

THE TWO COVENANTS CONTRASTED (1)

By Keith Greer

“But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.” {Hebrews 8:6,7} Every good history student understands that when governments change, the laws that govern the people also change. Do you remember that the battle of San Jacinto freed Texas from Mexican dominion and law? This march for freedom began with the valiant men at the Alamo. When Texas became an independent nation, it was no longer amenable to Mexico’s laws.

We seem to be able to understand this fact as it pertains to civil law but fail to see that the same principle applies to the change from Moses’ Law to the Law of Christ. Hebrews does a masterful job of explaining how Christ’s death on the cross abrogated the Law of Moses. Paul stated the case plainly in *Romans 7:1-4*: “Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another--to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.” Death releases us from the duties of the law under which we live. Carefully read Paul’s words to the churches of Galatia in *Galatians 5:1-4*. *If we show some contrasts between the two covenants, it may become clearer.*

Who gave the laws? Old Covenant: “Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.” {Malachi 4:4} God gave the Old law to Moses, and Moses gave it to Israel {Exodus 20}. New Covenant: “To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.” {Hebrews 12:24} The Law of Christ came from Christ. Consider how John explained it. “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” {John 1:17}

To whom were the laws given? Old Covenant: “And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: ‘Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.’” {Deuteronomy 5:1,2} The Law of Moses was a national law that was given ONLY to the nation of Israel. New Covenant: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” {Luke 24:47} Remember, the apostles were sent “into the whole world.” {Mark 16:15} Christ’s Law is a UNIVERSAL Law given to all nations.

On what were the laws written? Old Covenant. “But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away.” {2 Corinthians 3:7} The Law of Moses was written on tablets of stone by the “finger of God” {Exodus 31:18}. New Covenant: “Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.” {2 Corinthians 3:3} Christ’s law

was written on men's hearts—their Bible hearts (minds). *“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” {Hebrews 8:10}* Can you begin to see the clear contrasts between the two covenants? Unfortunately, failure to distinguish between them has led to many different religious errors. When one seeks to combine the two covenants, false conclusions and teachings will be the results. In the following article we will show some additional information that can help us see why people today must accept the differences between the two covenants. ***