gave us a witness of His great love for us in that He gave us His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. Jesus is the visible expression of the Love of God toward this World. **Please note that the gift which God gave to mankind was not merely the coming of Christ into the world, but also the coming of Christ into the heart.** Paul expresses this also in the following manner:

*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but **Christ lives in me.** The life I now live in the body, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20*

Paul is clarifying the promise which God made to Adam when He said to the serpent “I will PUT enmity between you and the woman...” God’s promise remains the same, and He desires to put this promise into action in every person living on the face of the earth. God does not ask us to accomplish

anything on our own. To ask us to accomplish anything good on our own would be to set us up for failure. This is where our faith in the character of God becomes crucial. **If I do not trust God and His word, then His promises will have little or no impact upon me.** The words of God to us will have no weight if we do not believe that He is the source of every good thing and that nothing evil comes from him. James 1:17; 1 Jn. 1:5.

But how can we have such faith in God when we naturally doubt Him? It is not possible for man to produce such a faith. We must look to Jesus both for a clear example of what faith is and that we might receive His faith. In Psalm 2:7 Christ the Son has proclaimed His Father’s declaration of truth that He (Christ) had come forth from His Father:

I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Psalm 2:7

The Bible does not reveal that God “showed” His Son any evidence of how He came forth from His Father. The words of truth from the Father were sufficient for Jesus. He believed His Father’s words and it was accounted unto Him for righteousness. This is the covenant of faith that exists between God and His Son. Jesus rests in the assurance of His Sonship through the words spoken by His Father. The nature of the relationship which they share is such that Jesus has never doubted the words of His Father. **Jesus has absolute faith in every word which proceeds from His Father.**

I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say. John 12:50

And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. John 8:29

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Hebrews 11:6

We may take this truth for granted, but **this is the New Covenant.** Jesus is our example of true faith, and as He was begotten before there was anything else **He is the originator of Faith and therefore the originator of the New Covenant. Jesus was the first one to express faith.**

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

You will notice that most bibles express this text with the words “of our faith,” but the original Greek text actually states only “of faith.” Therefore, **what this text is actually telling us is that Jesus is the first one to exercise faith and that is why He is the author of faith, and because He is the author He is also the one who knows how to give this faith (His faith) to us, making Him the finisher of faith.**

... and the righteousness of God [is] through the faith of Jesus Christ to all, and upon all those believing,--for there is no difference, Romans 3:22

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Galatians 2:16

Without this precious faith of Jesus we are unable to believe the words of God. **Without His faith in us by His Spirit, we will continue to doubt the words and promises of God. This is the New Covenant; Christ dwelling in us by His Spirit believing the Word of God:**

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Gal 4:6,7

When we believe in the person of Jesus, we can receive **His faith**, the faith of Jesus that reconciles us to God. Gal. 2:16.

This process of moving from trusting ourselves and doubting God to doubting ourselves and trusting in God alone is the path from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant and is best described in the life of Abraham who is the father of the faithful. Abraham shows us how the two covenants work to bring us to faith in God completely. Consider what the Apostle Paul writes about the experience of Abraham:

*For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one [Ishmael] by a bondmaid [Hagar], the other [Isaac] by a freewoman [Sarah]. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for **these are the two covenants**; the one from the Mount Sinai, which brings bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. Galatians 4:22-26*

Paul explains that the two sons of Abraham symbolize the two covenants that were competing with each other within him.

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. Gal 5:17

The natural spirit of independence in Abraham warred against the Spirit of Christ that came into Abraham when he first submitted to God and left his homeland. By the Spirit of Christ, Abraham received a promise from God and his faith was accounted to him as righteousness because he simply believed the words which God had spoken. Gal. 3:6. After a while, however, he wavered in his faith that was given him and surrendered to the flesh by listening to the suggestions of Sarah to take another wife and receive the child of promise through an independent manner which God had not instructed. **This was an act of unbelief and was expressed as being in the “Old Covenant.”**

It is important then to note that the two covenants are occurring in the lifetime of one man. The covenants do not represent eras that cover large spaces of time. As we study the life of Abraham we see that his acceptance of the promises of God revealed his willingness to enter the New Covenant into which he had been invited. When Abraham rejected this invitation he was simply revealing what is by nature in the heart of man, namely, a rebellious desire to do everything ourselves. The life of Abraham demonstrates that this process occurs many times in mankind. This is because **the Old Covenant is the manifestation of the natural heart of mankind** and God condescends to use this to show us what we are really like because mankind does not, by nature, have the capacity to be obedient to God. It is when we see ourselves as we truly are and are overwhelmed with a sense of our failing and we erringly expect God to condemn us that He reveals His grace to us and invites us to accept His promise of redemption. **Every act of self-will and selfishness was a visible expression of being in the Old Covenant therefore every time Abraham “believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness” he acknowledged his own human weakness and accepted that God would fulfil His promise in him by the faith of Jesus, which is the New Covenant.**

The subject of the covenants raises many opinions as to what is meant by the terms “old” and “new” covenant. Many believe that the two covenants represent two different dispensations or eras of the Gospel which are separated by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Believers prior to the cross are considered to be “under law”, while believers after the cross are “under grace.” This tract aims to provide a biblical introduction into a different understanding of the covenants – as a personal experience in our Christian walk, with an Old Covenant experience leading into a New Covenant experience. The aim is to show that the gospel is “everlasting”, “for unto us [after the cross] was the gospel preached as well as unto them [prior to the cross]” (Heb 4:2).

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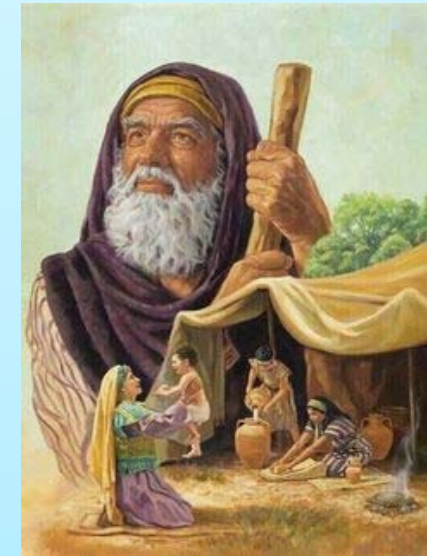


The Old & New Covenants

Two Dispensations of Time?

or

Two Inner Experiences?



“Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants.”

~ Galatians 4:22-24 ~