

Old Covenant/New Covenant Distinctions

I. Introduction

A. When the question arises, “Can we observe both the law of Moses and the law of Christ simultaneously?” it is important to point out that the two covenants oppose one another in so many ways.

B. Below, you will find a list of the “old covenant/new covenant” distinctions that I have found. Surely, many more exist.

C. Please **note** that many of the following Old Testament laws would fall under the category of New Testament liberty today. For example, it would not be sinful to refrain from working on Saturday, or to have your child circumcised, or to place dietary restrictions on yourself. Problems arise when we bind these laws on others or claim that “this is what God wants.” When we talk about something not being commanded in the new law, that doesn’t mean *necessarily* that it would be wrong to practice that law **individually** (in a non-religious way). We mean simply that it is not specified and therefore cannot be bound. On the other hand, many of the following Old Testament laws *cannot* be observed today (e.g. putting adulterers to death, Levitical priesthood, etc). Please understand this point as we begin our study...

II. Opposing Laws In Old And New Covenants.

A. Circumcision:

1. Commanded in old (Gen. 17:10-14).
2. Not commanded in new (Ac. 15:1-2, 10, 24; Gal. 5:3-4).

B. The Sabbath:

1. Commanded in old (Ex. 20:8-11; Num. 15:32-36).
2. Not commanded in new (Ac. 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Col. 2:14-16).

C. Observance Of Religious Holidays:

1. Commanded in old (Lev. 23).
2. Not commanded in new (Gal. 4:10-11; Col. 2:14-16).

D. Dietary Restrictions:

1. Commanded in old (Lev. 11).
2. Not commanded in new (Ac. 10:11-15; Rom. 14:17; Col. 2:16; 1 Tim. 4:4).

E. Passover Observance:

1. Commanded in old (Ex. 12:1-28).
2. Not commanded in new (1 Cor. 5:7).

F. Adulterers Put To Death:

1. Commanded in old (Lev. 20:10; Jn. 8:5).
2. Forbidden in new (1 Cor. 5).

G. Instrumental Music:

1. Commanded in old (2 Chr. 29:25-26).
2. Not commanded in new (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12).

H. Tithing:

1. Commanded in old (Lev. 27:30-34).
2. Not commanded in new (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7).

I. Animal Sacrifices:

1. Commanded in old (Lev. 1-7).
2. Not commanded in new (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:5).

J. Physical Tabernacle/Temple:

1. Commanded in old (Ex. 25-27; 1 Kin. 5:5).
2. Not commanded in new (Heb. 8:1-6).

K. Levitical Priesthood:

1. Commanded in old (Ex. 40:12-13; Heb. 7:11).
2. Not commanded in new (Heb 7:11-17; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

L. Civil Law:

1. Given in old (Lev. 4:22-26; Num. 31:9-18, 25-31; Num. 35).
2. Not given in new (Rom. 13:1-4).

M. Mode Of Communication:

1. Direct to prophets and leaders (Heb. 1:1).
2. Through Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:2).

N. Recipient Of Law:

1. The Israelites (Ex. 20:1-2).
2. All nations (Mt. 28:18-20; Rom. 1:16).

O. Revenge:

1. Allowed in old *through civil authorities* (Ex. 21:22-27; Num. 35:9-21).
2. Forbidden in new (Mt. 5:38-42).

P. Divorce:

1. Allowed in old *for reasons less than adultery* (Deut. 24:1-4).
2. Allowed in new *for one reason: adultery* (Mt. 19:9).

Q. Oaths:

1. Allowed in the old (Mt. 5:33).
2. Forbidden in new (Mt. 5:33-37; Jam. 5:12).

[At this point, we should ask the question- why do the two covenants seem to contradict if they are to be obeyed simultaneously? The point is, they do *not* co-exist. God is very clear in the New Testament that the old covenant is no longer active. The two covenants are distinct.]

III. The Old Covenant No Longer In Effect.

- A. Nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14-16; Eph. 2:14-16).
- B. The “yoke” disbanded (Ac. 15:9-11).
- C. Delivered from the law (Rom. 7:2-6).
 1. “Married” to one or the other, but not both (or called an adulterer).
- D. Not justified by old law, but by faith (Gal. 2:16-21, 3:2-3).
- E. Religious observance (and binding) of law of Moses results in apostasy (Gal. 5:1-4).
- F. Paul didn’t preach law of Moses (Gal. 5:11, 6:12).
- G. Not intended to last forever (Jer. 31:31-34; Gal. 3:19-25).
- H. Did not/does not provide redemption (Heb. 9:15, 10:4).
- I. An imperfect law (Heb. 8:6-7).
- J. The first has been done away (Heb. 8:13).
- K. First covenant removed and second covenant established (Heb. 10:9).

IV. The Authority Of Christ.

- A. Jesus Christ has ALL authority (Matthew 28:18).
- B. Worship is to be done according to Christ’s truth (John 4:24, 14:6).
- C. We must do all things by His authority (Colossians 3:17).
- D. The gospel alone is authoritative (Galatians 1:6-10).
- E. To transgress the doctrine of Christ is to lose fellowship with God (2 John 9).
- F. Words of Christ alone are to be taught as law (1 Tim. 6:3).
- G. Law of Moses and law of Christ contrasted (Gal. 2:16-21).