

## NEW COVENANT CHRISTIANITY – When Did it Begin?

There seems to be a lot of confusion over new covenant Christianity, the revised and updated law and covenant given to Jesus, compared to the temporary law given to Moses, and when this this new covenant began.

**Hebrews 8:7-13** tells us that first covenant was not *the* perfect covenant and that they were anticipating a second one.

It points out a major difference in the two covenants... in the first, Israel did not keep it. In the second, it will be in people's minds and on their hearts. YHWH will be their God and they will be His people. God will forgive their sins and remember them no longer.

It then reminds us that when there is a new covenant it makes the first obsolete. But we see this is a process, it is growing obsolete and in fact it will eventually disappear.

**Exodus 12:24** is often mistranslated and misunderstood because in some translations it says that the Law was given to them "forever or permanent." A more accurate translation or idea of the word "forever" is "long duration" or "here after."

It would seem logical to understand, knowing that the first covenant was temporary and unable to save, that the Israelites were to follow the Law and the old covenant, *UNTIL* the new one came at the coming of Messiah.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, no one would have looked for a second one.<sup>[m]</sup>  
<sup>8</sup> But<sup>[n]</sup> showing its fault,<sup>[o]</sup> God<sup>[p]</sup> says to them,

*"Look, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will complete a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.*

<sup>9</sup> *"It will not be like the covenant<sup>[q]</sup> that I made with their fathers, on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not continue in my covenant and I had no regard for them, says the Lord.*

<sup>10</sup> *"For this is the covenant that I will establish with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will put<sup>[s]</sup> my laws in their minds<sup>[t]</sup> and I will inscribe them on their hearts. And I will be their God and they will be my people.<sup>[u]</sup>*

<sup>11</sup> *"And there will be no need at all<sup>[v]</sup> for each one to teach his countryman or each one to teach his brother saying, 'Know the Lord,' since they will all know me, from the least to the greatest.<sup>[w]</sup>*

<sup>12</sup> *"For I will be merciful toward their evil deeds, and their sins I will remember no longer."<sup>[x]</sup>*

<sup>13</sup> When he speaks of a new covenant,<sup>[y]</sup> he makes the first obsolete. Now what is growing obsolete and aging is about to disappear.

The point of **Luke 5.33-39** seems not to be focused on the actual wine, or covenant, old or new, but on the fact that you can't or shouldn't mix the two. The new wine must be put in its *own* wineskin.

In regards to the last comment that no one after drinking old wine wants the new, "The old is good enough," it is helpful to understand that that phrase is used in the Greek as a *positive*, "it is good

enough," *not as a comparative*. "Why change what we have been drinking for something new? surely the old wine is good?"

**A few comments from various commentaries:** <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/luke/5-39.htm>

"The old is inferior, since the man, having declined to taste the new, can institute no comparison between it and the old. The wine which at the beginning has been set forth to him is good (John 2:10), and he assumes that only 'that which is worse' can follow."

"The words are spoken in a tone of something like a tolerant pity for the prejudices of age and custom."

"By a mongrel mixture of the ascetic ritualism of the old with the spiritual freedom of the new economy, both are disfigured and destroyed."

"Scribes and Pharisees, who have drank of the old wine of the law, and the traditions of the elders, do not desire the new wine of the Gospel, but prefer the former to it: the ceremonial law may be expressed by old wine, being originally instituted of God, and acceptable to him; and one part of which lay in libations of wine, and was of long standing, but now waxen old, and ready to vanish away; and likewise the traditions of the elders"

"The spirit for which our Lord here (as it were) offers an apology is the deep-rooted human tendency to prefer old habits to new lights, and stereotyped formulae to fresh truths. It is the unprogressive spirit which relies simply on authority, precedent, and tradition, and says, 'It was good enough for my father, it is good enough for me;' 'It will last my time.' The expression itself seems to have been a Jewish proverb."

**So, we see that this passage was not so much a comparison between the old and the new, but that the two cannot be mixed.** Also, that it can be hard to let go of one thing that is good when there is something new coming in its place. The main point, again, is that the old and the new cannot be mixed.

<sup>33</sup> Then<sup>[dw]</sup> they said to him, "John's<sup>[dx]</sup> disciples frequently fast<sup>[dv]</sup> and pray,<sup>[dz]</sup> and so do the disciples of the Pharisees,<sup>[ea]</sup> but yours continue to eat and drink."<sup>[eb]</sup> <sup>34</sup> So<sup>[ec]</sup> Jesus said to them, "You cannot make the wedding guests<sup>[ed]</sup> fast while the bridegroom<sup>[ee]</sup> is with them, can you?"<sup>[ef]</sup> <sup>35</sup> But those days are coming, and when the bridegroom is taken from them,<sup>[eg]</sup> at that time<sup>[eh]</sup> they will fast." <sup>36</sup> He also told them a parable:<sup>[ei]</sup> "No one tears a patch from a new garment and sews<sup>[ej]</sup> it on an old garment. If he does, he will have torn<sup>[ek]</sup> the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.<sup>[el]</sup> <sup>37</sup> And no one pours new wine into old wineskins.<sup>[em]</sup> If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. <sup>38</sup> Instead **new wine must be poured into new wineskins.**<sup>[en]</sup> <sup>39</sup> No<sup>[eo]</sup> one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, 'The old is good enough.'"

**Hebrews 9:8-10** seems to say something similar to **Luke 16:16**. The old order of things, the old covenant and its practices, external practices, including the holy place and tabernacle, were only symbols and only imposed on people until the new order came.

The Holy Spirit is making clear that the way into the Holy Place had not yet appeared as long as the old tabernacle<sup>[k]</sup> was standing. <sup>9</sup> This was a symbol for the time then present, when gifts and

sacrifices were offered that could not perfect the conscience of the worshiper.<sup>10</sup> They served only for matters of food and drink<sup>[l]</sup> and various ritual washings; they are external regulations<sup>[m]</sup> imposed until the new order came.

To understand this better let's consider why the Law was given to Moses. We see in **Galatians 3:19-29** that the law given to Moses was "**because of transgression,**" again, like **Luke 16:16**, "**UNTIL the arrival of the descendant** to whom the promise had been made."

So, the Law given to Moses was because of sin and only serving that purpose until the arrival of the descendant, Jesus, to whom the promise had been made.

In **Exodus 23:20-25, 30, 24:3-8** we see how what God spoke to Moses helps reveal His plan for this descendant and for the new covenant. It shows God's agency when it says that He was sending an angel to bring them into the place He had prepared for them. They were to listen to his voice and obey it because YHWH's name is in him (agency).

If you diligently obey him and do all that I command (again, agency) then God's angel will bring them into the promised land, and they will receive their inheritance.

So, Moses went and **told the people what God said which was the covenant that He was making with them**; and the people all agreed and answered that they would do what God said. They accepted the WORDS of the covenant.

Then Moses wrote down the covenant agreement, and they made a sacrifice. Half of the blood went on the altar and half in a bowl. Then Moses read the covenant to them again and when they agreed, he sprinkled the rest of the blood on them, sealing the covenant between them and God.

The words were spoken to Moses, he passed them on to the people, the sacrifice was made that ratified the covenant, and with agreement, the blood was sprinkled onto the people bringing them into the covenant with God.

"I am going to **send<sup>[av]</sup> an angel<sup>[aw]</sup>** before you to protect you as you journey<sup>[ax]</sup> and to **bring you into the place that I have prepared.<sup>[ay]</sup>**<sup>21</sup> Take heed because of him, and **obey his voice**; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for **my Name<sup>[az]</sup> is in him.**

**But if you diligently obey him<sup>[ba]</sup>** and do all that I command, (AGENCY) then I will be an enemy to your enemies, and I will be an adversary to your adversaries.<sup>23</sup> For my angel will go before you and bring you to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, and I will destroy them completely.<sup>[bb]</sup>

<sup>24</sup> "You must not bow down to their gods; you must not serve them or do according to their practices. Instead you must completely overthrow them and smash their standing stones<sup>[bc]</sup> to pieces.<sup>[bd]</sup> <sup>25</sup> You must serve<sup>[be]</sup> the LORD your God

Little by little<sup>[be]</sup> I will drive them out before you, until you become fruitful and inherit the land.

Moses came<sup>[b]</sup> and told the people all the LORD's words<sup>[i]</sup> and all the decisions. All the people answered together,<sup>[i]</sup> "We are willing to do<sup>[k]</sup> all the words that the LORD has said,"<sup>4</sup> and Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD.

He sent young Israelite men,<sup>[d]</sup> and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls for peace offerings<sup>[a]</sup> to the LORD.<sup>6</sup> Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and half of the blood he splashed on the altar.<sup>[j]</sup><sup>7</sup> He took the Book of the Covenant<sup>[s]</sup> and read it aloud<sup>[t]</sup> to the people, and they said, "We are willing to do and obey<sup>[u]</sup> all that the LORD has spoken."<sup>8</sup> So Moses took the blood and splashed it on<sup>[v]</sup> the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant<sup>[w]</sup> that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

**Hebrews 10:1-13** tells us that the old covenant Law was just a shadow of the good things God has planned that would come later. The first covenant was not reality itself and was unable to perfect and save. What was done in Exodus was a shadow of the new covenant and what the Messiah would do.

We see a clear distinction between the Law given to Moses and when Jesus came on the scene. Jesus puts the old sacrifice and offering on one side and then compares them to himself. He states that God did not even desire or delight in those sacrifices and offerings, but His plan ultimately was the human messiah, Jesus. Jesus confirmed that he was written about in the Torah, and in fact that he was there now to do God's will and bring about His perfect plan. **When the light was turned on to reveal the reality, the shadow faded.**

The writer of Hebrews states the fact that when Jesus said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will," **at that time**, he did away with the first to establish the second. When Jesus started his ministry of proclaiming the new covenant, the perfect covenant, he did away with old, the first covenant given to Moses, which as we know, was only temporary.

Just as Moses brought the Law, the covenant, that God gave him to the people of Israel, and they agreed and sealed it with blood, Jesus now brings a better covenant and we can be made holy through the offering of his body, if we agree to the covenant and are sprinkled with the blood as the Israelites were.

Jesus spoke the new covenant that God gave him (**John 12:49** "For I have not spoken from my own authority, but the Father himself who sent me has commanded me what I should say and what I should speak.") during his ministry. Then made an offering to seal the covenant with God. And then entered heaven, as the High Priest, into the Holy of Holies, with the sacrifice, himself, and sat down at the right hand of God and is now waiting to return and put his enemies under his feet and to consummate the covenant and fully manifest the prophecy and promises of God.

For the law possesses a shadow of the good things to come but not the reality itself, and is therefore completely unable, by the same sacrifices offered continually, year after year, to perfect those who come to worship.<sup>[a]</sup><sup>2</sup> For otherwise would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers would have been purified once for all and so have<sup>[b]</sup> no further consciousness of sin?<sup>3</sup> But in those sacrifices<sup>[c]</sup> there is a reminder of sins year after year.<sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.<sup>5</sup> So when he came into the world, he said,

*“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me.*

<sup>6</sup> *“Whole burnt offerings and sin-offerings you took no delight in.*

<sup>7</sup> *“Then I said, ‘Here I am:<sup>[d]</sup> I have come—it is written of me in the scroll of the book—to do your will, O God.’”<sup>[e]</sup>*

<sup>8</sup> When he says above, *“Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sin-offerings you did not desire nor did you take delight in them”<sup>[f]</sup>* (which are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup> then he says, *“Here I am: I have come to do your will.”<sup>[g]</sup> **He does away with<sup>[h]</sup> the first to establish the second.*** <sup>10</sup> By his will<sup>[i]</sup> we have been made holy through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. <sup>11</sup> And every priest stands day after day<sup>[j]</sup> serving and offering the same sacrifices again and again—sacrifices that can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But when this priest<sup>[k]</sup> had offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, *he sat down at the right hand<sup>[l]</sup> of God,* <sup>13</sup> where he is now waiting<sup>[m]</sup> *until his enemies are made a footstool for his feet*

We can see in the shadow of the festivals and the Law given to Moses, the plan that was fulfilled and is being fulfilled in messiah Jesus and with our Kingdom hope.

The Law and the prophets prophesied about the Messiah and the Kingdom to come. They pointed to the future. The first four feasts were fulfilled in Jesus and the last three will be manifested when Jesus returns.

Again, **Galatians 3:19-29 and 4:1-12** poses the same question many ask today, *“Why then was the Law given?”* And it also immediately gives us the answer.

**It was given because of sin and UNTIL the arrival of the descendant to whom the promise was made.** It reminds us as Exodus stated, that angels passed it on to the mediator, Moses, who represented both sides, God, and the Israelites. **Jesus in the same way is the mediator of the new covenant that God gave to him which revealed God’s purpose when the time was right.**

**1 Timothy 2:5-6** states again that “there is one God and one *mediator* between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom for all, revealing God’s purpose at his appointed time.”

**Luke 4:14-21** confirm Jesus as God’s Messiah and spokesman. He was baptized, holy spirit came upon him, and he passed the temptation test in the wilderness. At that time he began teaching in the Synagogues.

Jesus, led by God’s holy spirit, was given Isaiah to read and when he finished reading, he made it clear that *TODAY* this scripture has been fulfilled as they heard it read.

***“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and the regaining of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”***

Jesus announced that he was Messiah and that his ministry had begun. He was the anointed one and would now be proclaiming the Kingdom (**Luke 4:43, 8:1, 16:16**).

**Luke 16:16** is tied in here as well. “The Law and the Prophets were in force *until* John; since then the good news of the Kingdom of God has been proclaimed.” **Galatians 3:24** reiterates that the Law was a guardian *UNTIL* Christ.

**So, was it until John or until Christ?** It was until both, until John because he went before the Messiah announcing that he was coming, and then the actual new covenant began when Jesus began speaking.

Some question **Luke 16:17** where it says that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for the (old covenant) Law to fail, which would seem to contradict verse 16 where it says it was proclaimed and followed *UNTIL* John.

Look at the word “until,” we see that the Greek word means, “up to a certain point.” It refers to the space of time or place, till, or until. So, Luke 16:16 is clear that what he is speaking about, the Law and Prophets were to be followed, were in effect, *until a certain point*, which we see is, until John and in Galatians, until Messiah.

<sup>16</sup> “The law and the prophets were (in force) until John;<sup>[az]</sup> since then,<sup>[ba]</sup> the good news of the kingdom of God<sup>[bb]</sup> has been proclaimed, and everyone is urged to enter it.<sup>[bc]</sup> <sup>17</sup> But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tiny stroke of a letter<sup>[bd]</sup> in the law to become void.

“Nothing truly belonging to the Law, however seemingly trivial, shall drift away and be forgotten until it has done all that it was meant to do.” **So, nothing would be forgotten until it was done doing what God meant for it to do.**

Where it says, “fail,” that means fall from or down, or to fall under (as under condemnation.)

God has moved the temporary blessings in the land of Canaan; to the eternal blessings in the Kingdom of God. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/luke/16-16.htm>

The Law and the Prophets were until John, and since that time, the Kingdom of God is preached, the Gospel of the Messiah, his person and his office.

The law and the prophets were until John. This is one of our Lord’s clearest intimations that the aeon, or age, of the Law and the Prophets was now merging into a new dispensation, since they were only “a shadow of things to come.” Colossians 2:17

#### **Luke 4:14-21**

<sup>14</sup> Then<sup>[ar]</sup> Jesus, in the power of the Spirit,<sup>[as]</sup> returned to Galilee, and news about him spread<sup>[at]</sup> throughout the surrounding countryside.<sup>[au]</sup> <sup>15</sup> He<sup>[av]</sup> began to teach<sup>[aw]</sup> in their synagogues<sup>[ax]</sup> and was praised<sup>[ay]</sup> by all.

<sup>16</sup> Now<sup>[az]</sup> Jesus<sup>[ba]</sup> came to Nazareth,<sup>[bb]</sup> where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue<sup>[bc]</sup> on the Sabbath day, as was his custom.<sup>[bd]</sup> He<sup>[be]</sup> stood up to read,<sup>[bf]</sup> <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He<sup>[bg]</sup> unrolled<sup>[bh]</sup> the scroll and found the place where it was written,

<sup>18</sup> ***“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed<sup>[bi]</sup> me to proclaim good news<sup>[bi]</sup> to the poor.<sup>[bk]</sup>  
He has sent me<sup>[bl]</sup> to proclaim release<sup>[bm]</sup> to the captives  
and the regaining of sight<sup>[bn]</sup> to the blind,  
to set free<sup>[bo]</sup> those who are oppressed,<sup>[bp]</sup>  
<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year<sup>[bq]</sup> of the Lord’s favor.”<sup>[br]</sup>***

<sup>20</sup> Then<sup>[bs]</sup> he rolled up<sup>[bt]</sup> the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on<sup>[bu]</sup> him. <sup>21</sup> Then<sup>[bv]</sup> he began to tell them, “Today<sup>[bw]</sup> this scripture has been fulfilled even as you heard it being read.”

We also see in the Galatian 3 passage another important question, *“Is the Law then opposed to God?”* The answer is NO, because it could not give life or make people righteous. It actually imprisoned people to sin! The promise and reality was given through Jesus and made possible through his faithfulness to those who would believe (and act on their belief, that is, obey).

The passage goes on to say that we were held in custody of the Law (had to obey and practice it) *UNTIL* the coming faith would be revealed. It says that the Law was our guardian *UNTIL* Messiah, and only then could we be declared righteous through faith in what God said.

We become sons of God through Messiah Jesus when we agree to this new covenant through faith, that is, we believe what he said and respond accordingly.

It then goes on to say how we seal this covenant when we profess our agreement after reading the document (as Moses did with the Israelites). We don’t have the actual blood of the covenant splashed on us as Moses did when they sealed the covenant with the animal sacrifice, but it says that we clothe ourselves with Christ through baptism. Then we belong to Christ and are Abraham’s descendants and heirs to the promise given to him.

Again, it makes distinction that the Law given to Moses was *only for a time*, and that time was until God sent, or commissioned His son who was a human born under the Law. God did this so that Jesus could truly be the one to redeem those under the Law. (Yes, Jesus was born under the Law and followed and kept it as his parents did until he was given the words of the new covenant.)

When redeemed we are no longer slaves but become sons and heirs having full rights as children of God.

Paul then addresses Christians, those who have agreed to and come under the new covenant that was given to Jesus. He makes sure they understand that once they accepted and started following Messiah, then they could not and should not turn back to what was weak and worthless. He tells them if they do that they would be enslaved all over again to the letter of the Law given to Moses, to observing religious days, months, seasons, or years.

If we choose to follow Christ, which means following the new covenant given to him, his teachings, then, if we desire to keep any of the old covenant given to Moses, we have turned our back on Jesus for something weak and worthless. The old covenant is behind us and the new covenant is before us. You cannot face both directions. You must choose. Go forward or turn back. The Israelites could not go

toward the promised land and freedom and at the same time turn around and go back to slavery in Egypt.

### Galatians 3:19-4:12

<sup>19</sup> Why then was the law given?<sup>[am]</sup> It was added<sup>[an]</sup> because of transgressions,<sup>[ao]</sup> until the arrival of the descendant<sup>[ap]</sup> to whom the promise had been made. It was administered<sup>[aq]</sup> through angels by an intermediary.<sup>[ar]</sup> <sup>20</sup> Now an intermediary is not for one party alone, but God is one.<sup>[as]</sup> <sup>21</sup> Is the law therefore opposed to the promises of God?<sup>[at]</sup> Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that was able to give life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.<sup>[au]</sup> <sup>22</sup> But the scripture imprisoned<sup>[av]</sup> everything under sin so that the promise could be given—because of the faithfulness<sup>[aw]</sup> of Jesus Christ—to those who believe.

<sup>23</sup> Now before faith<sup>[ax]</sup> came we were held in custody under the law, being kept as prisoners<sup>[ay]</sup> **until the coming faith would be revealed**. <sup>24</sup> Thus the law had become our guardian<sup>[az]</sup> **until Christ**, so that we could be declared righteous<sup>[ba]</sup> by faith. <sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.<sup>[bb]</sup> <sup>26</sup> For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith.<sup>[bc]</sup> <sup>27</sup> For all of you who<sup>[bd]</sup> were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave<sup>[be]</sup> nor free, there is neither male nor female<sup>[bf]</sup>—for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants,<sup>[bg]</sup> heirs according to the promise.

Now I mean that the heir, as long as he is a minor,<sup>[a]</sup> is no different from a slave, though he is the owner<sup>[b]</sup> of everything. <sup>2</sup> But he is under guardians<sup>[c]</sup> and managers until the date set by his<sup>[d]</sup> father. <sup>3</sup> So also we, when we were minors,<sup>[e]</sup> were enslaved under the basic forces<sup>[f]</sup> of the world. <sup>4</sup> But **when the appropriate time<sup>[g]</sup> had come, God sent out his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,** <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we may be adopted as sons with full rights.<sup>[h]</sup> <sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who calls<sup>[i]</sup> *"Abba!i]"* Father!" <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if you are<sup>[k]</sup> a son, then you are also an heir through God.<sup>[l]</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Formerly when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods at all.<sup>[m]</sup> <sup>9</sup> But now that you have come to know God (or rather to be known by God), how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless<sup>[n]</sup> basic forces?<sup>[o]</sup> Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again?<sup>[p]</sup> <sup>10</sup> You are observing religious<sup>[q]</sup> days and months and seasons and years. <sup>11</sup> I fear for you that my work for you may have been in vain. <sup>12</sup> I beg you, brothers and sisters,<sup>[r]</sup> become like me, because I have become like you. You have done me no wrong!

**Romans 4** asks about Abraham in regards to this matter. Abraham showed even then that it was *faith* that God desired. Belief in what God said, proven by his actions, made him righteous. Abraham believed God long before he was circumcised, which later became the seal of that covenant. This made it clear that it was not the Law, but faith, that the promise to inherit the earth would be fulfilled, both for Jews and Gentiles.

Even David spoke of faith and righteousness and that sins would be covered over and forgiven, and never counted against the believer under the new covenant.

### Romans 4:1-25



What then shall we say that Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh,<sup>[a]</sup> has discovered regarding this matter?<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was declared righteous<sup>[c]</sup> by works, he has something to boast about—but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the scripture say? **“Abraham believed God, and it was credited<sup>[d]</sup> to him as righteousness.”**<sup>[e]</sup> <sup>4</sup> Now to the one who works, his pay is not credited due to grace but due to obligation.<sup>[f]</sup> <sup>5</sup> But to the one who does not work, but believes in the one who declares the ungodly righteous,<sup>[g]</sup> his faith is credited as righteousness.

<sup>6</sup> So even David himself speaks regarding the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

<sup>7</sup> **“Blessed<sup>[h]</sup> are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;**  
<sup>8</sup> **blissed is the one<sup>[i]</sup> against whom the Lord will never count<sup>[j]</sup> sin.”**<sup>[k]</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Is this blessedness<sup>[l]</sup> then for<sup>[m]</sup> the circumcision<sup>[n]</sup> or also for<sup>[o]</sup> the uncircumcision? For we say, **“faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness.”**<sup>[p]</sup> <sup>10</sup> How then was it credited to him? Was he circumcised at the time, or not? No, he was not circumcised but uncircumcised! <sup>11</sup> And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised,<sup>[q]</sup> so that he would become<sup>[r]</sup> the father of all those who believe but have never been circumcised,<sup>[s]</sup> that they too could have righteousness credited to them. <sup>12</sup> And he is also the father of the circumcised,<sup>[t]</sup> who are not only circumcised, but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham possessed when he was still uncircumcised.<sup>[u]</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For the promise<sup>[v]</sup> to Abraham or to his descendants that he would inherit the world was not fulfilled through the law, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

<sup>14</sup> For if they become heirs by the law, faith is empty and the promise is nullified.<sup>[w]</sup> <sup>15</sup> For the law brings wrath, because where there is no law there is no transgression<sup>[x]</sup> either.

<sup>16</sup> For this reason it is by faith so that it may be by grace,<sup>[y]</sup> with the result that the promise may be certain to all the descendants—not only to those who are under the law, but also to those who have the faith of Abraham,<sup>[z]</sup> who is the father of us all <sup>17</sup> (as it is written, **“I have made you the father of many nations”**).<sup>[aa]</sup> He is our father<sup>[ab]</sup> in the presence of God whom he believed—the God who<sup>[ac]</sup> makes the dead alive and summons the things that do not yet exist as though they already do.<sup>[ad]</sup> <sup>18</sup> Against hope Abraham<sup>[ae]</sup> believed<sup>[af]</sup> in hope with the result that he became **the father of many nations**<sup>[ag]</sup> according to the pronouncement,<sup>[ah]</sup> **“so will your descendants be.”**<sup>[ai]</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Without being weak in faith, he considered<sup>[aj]</sup> his own body as dead<sup>[ak]</sup> (because he was about 100 years old) and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. <sup>20</sup> He<sup>[al]</sup> did not waver in unbelief about the promise of God but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.

<sup>21</sup> He was<sup>[am]</sup> fully convinced that what God<sup>[an]</sup> promised he was also able to do. <sup>22</sup> So indeed it was credited to Abraham<sup>[ao]</sup> as righteousness.

<sup>23</sup> But the statement **it was credited to him**<sup>[ap]</sup> was not written only for Abraham’s<sup>[aq]</sup> sake, <sup>24</sup> but also for our sake, to whom it will be credited, those who believe in the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. <sup>25</sup> He<sup>[ar]</sup> was given over<sup>[as]</sup> because of our transgressions and was raised for the sake of<sup>[at]</sup> our justification.

**James 2:10** reminds us of the fact that if someone is trying to keep the Law given to Moses and fails in just one point, then he will be guilty of breaking the whole Law. You can't pick and choose.

For the one who obeys the whole law but fails<sup>[l]</sup> in one point has become guilty of all of it.

**Colossians 2:6-23** talks about "receiving Christ as Lord" (by receiving his teachings with faith) and being buried with him in baptism and raised with him through faith. Again, hearing, accepting, or agreeing to, and sealing the covenant is all necessary if we want to come into covenant with God and receive Christ as Lord. In doing so, this is how we are "circumcised by Christ."

When we receive it and obey, this destroys the certificate of indebtedness to the covenant given to Adam, *if you sin you will die*, and to the indebtedness to the Law given to Moses and all its regulations.

*Jesus preached freedom from the Law and in the end, it was ratified on the cross.*

It says, THEREFORE, because Jesus did this, keep your focus on the reality and not the shadow. Don't let people judge you, because you are no longer living in slavery, to food and drink according to the Law given to Moses, or feasts, new moon or sabbath days.

Keep in mind that the Law was until John who was the forerunner of the chosen Messiah. John was the last transition between the old and the new covenants. Once Jesus began his ministry, he began speaking the words of the New Covenant, which were true and in effect at that time. They were just not ratified with his blood until he gave his life as the ultimate and only sacrifice that could and would save those who came into covenant with God.

### **Colossians 2:6-23**

<sup>6</sup> Therefore, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord,<sup>[l]</sup> continue to live your lives<sup>[m]</sup> in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted<sup>[n]</sup> and built up in him and firm<sup>[o]</sup> in your<sup>[p]</sup> faith just as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. <sup>8</sup> Be careful not to allow anyone to captivate you<sup>[q]</sup> through an empty, deceitful philosophy<sup>[r]</sup> that is according to human traditions and the elemental spirits<sup>[s]</sup> of the world, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in him all the fullness of deity lives<sup>[t]</sup> in bodily form, <sup>10</sup> and you have been filled in him, who is the head over every ruler and authority. <sup>11</sup> In him you also were circumcised—not, however,<sup>[u]</sup> with a circumcision performed by human hands, but by the removal<sup>[v]</sup> of the fleshly body,<sup>[w]</sup> that is,<sup>[x]</sup> through the circumcision done by Christ. <sup>12</sup> Having been **buried with him in baptism, you also have been raised with him through your**<sup>[y]</sup> **faith in the power**<sup>[z]</sup> **of God who raised him from the dead.** <sup>13</sup> And even though you were dead in your<sup>[aa]</sup> transgressions and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he nevertheless<sup>[ab]</sup> made you alive with him, having forgiven all your transgressions. <sup>14</sup> **He has destroyed**<sup>[ac]</sup> **what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness**<sup>[ad]</sup> **expressed in decrees opposed to us. He has taken it away by nailing it to the cross.** <sup>15</sup> **Disarming**<sup>[ae]</sup> **the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross.** (curse of Adam, you will die)

<sup>16</sup> Therefore do not let anyone judge you with respect to food or drink, or in the matter of a feast, new moon, or Sabbath days— <sup>17</sup> these are only<sup>[ag]</sup> the shadow of the things to come, but the reality<sup>[ah]</sup> is Christ!<sup>[ai]</sup> <sup>18</sup> Let no one who delights in false humility<sup>[aj]</sup> and the worship of angels pass judgment on you. That person goes on at great lengths<sup>[ak]</sup> about what he has supposedly seen, but he is puffed up with empty notions by his fleshly mind.<sup>[al]</sup> <sup>19</sup> He has not held fast<sup>[am]</sup> to

the head from whom the whole body, supported<sup>[an]</sup> and knit together through its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.<sup>[ao]</sup>

<sup>20</sup> If you have died with Christ to the elemental spirits<sup>[ap]</sup> of the world, why do you submit to them as though you lived in the world? <sup>21</sup> “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!” <sup>22</sup> These are all destined to perish with use, founded as they are<sup>[aq]</sup> on human commands and teachings.<sup>[ar]</sup> <sup>23</sup> Even though they have the appearance of wisdom<sup>[as]</sup> with their self-imposed worship and humility achieved by an<sup>[at]</sup> unsparing treatment of the body—a wisdom with no true value—they in reality result in fleshly indulgence.

Jesus taught in **Matthew 7.12** that if we treat others how we want to be treated, we then fulfill the Law and the prophets.

The Law and the prophets we see here, which would be the same in **Luke 16:17**, means the sum and substance of Torah, all the Law and what the prophets spoke, all of Scripture.

So, when talking about the New Covenant fulfilling the Law and the Prophets, it is saying that Jesus and his words, the new covenant, fulfill everything spoken of prior to him. It is not saying that what the prophets spoke has all come to pass or that it will not come to pass.

In<sup>[b]</sup> everything, treat others as you would want them<sup>[a]</sup> to treat you,<sup>[r]</sup> for this fulfills<sup>[s]</sup> the law and the prophets.

**John 1.45** confirms that Moses wrote about Jesus in the Law, as did the prophets.

Philip found Nathanael<sup>[df]</sup> and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the law, and the prophets also<sup>[dg]</sup> wrote about—Jesus of Nazareth

As does **Acts 28.23-24**. From morning till evening Paul explained and tried to convince people about the Kingdom and Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the prophet’s writings.

They set<sup>[br]</sup> a day to meet with him,<sup>[bs]</sup> and they came to him where he was staying<sup>[bt]</sup> in even greater numbers.<sup>[bu]</sup> From morning until evening he explained things<sup>[bv]</sup> to them,<sup>[bw]</sup> testifying<sup>[bx]</sup> about the kingdom of God<sup>[by]</sup> and trying to convince<sup>[bz]</sup> them about Jesus from both the law of Moses and the prophets. <sup>24</sup> Some were convinced<sup>[ca]</sup> by what he said,<sup>[cb]</sup> but others refused<sup>[cc]</sup> to believe.

**Romans 3.19-31** tells us that the Law only applies to those under the Law, who anyone following Christ is not under. It says that although the righteousness of God was attested to us by the Law and the Prophets (basically the whole Old Testament), it was disclosed, or brought to light apart from the Law, through the faithfulness of Jesus.

God publicly displayed him at his death as the mercy seat accessible through faith. (Which is a whole other teaching, but we see through the old covenant shadow what the new covenant reality was and did.) God did this to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance He had passed over the sins previously committed, just like we saw in the first Passover in Egypt with those who obeyed.

The question is then asked, Do we then nullify the law through faith? Absolutely not! Instead we uphold the law. And this is what Jesus' teaching showed us. This is what is meant by the new covenant fulfilling the old. **It moved from obedience to the Law to obedience in faith.**

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under<sup>[u]</sup> the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> For *no one is declared righteous before him<sup>[v]</sup>* by the works of the law,<sup>[w]</sup> for through the law comes<sup>[x]</sup> the knowledge of sin. <sup>21</sup> But now<sup>[y]</sup> apart from the law the righteousness of God (although it is attested by the **law and the prophets**)<sup>[z]</sup> has been disclosed— <sup>22</sup> namely, the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ<sup>[aa]</sup> for all who believe. For there is no distinction, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. <sup>24</sup> But they are justified<sup>[ab]</sup> freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup> God publicly displayed<sup>[ac]</sup> him<sup>[ad]</sup> at his death<sup>[ae]</sup> as the mercy seat<sup>[af]</sup> accessible through faith.<sup>[ag]</sup> This was to demonstrate<sup>[ah]</sup> his righteousness, because God in his forbearance had passed over the sins previously committed.<sup>[ai]</sup> <sup>26</sup> This was<sup>[aj]</sup> also to demonstrate<sup>[ak]</sup> his righteousness in the present time, so that he would be just<sup>[al]</sup> and the justifier of the one who lives because of Jesus' faithfulness.<sup>[am]</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Where, then, is boasting?<sup>[an]</sup> It is excluded! By what principle?<sup>[ao]</sup> Of works? No, but by the principle of faith! <sup>28</sup> For we consider that a person<sup>[ap]</sup> is declared righteous by faith apart from the works of the law.<sup>[aq]</sup> <sup>29</sup> Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of the Gentiles too? Yes, of the Gentiles too! <sup>30</sup> Since God is one,<sup>[ar]</sup> he will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. <sup>31</sup> **Do we then nullify<sup>[as]</sup> the law through faith? Absolutely not! Instead<sup>[at]</sup> we uphold the law.**

As we continue, we see more how John was the transition, as was his baptism. He was the one to come before the Messiah, even if the new covenant was being revealed earlier by the “shadow” and the prophets.

Some link John's baptism to the Jewish ritual washing called Mikvah. Mikvah was a shadow that would reveal reality later. John was taking it one step closer. It was not the same as Mikvah, and yet it was not the same as baptism as commanded later for those desiring to follow Christ. (We see in **Acts 19:2-5** this is true because those who received “just” the baptism of John were “re-baptized” into Christ.)

“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”<sup>[f]</sup> They replied,<sup>[g]</sup> “No, we have not even<sup>[h]</sup> heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” <sup>3</sup> So Paul<sup>[i]</sup> said, “Into what then were you baptized?” “Into **John's baptism,**” they replied.<sup>[j]</sup> <sup>4</sup> Paul said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him,<sup>[k]</sup> that is, in Jesus.” <sup>5</sup> **When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

Looking at what a Mikveh (Mikvah) was, it was a bath used for the purpose of ritual immersion in Judaism to achieve ritual purity. It is said that it must be living water, flowing or connected to a natural spring, although it can't be river that dries up (**Another great shadow! We know the real Living Water!**)

Mikvah was a Jewish ritual that represented a **change in status** in regards to purification, restoration, and qualification for full religious participation in the community. It was a ritual purification for converts, after menstruation or child birth, emissions of semen, certain skin conditions, after contact with a dead animal or human, etc., and for priests who are being consecrated, dedicated, and set apart for worship

of God, and for the high priest on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. (Yom Kippur is seen as a wedding date, as on this date Moses returned having reestablished the covenant between God and Israel.)

(Interesting food for thought too, that baptism was chosen during this transition period, perhaps another idea of shadow with the mikvah representing a change in status...)

For the ritual, the person must be clean (bathed, etc.) before getting in the water. You can see the connection for John's and the later command, to **repent and be baptized**. (Repentance consists of regretting having committed the sin, resolving not to commit that sin in the future, and confessing that sin before God. You get clean in this way and then get in the water!)

As we know, Jesus was sinless and had no need to repent, but, as we saw, **the Mikvah was also for priests being consecrated, dedicated, and set apart, for their work**. Understanding this helps us to better understand the phrase in **Matthew 3:15**, "for it is right for us to fulfill all righteousness." He was saying that it was right or proper, and necessary, for them to do this even if John felt unworthy and even though later Jesus would immerse people with holy spirit as well, it was not yet time for that.

(Another point for thought, when you repent and are baptized, you too are being set apart for your service. Baptism is not the end, it is just the beginning.)

**There was no teaching in the Law or the prophets (OT) requiring baptism to be done, so it could not be referring to practicing the Law.** Also, John was calling for repentance, which we know Jesus had no need for. So, it would make the most sense, that Jesus was being consecrated for the work he was about to begin. God then publicly declared His "delight" in Jesus accepting his ministry and mission. He was the anointed Messiah who willingly accepted that role.

#### **Acts 10:36-39**

You know<sup>[ca]</sup> the message<sup>[cr]</sup> he sent to the people<sup>[cs]</sup> of Israel, proclaiming the good news of peace<sup>[ct]</sup> through<sup>[cu]</sup> Jesus Christ<sup>[cv]</sup> (he is Lord<sup>[cw]</sup> of all)—<sup>37</sup> you know what happened throughout Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John announced:<sup>[cx]</sup> <sup>38</sup> with respect to Jesus from Nazareth,<sup>[cy]</sup> that<sup>[cz]</sup> God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power. He<sup>[da]</sup> went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil,<sup>[db]</sup> because God was with him.<sup>[dc]</sup> <sup>39</sup> We<sup>[dd]</sup> are witnesses of all the things he did both in Judea<sup>[de]</sup> and in Jerusalem.

In doing so, Jesus also showed his connection to John who was the one "preparing the way of the Lord."

Also, in the future (today) this would be the "rite" for those choosing to follow Christ. He is the head of the church and as it says, we must follow his example, and he was baptized. Jesus was obedient to His Father, and so should we.

John even foretold holy spirit then being a part of baptism as we see in **Acts 2:38**. Holy spirit came on Jesus in a new way after his baptism, and afterwards it was the same for the Christians. But at that moment, John's baptism was still a shadow, as Mikvah was, but the light was beginning to shine brighter, the shadow was fading, and soon there would be no shadow and people would see reality.

Baptism would then become the "ritual" of initiation into Christ, instead of circumcision into Judaism and in accordance of the old covenant. It is the Christian sealing of the new covenant given to Jesus and the believer becomes one with him and under his headship.

You have been filled in him, who is the head over every ruler and authority. <sup>11</sup> In him you also were circumcised—not, however,<sup>[u]</sup> with a circumcision performed by human hands, but by the removal<sup>[v]</sup> of the fleshly body,<sup>[w]</sup> that is,<sup>[x]</sup> **through the circumcision done by Christ.** <sup>12</sup> **Having been buried with him in baptism**, you also have been raised with him through your<sup>[y]</sup> faith in the power<sup>[z]</sup> of God who raised him from the dead. (**Colossians 2:10-12**)

Could John's baptism be pointing to Jesus who is the ultimate sacrifice when sacrifices according to the old covenant would be no longer practiced? Perhaps his call to repentance was lifting the veil of the shadow of animal sacrifices that merely covered sin temporarily, but didn't actually blot them out as far as the east is from the west. **John's call for repentance and baptism was now starting the transition between the old covenant and the new.** He was preparing the way for the Messiah and his ministry and seemed to be shedding light on the new covenant that was coming, and on the baptism he mentioned that would then also include holy spirit.

As this transition was taking place with John's baptism, it pointed to the shadow of old covenant sacrifice fading out and pointed to obedience to the new covenant command to be baptized so your sins would be forgiven. In the new covenant that was coming there would be no more old covenant sacrifice. The only sacrifice now acceptable would be the Lamb of God, Jesus. The new covenant baptism does not negate Jesus' sacrifice, but as it says in Romans, it unites you to it. It is the fulfillment and reality that was only seen through the old covenant shadow.

<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/3-15.htm>

Perhaps we see the importance of going through the water (not just sprinkled) as the Israelites did in **Joshua 3:15** when translated from the Hebrew, it says that when the priests carrying the ark "dipped into the edge" of the water, the water coming downstream in the Jordan stopped flowing and they crossed into the Promised Land. I don't think this was talking about baptism, but could refer to going through the water in order to enter the Promised Land, or even the future Kingdom.

**1 Peter 3:20-21** is also an example of Noah's ark representing the resurrected Jesus who now saves and how 8 people were delivered through the flood by the ark that prefigured baptism. The shadow again pointing to the reality. Obedience in getting in the ark was required for salvation in Noah's day, just as obedience in baptism is required today.

God patiently waited<sup>[a]</sup> in the days of Noah as an ark was being constructed. In the ark<sup>[am]</sup> a few, that is eight souls, were delivered through water. <sup>21</sup> And this prefigured baptism, which now saves you<sup>[an]</sup>—not the washing off of physical dirt<sup>[ao]</sup> but the pledge<sup>[ap]</sup> of a good conscience to God—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

Consider the Ethiopian eunuch in **Acts 8:36-39** who heard the Gospel preached by Philip when he was reading from the Prophets. He then asked about baptism when he saw water (which means that this must have been part of the Gospel message since it is not mentioned in Isaiah). They then went down into the water, and came up out of the water. Again, no sprinkling, but immersion as the word baptism itself suggests.

Christian Baptism represents cleansing and initiation into new life. It is the reality of the shadow, but even in and of itself it is a sort of shadow too of our resurrection when Jesus comes, and a shadow of the manifestation of his atonement when we are made immortal.

Romans 6:3-5  
1 Peter 3:18-22  
Acts 11:16 (Acts 2:38)  
1 Corinthians 12:13  
Titus 3:5-6

So, John was prophesied to go before the Lord and give light to those in the darkness and in the SHADOW of death. (The Law given to Moses was a “shadow” and it led to death (**Mark 1:1-13, Matthew 3:1-17, Luke 1:13-17, 67-80**).)

**Luke 1:76-79** is a beautiful picture of who John would be and his role with Messiah.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High. For you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins. Because of our God’s tender mercy the dawn will break upon us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

### **Mark 1:1-13**

The **beginning of the gospel<sup>[a]</sup> of Jesus Christ<sup>[b]</sup>**, the Son of God.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>2</sup> As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,<sup>[d]</sup>

*“Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way,<sup>[e]</sup>  
<sup>3</sup> the voice of one shouting in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make<sup>[f]</sup> his paths straight.’”<sup>[g]</sup>*

<sup>4</sup> In the wilderness<sup>[h]</sup> John the baptizer<sup>[i]</sup> **began preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.** <sup>5</sup> People<sup>[k]</sup> from the whole Judean countryside and all of Jerusalem were going out to him, and he was baptizing them<sup>[j]</sup> in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. <sup>6</sup> John wore a garment made of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.<sup>[m]</sup> <sup>7</sup> He proclaimed,<sup>[n]</sup> “One more powerful than I am is coming after me; I am not worthy<sup>[o]</sup> to bend down and untie the strap<sup>[p]</sup> of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

### **Matthew 3:1-17**

<sup>3</sup> In those days John the Baptist came into the wilderness<sup>[a]</sup> of Judea proclaiming, <sup>2</sup> **“Repent,<sup>[b]</sup> for the kingdom of heaven is near.”** <sup>3</sup> For he is the one about whom the prophet Isaiah had spoken:<sup>[c]</sup>

*“The voice<sup>[d]</sup> of one shouting in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make<sup>[e]</sup> his paths straight.’”<sup>[f]</sup>*

<sup>4</sup> Now John wore clothing made from camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his diet consisted of locusts and wild honey.<sup>[g]</sup> <sup>5</sup> Then people from Jerusalem,<sup>[h]</sup> as well as all Judea and all the region around the Jordan, were going out to him,<sup>6</sup> and he was baptizing them<sup>[i]</sup> in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many Pharisees<sup>[j]</sup> and Sadducees<sup>[k]</sup> coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?" <sup>8</sup> Therefore produce fruit<sup>[l]</sup> that proves your<sup>[m]</sup> repentance,<sup>9</sup> and don't think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.'<sup>[n]</sup> For I tell you that God can raise up children for Abraham from these stones! <sup>10</sup> Even now the ax is laid at<sup>[o]</sup> the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> "I baptize you with water, for repentance, but the one coming after me is more powerful than I am—I am not worthy<sup>[p]</sup> to carry his sandals! He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.<sup>[q]</sup> <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork<sup>[r]</sup> is in his hand, and he will clean out his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the storehouse,<sup>[s]</sup> but the chaff he will burn up with inextinguishable fire!"<sup>[t]</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to John to be baptized by him in the Jordan River.<sup>[u]</sup> <sup>14</sup> But John<sup>[v]</sup> tried to prevent<sup>[w]</sup> him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?" <sup>15</sup> So Jesus replied<sup>[x]</sup> to him, "**Let it happen now,<sup>[y]</sup> for it is right for us to fulfill all righteousness.**" Then John<sup>[z]</sup> yielded<sup>[aa]</sup> to him. <sup>16</sup> After<sup>[ab]</sup> Jesus was baptized, just as he was coming up out of the water, the<sup>[ac]</sup> heavens<sup>[ad]</sup> opened<sup>[ae]</sup> and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove<sup>[af]</sup> and coming to rest<sup>[ag]</sup> on him. <sup>17</sup> And<sup>[ah]</sup> a voice from heaven said,<sup>[ai]</sup> "This is my one dear Son,<sup>[aj]</sup> in him<sup>[ak]</sup> I take great delight."

<sup>9</sup> Now<sup>[a]</sup> in those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan River.<sup>[l]</sup> <sup>10</sup> And just as Jesus<sup>[s]</sup> was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens<sup>[t]</sup> splitting apart and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.<sup>[u]</sup> <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven: "You are my one dear Son;<sup>[v]</sup> in you I take great delight."<sup>[w]</sup> <sup>12</sup> The Spirit immediately drove him into the wilderness.<sup>[x]</sup> <sup>13</sup> He was in the wilderness forty days,<sup>[y]</sup> enduring temptations from Satan. He<sup>[z]</sup> was with wild animals, and angels were ministering to his needs.

### Luke 1:13-17, 67-80

<sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard,<sup>[ao]</sup> and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son; you<sup>[ap]</sup> will name him John.<sup>[aq]</sup> <sup>14</sup> Joy and gladness will come<sup>[ar]</sup> to you, and many will rejoice at<sup>[as]</sup> his birth,<sup>[at]</sup> <sup>15</sup> for he will be great in the sight of<sup>[au]</sup> the Lord. He<sup>[av]</sup> must never drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth.<sup>[aw]</sup> <sup>16</sup> He<sup>[ax]</sup> will turn<sup>[ay]</sup> many of the people<sup>[az]</sup> of Israel to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> And he will go as forerunner before the Lord<sup>[ba]</sup> in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,<sup>[bb]</sup> to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him."

Then<sup>[bv]</sup> his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied,<sup>[bz]</sup>

<sup>68</sup> "Blessed<sup>[ha]</sup> be the Lord God of Israel, because he has come to help<sup>[hb]</sup> and has redeemed<sup>[hc]</sup> his people.



69 For<sup>[hd]</sup> he has raised up<sup>[he]</sup> a horn of salvation<sup>[hf]</sup> for us in the house of his servant David,<sup>[hg]</sup>  
70 as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from long ago,<sup>[hh]</sup>  
71 that we should be saved<sup>[hi]</sup> from our enemies,<sup>[hj]</sup>  
and from the hand of all who hate us.  
72 He has done this<sup>[hk]</sup> to show mercy<sup>[hl]</sup> to our ancestors,<sup>[hm]</sup>  
and to remember his holy covenant<sup>[hn]</sup>—  
73 the oath<sup>[ho]</sup> that he swore to our ancestor<sup>[hp]</sup> Abraham.  
This oath grants<sup>[hq]</sup>  
74 that we, being rescued from the hand of our<sup>[hr]</sup> enemies,  
may serve him without fear,<sup>[hs]</sup>  
75 in holiness and righteousness<sup>[ht]</sup> before him for as long as we live.<sup>[hu]</sup>  
76 And you, child,<sup>[hv]</sup> will be called the prophet<sup>[hw]</sup> of the Most High.<sup>[hx]</sup>  
For you will go before<sup>[hy]</sup> the Lord to prepare his ways,<sup>[hz]</sup>  
77 to give his people knowledge of salvation<sup>[ia]</sup> through the forgiveness<sup>[ib]</sup> of their sins.  
78 Because of<sup>[ic]</sup> our God's tender mercy<sup>[id]</sup>  
the dawn<sup>[ie]</sup> will break<sup>[if]</sup> upon us from on high  
79 **to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,**<sup>[ig]</sup>  
to guide our feet into the way<sup>[ih]</sup> of peace.”

80 And the child kept growing<sup>[ij]</sup> and becoming strong<sup>[ik]</sup> in spirit, and he was in the wilderness<sup>[il]</sup>  
until the day he was revealed<sup>[im]</sup> to Israel.

Let's now consider Jesus as High Priest. Jesus was prophesied to be both King and Priest, just as Melchizedek was. (In the Levitical priesthood they were just priests, not kings.)

Jesus was proclaimed and appointed as King and Priest, and showed himself, like a shadow, as King and Priest in his ministry. He was only realized or proven as *the* High Priest upon his resurrection and when he went into heaven, right into God's presence. He will only be fully realized as King when he returns to subdue and rule, and his atonement will be fully realized at that time when believers are made immortal.

Jesus was appointed high priest, just like those before him, but he only entered the holy of holies/heaven, after his resurrection and now represents believers under the new covenant as the High Priest mediator between them and God.

Some insight into the role of High Priest can give a deeper understanding to Jesus' role as priest during his ministry, and now. [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/4195084/jewish/The-High-Priest-in-Jewish-Tradition.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4195084/jewish/The-High-Priest-in-Jewish-Tradition.htm)

The High Priest's day began with the daily flour offering and baking bread. (We know Jesus said he was the bread of life and man will not live by bread alone, but by every word God has spoken!)

It is said in the Jerusalem Talmud that “many High Priests actively participated in the entirety of the Temple's daily service, while others elected a smaller workload.” (We saw Jesus as an active participant in daily service to his God, and to men, prior to taking his atoning sacrifice into the most Holy of Holies.)

When a decision of national significance was needed, the High Priest was consulted using his breastplate with the Urim and Thummim. (We know Jesus is the head of the church and he told us ask him, and he also said that he spoke only what the Father gave him to say.)

The high priest was also the spiritual leader of the Jewish people and their chief advocate in prayer (as Jesus is for Christians, again, as the head of the church).

During Temple times people who committed inadvertent murder were exiled to cities of refuge until the high priest died. (Jesus is our refuge forever because he will never die, and he is High Priest forever (for all time) and “became the guarantee of a better covenant” (because he will never die).)

The most important role of the High Priest was entering the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). On this day the High Priest was to do all the Temple services himself (2 daily sacrifices, twice daily incense, special holiday offering, the lighting of the menorah, and in addition sacrifice for him and his family, the priests, and the nation.) He also brought an additional incense offering into the Holy of Holies. **(Remember, the High Priest was serving throughout the year prior to the Day of Atonement that happened once a year. He did not just become High Priest on Yom Kippur.)**

The High Priest had to ceremonial bathe and offer sacrifices for his own sins, but Jesus was pure and undefiled so he did not need to make sacrifices for himself. He just gave his blood for our sins. He made his offering and then entered the heavenly Holy of Holies upon resurrection. Perhaps his baptism not only signified the start of his ministry, but also ceremonial washing as the High Priest (shadowing him entering the Holy of Holies in the future).

The Kohen Gadol, the Great Priest, who was succeeding the last, would wear the High Priestly clothes, which included a “crown” that said “Holiness to the Lord” (perhaps another shadow of Jesus - he WAS holiness to the Lord – sinless), and would be anointed with oil (Jesus was anointed with holy spirit at his baptism), and he would serve in the Holy Temple. (Another tradition says that he would not work in the Temple until the seventh day, which could be another interesting study.).

On the seventh day he offered the flour offering and became a full-fledged High Priest. But prior to that, he was still anointed as High Priest. We even see how David was anointed as a lad and only became king later. But we see from his anointing that he was chosen and had God’s holy spirit and he was doing God’s work and serving people, his father for starters when he was pastoring the family flock.

The High Priest mediated the covenant between God and Israel and acted as judge. We see Jesus doing those same things. He showed during his ministry that he judged righteously and he will be the righteous judge at his coming and at the resurrection for judgement (The Great White Throne).

We see how in the new covenant given to Christ, and in Christ, how God completed and fulfilled (filled it full) the old covenant given to Moses and Israel. Jesus did not abolish the Day of Atonement, “he made its meaning and imagery full.” Yom Kippur, as with the rest of the festivals and the Law and the Prophets, was a prophetic picture of events for Messiah’s first and second comings. We have seen many of those events and prophecies fulfilled, and we will see the rest fulfilled when he returns.

**1 Peter 2:9** tells us that we too are *a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own,* so that you may *proclaim the virtues* of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

We are priests now, as Jesus was prior to his resurrection and entering heaven as High Priest. But, like Christ, our priesthood now is a shadow to what is coming when we reign with Jesus as a kingdom of priests (**Revelation 5:10**), yet, we are to practice that priesthood as Jesus did. We were given the ministry of reconciliation and the command to proclaim this coming Kingdom and coming Kingdom priesthood.

**In Isaiah 61:6** it talks about being called the Lord's priests, "You will be called, 'the LORD's priests, servants of our God.' You will enjoy the wealth of nations and boast about the riches you receive from them." And in **Exodus 19:5-6** it says that if you will diligently listen to me and keep my covenant, then you will be my special possession out of all the nations, for all the earth is mine, and you will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. *That sounds just like Revelation!*

**Romans 10:4** tells us that "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes." So does that mean the Law only ends when someone chooses to follow Christ. Perhaps it means that the condemnation that comes with Law (the soul that sins will die) is no longer an issue for them because they are now under the promises of the new covenant.

**Romans 10:3** tells us that the Israelites ignored God's righteousness, sought establish their own, and did not submit to God's righteousness. Then Paul continues in one breath, "for Christ is the end of the Law, with the result there is righteousness for everyone who believes."

And if we continue reading, we see that Paul continues to contrast the old covenant given to Moses and trying to live by that, to the new covenant given to Christ.

**Romans 10:17** says that faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the preached word of Christ. **Christ preached the new covenant throughout his ministry and that is what we must put our faith in.** We must hear what was spoken, and as Moses read the old covenant to them so they could accept it or reject it, Jesus did the same.

Let's consider a few verses about Jesus as High Priest in Hebrews.

### **Hebrews 2:17**

He had<sup>[ab]</sup> to be made like his brothers and sisters<sup>[ac]</sup> in every respect, **so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God, to make atonement<sup>[ad]</sup>** for the sins of the people.

**Jesus became a merciful and faithful High Priest and then made atonement for the sins of the people.**

### **Hebrews 3:1-3**

Therefore, holy brothers and sisters,<sup>[a]</sup> partners in a heavenly calling, take note of **Jesus, the apostle and high priest** whom we confess,<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>2</sup> who is faithful to the one who appointed him, as Moses was also in God's<sup>[c]</sup> house.<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>3</sup> For he has come to deserve greater glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house deserves greater honor than the house itself!

**Jesus was an apostle and High Priest and because of his faithfulness and atonement he came to deserve greater glory than Moses. He was the first from among the dead to be resurrected and given immortality, and then entered heaven to sit at the right hand of God until he is sent back to take over all the kingdoms of the earth.**

### Hebrews 4:14-16

Therefore since we have a **great high priest who has passed through the heavens**, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Therefore let us **confidently approach the throne** of grace to receive mercy and find grace whenever we need help.

**Jesus was High Priest and after his resurrection he then passed through the heavens.**

### Hebrews 5:1-10

**For every high priest is taken from among the people<sup>[a]</sup> and appointed<sup>[b]</sup> to represent them before God,<sup>[c]</sup>** to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. <sup>2</sup> He is able to deal compassionately with those who are ignorant and erring, since he also is subject to weakness, <sup>3</sup> and for this reason he is obligated to make sin offerings for himself as well as for the people. <sup>4</sup> And no one assumes this honor<sup>[d]</sup> on his own initiative,<sup>[e]</sup> but only when called to it by God,<sup>[f]</sup> as in fact Aaron was. <sup>5</sup> So also **Christ did not glorify himself in becoming high priest**, but the one who glorified him was God,<sup>[g]</sup> who said to him, ***“You are my Son! Today I have fathered you,”*** (Ps. 2:7) <sup>6</sup> as also in another place God<sup>[h]</sup> says, ***“You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.”*** (Ps. 110:4) <sup>7</sup> **During his earthly life<sup>[k]</sup> Christ<sup>[l]</sup> offered<sup>[m]</sup> both requests and supplications,** with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death and he was heard because of his devotion. <sup>8</sup> Although he was a son, he learned obedience through the things he suffered.<sup>[n]</sup> <sup>9</sup> And by being perfected in this way, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, <sup>10</sup> and he was designated<sup>[o]</sup> by God as high priest ***in the order of Melchizedek.***

**In this passage we see that Jesus was totally human like we are and God chose him from among other humans and appointed him to represent his brothers before Himself. He was called by God and responded to the call willingly.**

Christ did not glorify himself in becoming High Priest, but the one who glorified him was God, who said to him, ***“You are my Son! Today I have fathered you,”*** (Psalm 2:7) which seems to have been when he was miraculously created in Mary’s womb, and as also in another place God says, ***“You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.”*** Upon his resurrection Jesus confirmed his calling as ***“a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek,”*** because he would no longer die. **So we see the calling and the anointing of Jesus from birth and through his resurrection!**

**Hebrews 7:11-28** compares the priesthood of the Levites to the priesthood of Melchizedek.

It says that Jesus has become a priest not by a legal regulation about physical descent but by the power of an indestructible life. The priesthood of Jesus will go on forever because his life is now indestructible. This is not implying that Jesus just became priest then. The context and point at hand is the comparison of the two priesthoods and Jesus was in the order of Melchizedek and would be the only High Priest forever.

When he sealed the covenant with his blood that he had spoken throughout his ministry, he was then resurrected and God’s words proved true that he would be High Priest forever.

Also, in comparing the two covenants and priesthoods, the point is made that one was weak and useless and the other a better hope and a better covenant. Again, the new covenant did not abolish the first,

weak and useless one; it fulfilled it and gives true hope and forgiveness. We are told that former command (covenant) is set aside. It must be set aside, if the new one is in effect. **Again, you can't mix the two covenants, not before they were sealed or after.**

### Hebrews 7:11-28

So if perfection had in fact been possible through the **Levitical priesthood**—for on that basis<sup>[g]</sup> the people received the **law**—what further need would there have been for another priest to arise, said to be in the **order of Melchizedek** and not in Aaron's order?<sup>12</sup> For **when the priesthood changes, a change in the law must come**<sup>[i]</sup> as well.<sup>13</sup> Yet the one these things are spoken about belongs to<sup>[s]</sup> a different tribe, and no one from that tribe<sup>[l]</sup> has ever officiated at the altar.<sup>14</sup> For it is clear that our Lord is descended from Judah, yet Moses said nothing about priests in connection with that tribe.<sup>15</sup> **And this is even clearer if another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek,**<sup>16</sup> **who has become a priest not by a legal regulation about physical descent**<sup>[u]</sup> **but by the power of an indestructible life**.<sup>17</sup> For here is the testimony about him:<sup>[v]</sup> ***"You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek."***<sup>[w]</sup><sup>18</sup> On the one hand a former command is set aside<sup>[x]</sup> because it is weak and useless,<sup>[y]</sup><sup>19</sup> for the law made nothing perfect. On the other hand a **better hope is introduced**, through which we draw near to God.<sup>20</sup> And since<sup>[z]</sup> this was not done without a sworn affirmation—for the others have become priests without a sworn affirmation,<sup>21</sup> but Jesus<sup>[aa]</sup> did so<sup>[ab]</sup> with a sworn affirmation by the one who said to him, ***"The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever'"***<sup>[ac]</sup>—<sup>22</sup> accordingly **Jesus has become the guarantee**<sup>[ad]</sup> **of a better covenant**.<sup>23</sup> And the others<sup>[ae]</sup> who became priests were numerous, because death prevented them<sup>[af]</sup> from continuing in office,<sup>[ag]</sup><sup>24</sup> but **he holds his priesthood permanently since he lives forever**.<sup>25</sup> So he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.<sup>26</sup> For it is indeed fitting for us to have such a **high priest: holy, innocent, undefiled, separate from sinners, and exalted above the heavens**.<sup>27</sup> He has no need to do every day what those priests do, to offer sacrifices first for their own sins and then for the sins of the people, since he did this in offering himself once for all.<sup>28</sup> For the law appoints as high priests men subject to weakness,<sup>[ah]</sup> but the word of solemn affirmation that came after the law appoints a son made perfect forever.

### Hebrews 8:1-6

Now the main point of what we are saying is this:<sup>[a]</sup> We have such a **high priest**, one who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,<sup>[b]</sup><sup>2</sup> a **minister in the sanctuary and the true tabernacle** that the Lord, not man, set up.<sup>3</sup> For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. So this one too had to have something to offer.<sup>4</sup> Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest, since there are already priests who offer<sup>[c]</sup> the gifts prescribed by the law.<sup>5</sup> The place **where they serve is**<sup>[d]</sup> **a sketch**<sup>[e]</sup> **and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary**, just as Moses was warned by God as he was about to complete the tabernacle. For he says, ***"See that you make everything according to the design***<sup>[f]</sup> **shown to you on the mountain."**<sup>[g]</sup><sup>6</sup> But<sup>[h]</sup> now Jesus<sup>[i]</sup> has obtained a superior ministry, since<sup>[j]</sup> the covenant that he mediates is also better and is enacted<sup>[k]</sup> on better promises.

Jesus only totally fulfilled the role of High Priest, offered the ultimate sacrifice for atonement, and then entered the true Holy of Holies at his death and after his resurrection. *This is when the new covenant was ratified.*

Because the Jews did not receive their Messiah and did not acknowledge the new covenant he brought to them, and instead killed him, that old covenant Law continued on among them, but it was still old, weak, and useless. What they were doing and continued to do, was only a sketch and a shadow. **They refused to come into the light so the shadow would disappear and the reality and fulfillment of all they practiced would be seen.**

Just because they refused Jesus and the new covenant, that did not make the old valid in any way just because they continued to practice it. When Jesus comes they will acknowledge and see the Law as the shadow of what had come and who and what came a second time.

**Hebrews 9:8-28** tells us again that the old covenant and the Law were only imposed until the new order came. How would anyone know the new order came if that new order was not first proclaimed and taught (read to the people like Moses did)? When it was given and read it was in effect, the only thing was that it had to be ratified with blood and then accepted by the people so they would be under God's covenant. The covenant did not instantly appear when Moses made the offering or when Jesus died on the cross. Those things *confirmed* the covenant and made it a legal document.

The Holy Spirit is making clear that the way into the Holy Place had not yet appeared as long as the old tabernacle, or first tent, was standing.<sup>9</sup> This was a symbol for the time then present, when gifts and sacrifices were offered that could not perfect the conscience of the worshiper.<sup>10</sup> They served only for matters of food and drink<sup>[l]</sup> and various ritual washings; **they are external regulations<sup>[m]</sup> imposed until the new order came.**<sup>[n]</sup>

<sup>11</sup> **But now Christ has come<sup>[o]</sup> as the high priest of the good things to come.** He passed through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands, that is, not of this creation,<sup>12</sup> and he entered once for all into the Most Holy Place not by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood, and so he himself secured<sup>[p]</sup> eternal redemption.<sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow sprinkled on those who are defiled consecrated them and provided ritual purity,<sup>[q]</sup><sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our<sup>[r]</sup> consciences from dead works to worship the living God.

<sup>15</sup> And so he is the **mediator<sup>[s]</sup> of a new covenant**, so that those who are called may receive the eternal inheritance he has promised,<sup>[t]</sup> since he died<sup>[u]</sup> to set them free from the violations committed under the first covenant.<sup>16</sup> For where there is a will, the death of the one who made it must be proven.<sup>[v]</sup><sup>17</sup> For a will takes effect only at death, since it carries no force while the one who made it is alive.<sup>18</sup> So even the first covenant was inaugurated with blood.<sup>[w]</sup><sup>19</sup> **For when Moses had spoken every command to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,**<sup>20</sup> and said, ***"This is the blood of the covenant that God has commanded you to keep."***<sup>[x]</sup><sup>21</sup> And both the tabernacle and all the utensils of worship he likewise sprinkled with blood.<sup>22</sup> Indeed according to the law almost everything was purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.<sup>23</sup> So it was necessary for the sketches<sup>[y]</sup> of the things in heaven to be purified with these sacrifices,<sup>[z]</sup> but the heavenly things themselves required<sup>[aa]</sup> better sacrifices than these.<sup>24</sup> For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with hands—the representation<sup>[ab]</sup> of the true sanctuary<sup>[ac]</sup>—but into heaven itself, and **he appears now in God's presence for us.**<sup>25</sup> And he did not enter to offer<sup>[ad]</sup> himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the sanctuary year after year with blood that is not his own,<sup>26</sup> for

then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the consummation of the ages to put away sin by his sacrifice.

<sup>27</sup> And just as people<sup>[ae]</sup> are appointed to die once, and then to face judgment,<sup>[af]</sup> <sup>28</sup> so also, after Christ was offered once to *bear the sins of many*,<sup>[ag]</sup> to those who eagerly await him he will **appear a second time, not to bear sin<sup>[ah]</sup> but to bring salvation.**

**Matthew 5:17-20** can sometimes be confusing where it says, “until heaven and earth pass away not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter (jot or tittle) will pass from the law until everything takes place.”

Jesus made it clear that he did not come to abolish the Law and the prophets, but to fulfil them. The Greek word for fulfil means “to perfect, consummate, to carry through to the end, to accomplish, carry out, to render full, to complete.” This is what Jesus did! He fulfilled and completed the Law. **The shadow disappeared when the light came!**

Even in this passage, Jesus ends it by saying that unless their righteousness goes beyond the Scribes and Pharisees, that they will not enter the Kingdom. This seems to be clear from his whole teaching where he was raising the bar of righteousness and that if you followed his teachings, the new covenant being spoken, that then your righteousness would go beyond them, beyond the old covenant, and beyond the Scribes and the Pharisees. Jesus fulfilled the old covenant Law in every way and was the reality of the shadow.

<sup>17</sup> “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish these things but to fulfill them.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>18</sup> I<sup>[b]</sup> tell you the truth,<sup>[c]</sup> **until heaven and earth pass away not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter<sup>[d]</sup> will pass from the law until everything takes place.** <sup>19</sup> So anyone who breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others<sup>[e]</sup> to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but **whoever obeys them and teaches others to do so** will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you, unless your righteousness goes beyond that of the experts in the law<sup>[f]</sup> and the Pharisees,<sup>[g]</sup> you will never enter the kingdom of heaven!

**Matthew 23:2-3** can also cause confusion if not to read the context of the conversation. **(Matthew 23:1-39)**

Jesus recognized their authority in the Synagogue by saying to obey what they say, the teachings of Scripture. **But the point of the passage was their hypocrisy – don’t do what they do!**

He then goes right into telling them they only have one Rabbi – HIM, the Messiah. So again, the Bible cannot contradict itself. Jesus is the only Rabbi. The others were fading away and no longer valid under the new covenant (even though they continued keeping the old covenant).

If we remember some of Jesus’ other teachings, for example to pay the temple tax so not to offend, we can understand this better. In his answer he let them know that they did not HAVE to pay it under the new covenant, but to keep peace they should **(Matthew 17:24-27).**

The same can be said of the food laws that he addressed **(Mark 7:17-23).** He said that all food is clean, but he didn’t tell them they had to eat pork. They now had a choice. They were not under the Law, which meant under the penalty of the Law if they had bacon or a pork chop!

When we read Jesus' teachings, the new covenant that God was giving to him (he himself said, I speak only what the Father says), it could seem that he was contradicting the old covenant, but in reality he was fleshing it out and fulfilling it, and showing people the freedom that the new covenant was bringing.

### **Matthew 23.1-12**

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> "The<sup>[a]</sup> experts in the law<sup>[b]</sup> and the Pharisees<sup>[c]</sup> sit on Moses' seat. <sup>3</sup> Therefore pay attention to what they tell you and do it. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they teach.<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>4</sup> They<sup>[e]</sup> tie up heavy loads, hard to carry, and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing even to lift a finger to move them. <sup>5</sup> They<sup>[f]</sup> do all their deeds to be seen by people, for they make their phylacteries<sup>[g]</sup> wide and their tassels<sup>[h]</sup> long. <sup>6</sup> They<sup>[i]</sup> love the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues<sup>[j]</sup> <sup>7</sup> and elaborate greetings<sup>[k]</sup> in the marketplaces,<sup>[l]</sup> and to have people call them 'Rabbi.' <sup>8</sup> **But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher and you are all brothers.** <sup>9</sup> And call no one your 'father' on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one teacher, the Christ.<sup>[m]</sup> <sup>11</sup> The<sup>[n]</sup> greatest among you will be your servant. <sup>12</sup> And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

**This teaching is emphasizing humility and obedience.** He wants them to follow God's teachings, and not the Pharisees'. He wanted them to see new covenant authority, the Father and His Messiah, the only Rabbi. And he added that the one who was greatest among them, would be the one who was also serving the most.

I think in context it is emphasizing the Scribes and Pharisees "disease" because he then goes on to the seven woes. Jesus calls them blind guides and blind fools. He reminds them that they are descendants of those who murdered the prophets.

Then he tells them that he is sending them prophets, wise men, and experts in the law, some of which they will also kill and crucify. He ends by telling them that they, Israel, will not see him from then until they say blessed is the one who comes in the name of YHWH (**Psalm 118:26**) referencing his second coming. (Most likely meaning they wouldn't see him in the temple because they did see him again, as we know.) Also, Jesus was no longer offering them redemption and he was most likely prophesying what would soon happen.

Jesus' work that was prophesied in the Law and through the prophets up to the crucifixion, was finished when he shed his blood. The house would not be left desolate, that is, as we know, until he comes in glory, and the rest is fulfilled.

**Just as Moses came down from the mountain and gave the people the old covenant and ratified it with blood, now Jesus was going to do the same.** Jesus would soon ratify and seal the new covenant that he spoke and taught the last three and a half years, with his own blood. In the same way as we saw in Exodus when the people agreed to follow God's words given to Moses and were splashed with the sacrifice's blood, now all those who would accept the new covenant, all who would follow Jesus, would come into that covenant through baptism (since there obviously would not be blood to splash on all the generations until he would return).

We see in the context of **Ephesians 2:12-22** that there were Gentile believers who were brought into the family. We must remember that this was written to them AFTER Jesus's ministry, death, and



resurrection. Paul is stating the point that they should remember where they came from and the blessing they have now received. **Verse 17 reminds us that Jesus came with his preaching first, before his blood was shed.** His preaching was for the Jews who were near at that time, and for the Gentiles who were then far off. The Gentiles were not in the first covenant with God, but they are reminded here that because of Jesus's sacrifice, they could become citizens.

**This passage says that by abolishing, or superseding, the Law and commandments, Jesus made peace between the Jews and Gentiles. The dividing wall was then broken down by Jesus' sacrifice.** (This is not referencing John or Jesus when he began his ministry.)

As we know, we are heirs to Abraham's promise through the seed – through Jesus; and we put on Christ through baptism. **This all happened after his resurrection for us, but it does not negate the new covenant superseding the old prior, when Jesus began speaking it to the Jews in the beginning of his ministry.** At that time, he came to speak to the Jews and show how he was fulfilling the old covenant.

In Ephesians this is a whole other discourse with the Gentiles. This wall was broken down between the two and the new covenant superseded the old (which kept them separate) and for the Gentiles this happened at Jesus' death and resurrection.

**God's purpose was to create one new man out of the two, and to make peace. There would be one vine.**

We even see here in verse 20 that the *foundation* was built on the *Law and the Prophets*, but the house was now being built on top of it by Jesus who is the chief cornerstone (with the new covenant.)

This passage is not saying that the old covenant was still in force before this time. The context and point of this passage is that in uniting the Jews and Gentiles under Christ both can become citizens in God's coming Kingdom and they are now one body under one head.

## **Ephesians 2:11-22**

<sup>11</sup> Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh—who are called “uncircumcision” by the so-called “circumcision” that is performed on the body<sup>[x]</sup> by human hands—<sup>12</sup> that you were at that time without the Messiah,<sup>[y]</sup> alienated from the citizenship of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise,<sup>[z]</sup> having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> **But now in Christ Jesus you who used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**<sup>[aa]</sup> <sup>14</sup> For he is our peace, the one who made both groups into one<sup>[ab]</sup> and who destroyed the middle wall of partition, the hostility,<sup>15</sup> when he nullified<sup>[ac]</sup> in his flesh the law of commandments in decrees. He did this to create in himself one new man<sup>[ad]</sup> out of two,<sup>[ae]</sup> thus making peace,<sup>16</sup> and to reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by which the hostility has been killed.<sup>[af]</sup> <sup>17</sup> And **he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near,**<sup>18</sup> so that<sup>[ag]</sup> through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer foreigners and noncitizens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household,<sup>20</sup> because you have been built<sup>[ah]</sup> on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,<sup>[ai]</sup> with Christ Jesus himself as<sup>[aj]</sup> the cornerstone.<sup>[ak]</sup> <sup>21</sup> In him<sup>[al]</sup> the whole building,<sup>[am]</sup> being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,<sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Summing up *New Covenant Christianity* and when it began, the Law was until John who was the forerunner of the chosen Messiah. John was the transition between the old and the new covenants. Once Jesus began his ministry, he began speaking the words of the New Covenant, which were true and in effect at the time he spoke them, but they were only ratified with his blood and the new covenant sealed, when he gave his life as the ultimate and only sacrifice that could and would save those who came into the new covenant with God.

Upon his resurrection, he entered the true holy of holies and presented himself to God, now mediating for his brothers and as High Priest forever.

**The covenant is now sealed between God and each believer when the sacrifice's blood is sprinkled on them, which we see, is now through baptism**, rather than real blood. Baptism now must be followed in obedience instead of physical circumcision.

#### **Hebrews 10:19-22**

Therefore, brothers and sisters,<sup>[t]</sup> since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus,<sup>20</sup> by the fresh and living way that he inaugurated for us<sup>[u]</sup> through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,<sup>[v]</sup><sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest<sup>[w]</sup> over the house of God,<sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a sincere heart in the assurance that faith brings,<sup>[x]</sup> because we have had our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience<sup>[y]</sup> and our bodies washed in pure water.

#### **Luke 24.44-49**

Then Jesus said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **everything written about me<sup>[df]</sup> in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms<sup>[dg]</sup> must be fulfilled.**"<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures,<sup>[dh]</sup><sup>46</sup> and said to them, "Thus it stands written that the Christ<sup>[di]</sup> would suffer<sup>[dij]</sup> and would rise from the dead on the third day,<sup>47</sup> and repentance<sup>[dk]</sup> for the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed<sup>[dl]</sup> in his name to all nations,<sup>[dm]</sup> beginning from Jerusalem.<sup>[dn]</sup><sup>48</sup> You are witnesses<sup>[do]</sup> of these things.<sup>49</sup> And look, I am sending you<sup>[dp]</sup> what my Father promised.<sup>[dq]</sup> But stay in the city<sup>[dr]</sup> until you have been clothed with power<sup>[ds]</sup> from on high."

**May our minds be open as well to understand the Scriptures and what has been done and what will be done in the future.**

#### **Hebrews 13:20-21**

May the God of peace who by the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus,<sup>21</sup> equip you with every good thing to do his will, working in us<sup>[o]</sup> what is pleasing before him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever.<sup>[p]</sup> Amen.

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