

# Comparison of the Old and New Covenants

## Introduction

Firstly, we have to understand what these two covenants are and what they are not. In the place where they are contrasted most effectively (the book of Hebrews) the old covenant is the Mosaic Law, the Torah, while the new covenant is the covenant brought in by Christ's atoning work. The old covenant was the covenant that was in force when Christ came as a man to do the work of God to fulfil and supersede this old covenant, the Law of Moses. Mosaic Law was at the heart of the old covenant and identified with it in the law. When Jesus was walking on the earth as a man, this was the covenant that was in operation.

When God says that the old covenant is made obsolete, he is not referring to the Noahic, Abrahamic or Davidic Covenants. These still stand and are fulfilled in Christ as well. In the Noahic Covenant God promised that he would not flood the earth again (thus the flood was global!) and would continue his provision of seedtime and harvest until the end. Thus the earth continues today. In the Davidic Covenant God promised that an heir of David would be the supreme ruler of God's kingdom. This is fulfilled in Christ. The Abrahamic Covenant is the essence of the Gospel, which is why Jesus said that Abraham saw his day and rejoiced. In this covenant God promises to save a people from many nations to be blessed and to have an eternal inheritance. These people would share the same justifying faith as Abraham, who is considered to be the root of these people (Isa 51:1-2; Rm 11:16) – God's chosen people, the elect from all nations.

So, the old covenant is the Mosaic Covenant, a covenant which was brought in as a temporary measure (Gal 3:19) to magnify the sin of men, demonstrating that they cannot save themselves, and point to Christ the only deliverer from sin and the head of the true covenant. Consequently, the old covenant is now made obsolete and the many features of it are fulfilled in Christ. Thus the old forms of this covenant are finished and only those in Christ are valid. Scripture repeatedly confirms this demonstrating that the whole Jewish system, including the fleshly concept of Israel, is a mere shadow that has passed away now that the true reality (Christ) has come.

This paper examines the differences between these two systems in a tabular form.

<b>Old (Mosaic) Covenant</b>	<b>New Covenant</b>
<b>The Covenant</b>	
Has promises.	Has better promises. Heb 8:6
Mosaic Covenant is old.	A better covenant. Heb 7:22, 8:6
No oath.	Confirmed with an oath. Heb 7:20
Had faults.	No faults. Heb 8:7
Has hope.	A better hope. Heb 7:19
Was weak.	Old Covenant is now annulled because the New Covenant is effective to cleanse sin. Heb 7:18-19
Was made obsolete. Heb 8:13	Eternal. Heb 9:15
Inaugurated by the blood of animals. Heb 9:18	Being heavenly, was inaugurated by the blood of Christ. Heb 9:23
<b>The Covenant promise</b>	
Was to the heirs of Abraham by birth.	The true heir (seed) is Christ. Gal 3:16
Did not include Gentiles.	Now includes the elect from all nations who have faith. Gal 3:29, 4:28
Included fleshly circumcision as a sign of the covenant.	Circumcision is now of the heart to cut off the flesh. Rm 2:29; Col 2:11
Earthly, material inheritance, tied to the land.	An eternal inheritance. Heb 9:15
<b>Law (Torah)</b>	
Was a ministry of death. Rm 7:5; 2 Cor 3:7	Is a ministry of life. Rm 8:2, 6
Mosaic Law made nothing perfect. Heb 7:19	Grace makes perfect. Jn 1:16-17; Heb 12:23; Col 1:28
Is directly connected to the Levitical priesthood.	Since the priesthood has changed, the law has changed. Heb 7:12
Was a temporary system. Gal 3:19	The law of Christ is eternal as part of the New Covenant. Gal 6:2; Heb 9:15
The law is a copy and shadow of the true. Heb 8:5, 9:23	The reality is Christ. Heb 8:2, 9:11, 24
The law is taken away. Heb 10:9	The law of Moses is taken away in order to establish the New Covenant, the Law of Christ. Heb 10:9
<b>Worship System</b>	
The Tabernacle.	The true Tabernacle (Christ). Heb 8:2
Poorer Tabernacle.	Greater and more perfect Tabernacle. Heb 9:11
Tabernacle pitched by men.	True Tabernacle pitched by God. Heb 8:2
Made with hands.	Not made with hands; i.e. not of this creation. Heb 9:11
Sanctified by animal blood. Heb 9:21	Not purified by the blood of bulls and goats but by the blood of Christ. Heb 9:12
The Tabernacle worship system was a copy and shadow of the true. Heb 8:5, 9:24	The reality is Christ. Heb 9:11
Was a statement that the way into heaven was not yet made open. Heb 9:8	The way into the holiest is made open by Christ's blood. Heb 10:19
The system could not cleanse the conscience. Heb 9:9	Cleanses the conscience. Heb 9:14
The system could not actually remove sins. Heb 10:1-3, 11	Sanctified through the offering of Christ once for all time. Heb 10:10

Made nothing perfect. Heb 10:1	Sanctified and perfected. Heb 10:10, 14
The old way. Heb 8:13	The new and living way. Heb 10:20
Observing feasts and holy days is commanded.	Observing feasts and holy days is to be in bondage. Gal 2:4, 4:3, 9, 24, 25, 5:1
The ordinances of the law in diet, washings etc. were temporary until Christ came. Heb 9:9-10	These are now spiritually fulfilled in Christ and unnecessary. Observing them is bondage and foolish. Gal 4:10-11
Because there is forgiveness of sins, there is no longer any need of the old worship system with all its laws, rituals, offerings, feasts and holy days. Heb 10:18	
<b>The Priesthood</b>	
High Priest is on earth.	High Priest is in heaven. Heb 8:1
Priest offers continual bloody sacrifices year after year. Heb 9:25	Christ offered his own body as one sacrifice, once for all time. Heb 8:5, 9:28
No oath in ordination.	Christ made a priest with an oath. Heb 7:20
Priests die. Heb 7:23	Christ lives forever. Heb 7:24
Was of Judah.	Is now of Melchizedek. Ps 110:4; Heb 5:6, 6:20
Was earthly.	Is now heavenly and eternal. Heb 7:24
<b>Israel &amp; Jerusalem</b>	
Jerusalem is material and worldly	New Jerusalem is heavenly and spiritual. Gal 4:26; Rev 3:12, 21:2
Earthly Jerusalem is now in bondage Gal 4:25	Spiritual Jerusalem is free. Gal 4:26
National Jewishness is outward and fleshly. Rm 2:28	The godly meaning of Jewishness is internal and spiritual. Rm 2:29
Material Israel represents God's people under the Old Covenant.	Spiritual Israel is all the elect who follow in Abraham's faith from all nations. Rm 11:16-26; Gal 6:15-16
The kingdom was removed from fleshly Israel. Matt 21:43	The kingdom is given to the elect of all nations both Jew and Gentile. Matt 21:43, 8:11-12; Jn 3:3-5; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11; Rm 10:12-13

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Cor 5:17

Thus all the old forms of the law and the old covenant have passed away and all is new in Christ. Any theological system that focuses people upon the forms of the old covenant is unbiblical and dangerous.

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