

The New Covenant Replaces The Old Covenant

Deuh!!

But just in case it's not that obvious to you and you're saying "Huh?" not "Deuh!"

A covenant is a legally binding agreement between two groups. In our case we are particularly interested in the covenants between God and mankind.

In our tradition these covenants have been called testaments, but in modern English that's a very rarely used word and is only associated with wills and death.

This is why the Bible is broken into the "Old Testament" and the "New Testament". One focuses on the old covenant that God had with mankind before the cross, and the other focuses on the new covenant which God has with mankind now.

Now, when I was a little boy my Dad gave me a few rules to live by.

eat your vegetables

hold hands when crossing the road

be polite

share your toys

And they had consequences. Not eating my vegetables meant I didn't get dessert. But breaking some of the others meant I got a smack. The breaking of different rules resulted in different consequences.

Now when I became an adult my Dad didn't sit me down and explicitly say that I don't have to keep his rules any more. I kind of figured that out for myself. I can choose my own rules now. But here's something interesting. I still do keep most of my Dad's rules. I still eat my vegetables. I'm still polite. I still share my toys.

I realised my Dad's rules weren't there to control me, they were there to protect me. To educate me in how to live well.

But now I don't smack myself if I break them... And I occasionally give myself permission to choose not to keep them.

And even stranger, now I like them... When I became an adult I found out that vegetables actually taste good. Who knew!

Now in the Bible we see something very similar.

In the "Old Testament" we read of several covenants God made with people. But the most important one was the one he made through Moses... called "The Law". The most famous part of that is the ten commandments.

There was a list of things you must and must not do, (lots of them, not just ten). And there were varying consequences for breaking different rules. (Even death for some of them).

In the "New Testament" we read of a new covenant that God made with people. Through Yeshua. Not a list of do's and don'ts - now we have complete freedom to do whatever we want. And really no consequence for breaking it.

(Actually this is also a very special covenant. It's completely one sided. God agrees to do certain things but we don't have to do anything on our side. But that's another story.)

Now my Dad would look at me funny these days if I grabbed his hand while crossing the road. If I said, "I thought it was a rule" he would look at me and say, "Son, you're grown up now."

Same for us as Christians, we are NOT under the old set of rules any more. Not in the smallest way. The new agreement has completely replaced the old one. That was for the Jews. It is not and never was for Christians. Christians have a new agreement. No rules. We have to choose for ourselves now.

And just like when we became adults - we can look at the old rules and realise they were there to protect us. They are good advice. But no longer binding. So we will most likely keep some of the rules from the old covenant... not murdering for example. But we might ignore some of them, like the one about not eating pork.

I find that this is one of the most basic teachings of the New Testament... (that we are no longer under the old covenant). And yet the most misunderstood, misapplied, misguided teaching amongst modern Christians.

Many Christians today are still trying to live under the old rules. (Funny though they don't seem so keen to live under the old consequences...) The old rules do not apply. Now they are just good advice.

In Hebrews 7 we read of a priest called Melchizedek. He was around in Abraham's time. Around 2000BC. About 600 years before The Law was handed down through Moses.

Under the law, only the descendants of Levi, (one of Abraham's great grandsons), were allowed to be priests. Hebrews 7 makes the point that God has appointed Yeshua to be the high priest in the order of Melchizedek, (not of Levi). Yeshua, our high priest, is of the order of Melchizedek. So are we.

Yeshua is NOT a Levite, (he was physically descendant from Judah), and he is not appointed as a Levitical priest, (of the order of Levi). Yeshua is **not** a high priest of the law.

Melchizedek was a priest before the law. When there was NO law. None. Just like now.

This is Christianity 101. Very fundamental stuff. But so many Christians have it wrong.

The old covenant, (the law), does not apply to Christians in any way.

We are of the order of Melchizedek not the order of Levi.

We are under a new covenant. Sealed with the blood of Yeshua. A covenant of freedom. A covenant of grace.

The old covenant of the law has been replaced by the new covenant of freedom.