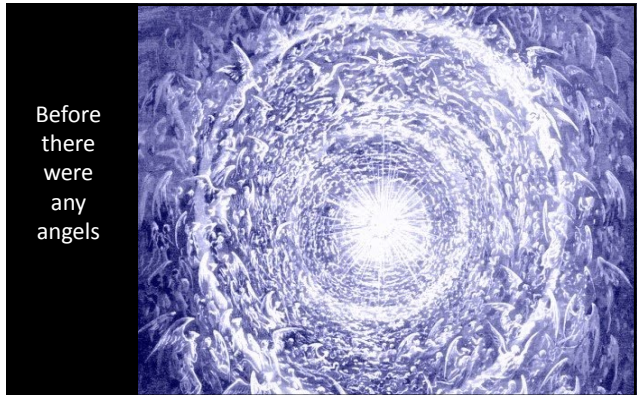
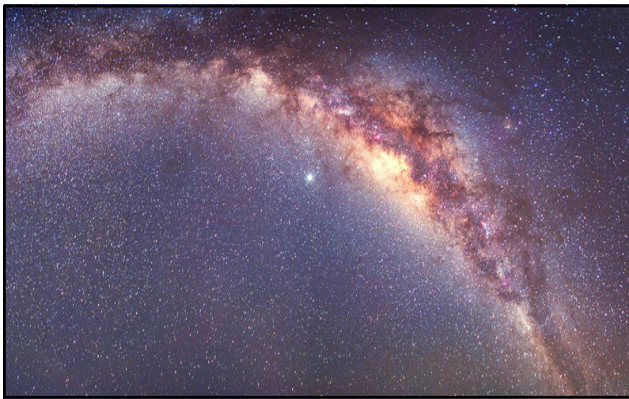
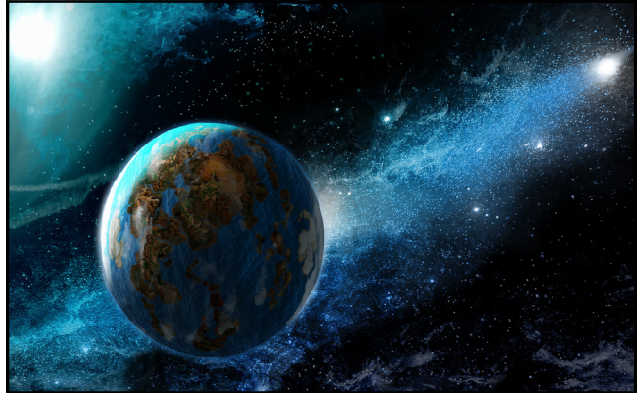


What's in a PROMISE?

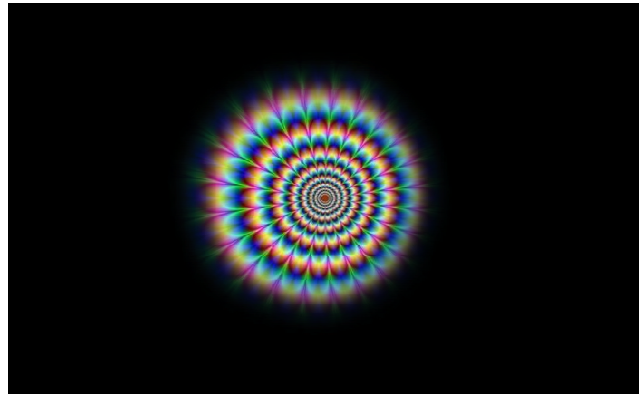
An Exploration of God's Covenants

A sermon by Norman Moll
September 1, 2012 Midland, Michigan



Before
there
were
any
angels

To a time before
“anything made . . . was made”
(John 1:3)

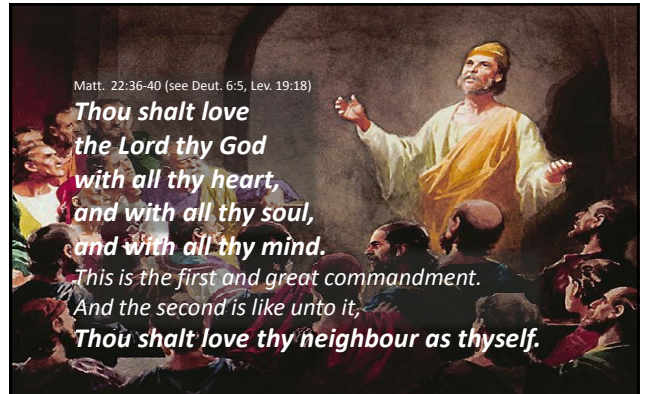
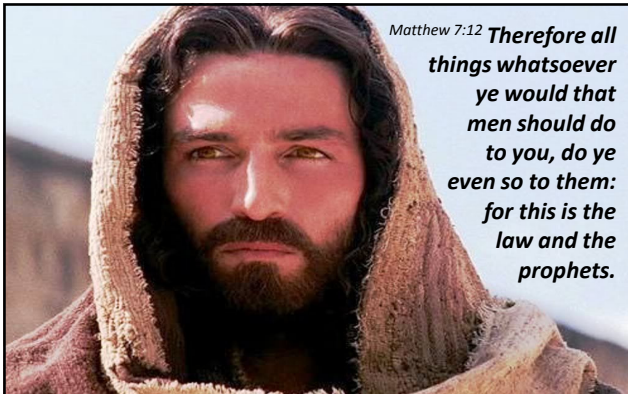


The unconditional commitment to Love that the Divine Relationship exhibits, that binds together Father, Son and Holy Spirit into one indivisible God, provides the basis for a critically important definition – the definition of

COVENANT

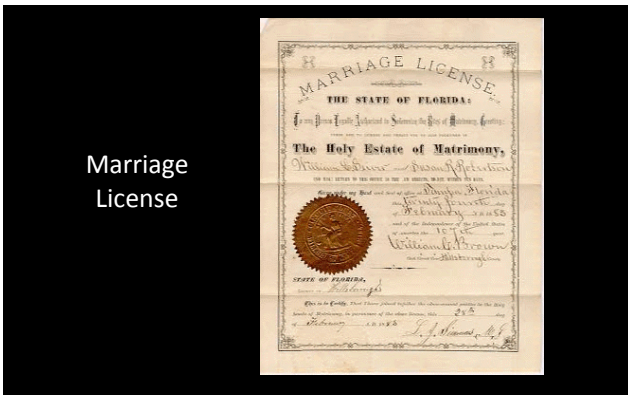
– the basis for all interpersonal interactions in which God engages.





"I am the LORD, I change not . . ."
 Malachi 3:6

God is Love.
 God is unchanging.
 God's love is unchanging.
 God's covenants are also unchanging.



Marriage License

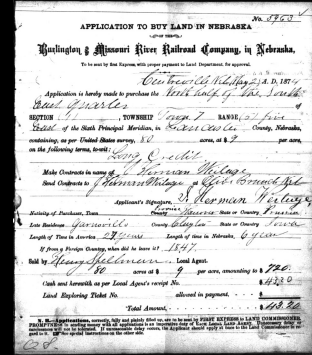


Marriage Certificate

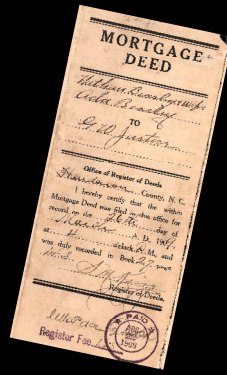
Naturalization Certificate



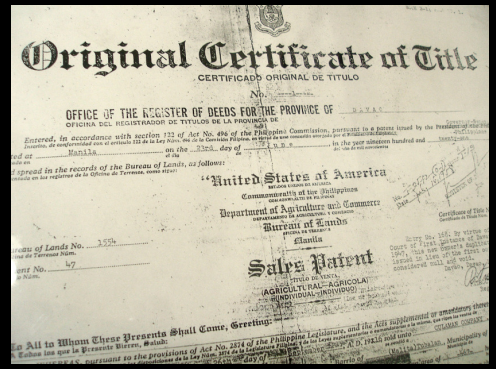
Land Contract



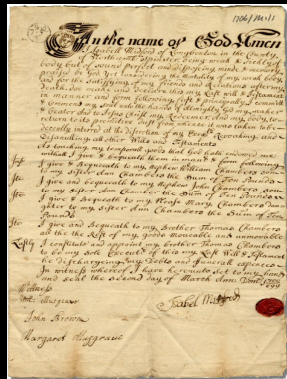
A Mortgage Deed



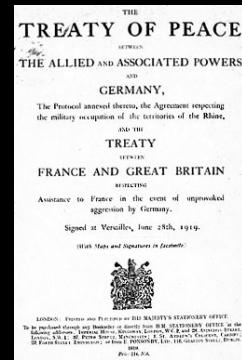
Title Deed



Last Will and Testament



Peace Treaty



Are covenants between humans completely trustworthy and secure?

1. For many covenants the death of one of the signers releases the other party. For instance a marriage only lasts as long as both parties live.
2. Since covenants depend on the law of the land for their legal standing, if the government fails or is toppled in war the covenants agreed to under that rule may lose their standing.
3. In spite of penalties included in some covenants it is not out of the question for one party to rebel and fail to fulfill his contractual agreement. In a land contract if the purchaser fails to pay according to the agreed upon schedule the land reverts to the original owner and the purchaser forfeits all that he has invested in the land up to that point.

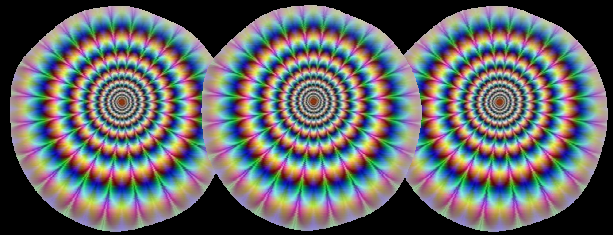
How God’s Covenants Are Different

For God to enter into a covenant with humans is highly significant. Since God lives forever, his death is not a concern. God’s law is unchanging and his rule is forever so a change of government is not a consideration. Finally God is trustworthy. He is true to His Word. Indeed only God is capable of establishing and fulfilling with 100% certainty any covenant. Hence only God can offer an everlasting/eternal covenant. Yet that is what He has done not just once but repeatedly down through time.

How God’s Covenants Are Different

Furthermore all of God’s covenants have their origin in the covenant that exists among the three members of the Godhead. Before anything created existed, God existed, love existed, covenant existed – Everlasting God, everlasting love, everlasting covenant. Inherent in that everlasting covenant was the character, the self-sacrificing love, the trustworthiness of the one Eternal Triune God.

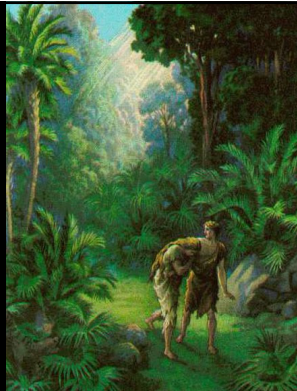
God’s Universal, Everlasting Covenant of Love



*God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. 1 Corinthians 5:19
 . . . Names . . . written in the book of life of the lamb slain from the
 foundation of the world. Revelation 13:8*

**Covenant of Redemption
 Covenant of Grace**

- The everlasting covenant extended to fallen humans
- Seed of the Woman would defeat the evil one
- The everlasting Gospel bridge from Paradise Lost to Paradise Restored
- God’s way of reconciling all things, in heaven and on earth, to Himself Genesis 3:15, etc.



**God’s Covenant
 After the Flood**

- Made with Noah, his seed and every living creature
- Never another universal flood
- The Rainbow – a token
- Seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease. Genesis 8:22; 9:8-17



God's Covenant With Abraham

Genesis 12, 15, 17

- Land of Canaan promised
- Seed as the stars of heaven
- Father of many nations
- All families of earth to be blessed by thy seed
- Circumcision the sign
- Ratified by the sign of the smoking furnace / burning lamp passing between the divided sacrifices



God's Covenant with Jacob

Genesis 28:10-15

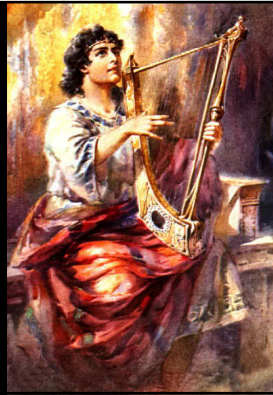
- God to be Jacob's God
- Dreams of a ladder reaching to heaven
- Land of Canaan for him and his seed
- Seed to be as the dust of the earth
- All families of earth to be blessed by thy seed
- I am with thee, will keep thee and bring you again to this land



God's Covenant with David

2 Samuel 7:5-17, 23:5

- I took him from the sheepcote and made him ruler over my people Israel
- I will be his father and he shall be my son
- Thy seed's kingdom to follow you
- He shall build me a house
- His kingdom established forever
- Thy house and throne to continue forever



God's Covenant with Israel at Sinai The Historical Old Covenant

- Bearer of the Everlasting Gospel
- System of moral and civil-laws based on love and the Ten Commandments
- Ceremonial system centered in the earthly sanctuary
- Imperfect priests administer animal sacrifices, shadows of the true sacrifice to be offered once for all
- Marked by redeeming acts of God
- Ratified by the blood of animals



God's New Covenant with Israel God's New Covenant

- Bearer of the Everlasting Gospel
- Greater moral expectations based on the fuller revelation of love and the Ten Commandments, as lived out in Jesus' life
- A new ceremonial system based on baptism and holy communion
- Administered by Jesus Christ, the perfect priest, in the heavenly sanctuary, interceding to save us completely
- Centered on Jesus' atoning sacrifice which provides forgiveness for sins committed in both old and new covenant historical periods
- The redemptive act of God in Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world and the reconciliation of all things to himself
- Ratified by the blood of Jesus



"Everlasting Covenant" References in the Bible

- "Everlasting Covenant" is used sixteen times
- Three uses specify "the" everlasting covenant
- Thirteen refer to "an" everlasting covenant
- All involve God as the covenant maker
- First use – Covenant with Noah following the flood:
Genesis 9:15-17 *And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth . . .*

“Everlasting Covenant” References in the Bible

- God’s covenant with Abraham recorded in Genesis 17
I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.
- To Israel at Sinai
1 Chronicles 16:15, 17 also Psalm 105:10 *Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. . . and hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant.*
- To David – regarding his throne (fulfilled only in Jesus due to the failure of David’s heirs)
2 Chronicles 23:5 (NIV) *If my house were not right with God, surely he would not have made with me an everlasting covenant, . . .*

“Everlasting Covenant” References in the Bible

- God promises to make an everlasting covenant with his people: Isaiah 55:3, 61:8, Jeremiah 32:40 and Ezekiel 16:60, and 37:26;
- Failure to keep God’s law results in the breaking of “the” everlasting covenant: Isaiah 24:5
- The covenant by which salvation is made possible, mentioned in the concluding words of Hebrews, is called “the” everlasting covenant:
Hebrews 13:20, 21 *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will . . . through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.*

“Everlasting Covenant” References in the Bible

- Both Old and New Testament references to “an” or “the” “everlasting covenant” exist.
- No one covenant is referred to exclusively as “the” everlasting covenant.
- We may therefore conclude that all of these covenants are part of one grand, eternal, covenant of love and peace between God and his entire creation.

What then are the foundational elements found in common among all of God’s Covenants with the inhabitants of planet earth?
WHAT IS THE DNA OF GOD’S COVENANT?

What is the New Covenant?

The first use of the term “new covenant” occurs in Jeremiah 31:31 where we read:
Jeremiah 31:31, 32 *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; my covenant which they broke, although I was a husband unto them, saith the LORD:*

According to this scripture the New Covenant will be unlike God’s covenant with the Israelites made at Sinai, a covenant which God’s people are stated to have broken.

What is the New Covenant?

Jeremiah 31:33, 34 *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*

THE DNA OF GOD’S COVENANT

Introduction Hebrews 8:6, 8-12 . . . He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. . . *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord;*

THE DNA OF GOD'S COVENANT

- Sanctification** *I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts:*
to become Holy as God is Holy
- Reconciliation** *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:*
- Mission** *And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.*
- Justification** *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

What is the Old Covenant?

- The covenant which existed before the New Covenant was instituted. (Hebrews 8:13)
- The covenant made "with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." (Hebrews 8:9)
- The covenant based on promises which could not be kept. (Hebrews 8:6) "All that the Lord has spoken we will do!" (Exodus 19:8)
- The covenant which God declared that Israel broke. (Isaiah 24:5)

Historically the Old Covenant relates to the entire Old Testament period.

For Whom Was the Old Covenant Intended?
Only Israel? No, the Whole World!

- God's intention was that Israel in keeping the covenant would become "a holy nation and a kingdom of priests." (Exodus 19:5, 6)
- Ezekiel 36:23 "the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes."
- Psalms 67: 1-2 "May God be gracious unto us and bless us and make his face shine upon us, that your [God's] ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations."
- Isaiah 51:4 "The law will go out from me, my justice will become a light to the nations."
- Isaiah 55:5 "Behold . . . nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God . . . for he hath glorified thee."

Evidence for the Universal Jurisdiction of the Commandments



"... the stranger within thy gates" in the 4th commandment (Exodus 20:10) and the reference to the "sons of strangers who keep the Sabbath" in Isaiah 56:6-7 "whose sacrifices and burnt offerings, made on my altar, God says he will accept, so that His House (temple) may be called a House of Prayer for All People."

Evidence for the Universal Jurisdiction of the Commandments



Isaiah 66:23 "It shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord."

Throughout the entire old covenant historical era God's covenants with His chosen people commissioned them to extend the gospel invitation to the whole world (Isaiah 45:22, Psalm 47:7-9). This task they failed to do!

Are then the provisions of the New Covenant present also in the Old (Sinaitic) Covenant? Why is this question important?

If the provisions of the New Covenant, the DNA, Sanctification, Reconciliation, Mission, Justification are also present in the Old Covenant, then the failure of Israel to keep the Old covenant is not God's fault but that of the people!

Are the provisions of the New Covenant present also in the Old (Sinaitic) Covenant?

Sanctification:

- Adam and Eve were created in God's Image. They were holy until they sinned. To regain holiness, to be sanctified is not humanly possible, but God offers: *"I am the Lord, who makes you holy."* Lev. 20:8
- Through the work of the Holy Spirit God desires to write his law in our fleshly hearts (not the granite of a stony heart) so that we might be *"eager [and able] to do what is good."* Ezekiel 36:27
- In Exodus 31:12-13 God says that keeping the Sabbath is a sign between God and His people that *"I am the Lord that doeth sanctify you."*

Are the provisions of the New Covenant present also in the Old (Sinaitic) Covenant?

Sanctification (continued):

- That a grace based sanctification was readily available within the provisions of the Old Covenant can be seen in Deuteronomy 30:11-16 *"Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. . . . No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so that you may obey it. . . . To love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws."*

Are the provisions of the New Covenant present also in the Old (Sinaitic) Covenant?

Reconciliation:

- Sin brought separation from God. Restoration of the Edenic divine-human love relationship is God's number 1 goal. It is contained in every covenant God has made: *"I will be their God and they will be my people."*
- We see this goal expressed by God in his words to the Israelites, Leviticus 26:12 *"I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people."*
- As free moral agents we have a choice. True love is based on free choice. God's intention for all intelligent, created beings is that they choose to return their Creator's love.
- How important is it for us to have a love relationship with God? John 17:3 *"This is eternal life to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."*

Are the provisions of the New Covenant present also in the Old (Sinaitic) Covenant?

Mission:

- As with reconciliation, God's desire is that all persons know Him. We have already seen repeated references to the mission God had planned for Israel, that of being a light to the world.
- Jeremiah 9:23-24 *"Let him that glorieth glory in this that he understands and knows me, the Lord who exercises loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight says the Lord."*
- Ezekiel 36:23 *"The nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, 'when I shew myself holy through you before their eyes.'"*

Are the provisions of the New Covenant present also in the Old (Sinaitic) Covenant?

Justification: God's gracious act in Christ to remove our sin and grant us a right standing before Him, imputing a **righteousness to us that is not of our own making, the righteousness of Christ.**

- *"For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."* Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:12
- God proclaimed as he passed by Moses on the mount, *"The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin."* Exodus 34:6-7 Wickedness here = perverse iniquity. **Rebellion** = a sin so heinous that there was no sacrifice proscribed for it in the entire sanctuary service. Still God willingly forgives wickedness and rebellion.

So with all the gracious provisions of the New Covenant contained in the Old Covenant, what was the outcome?

Why was God forced to say "they broke my covenant?"

What happened?

What might have been?

What Are We to Conclude?

- All of God's Covenants contain the same DNA
- Messiah's coming marks the transition from Old to New
- The Sanctuary Service of the Old pointed to the reality of Christ
- Jesus lived the perfect life, died for sinners, and mediates as their Great High Priest in the Heavenly Sanctuary
- The veil of separation has been removed
- The Holy Spirit, another Comforter, has taken Jesus place here
- The Sabbath is still the sign of God's sanctifying power and God's means of re-establishing Divine-Human relationships
- God's love remains the basis for His dealings with us
- The Cross and Resurrection demonstrate that love.
- Love motivates Christ's true followers.

"Do we live so close to the Lord today
Walking to and fro on life's busy way
That the world in us can a likeness see
To the man of Calvary?"

"Can the world see Jesus in you?
Can the world see Jesus in me?
Does your love for Him ring true
In your life and service too,
Can the World see Jesus in you?"

Covenant DNA – Have we accepted the promise?

- **Sanctification:** Have we allowed God to write his law on hearts so that it is ingrained in our very being and our actions are the natural outgrowth of partaking of the divine nature?
- **Reconciliation:** Does our relationship with God reflect the fact that we have become his child and he is our father so that mutual love flows between us?
- **Mission:** Are we sharing with the world the Good News of the Eternal Gospel message – God is Love?
- **Justification:** By faith have we allowed the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant to cover our sins?

What Describes Your Experience with God?
The Old Covenant or the New?

- | | |
|---|--|
| • God's law written on tables of stone | • God's law written in heart (mind) by God's Holy Spirit |
| • A person just going through the motions of religious observance | • One "born of the Spirit," living by the Spirit and bearing the Spirit's fruits |
| • A form of godliness that denies the power (2 Timothy 3:5) | • True obedience motivated by faith, empowered by the Spirit |
| • Legalistic righteousness based on works, not faith, making the law a slave-master | • Righteousness by faith in Christ that delights in and loves God's law |
| • Prevents marriage to Christ | • God's bride, Christ lives within |
| • "Man of sin" still alive and well | • Dead to sin, alive to Christ |
| • A perversion of Christ's gospel | • Sanctified, justified and reconciled |



