

The Best Way to Read the Old Testament
Hebrews 8:13

This says God's old agreement with Israel became obsolete, grew old and was finally abolished.

When did God's covenant with Israel become *obsolete*? In AD 30 when Jesus said "It is finished" at the cross and the Father said, "It is approved" at the resurrection.

When did God's covenant with Israel *grow old*? In the forty years (a generation) between the death of Christ (AD 30) to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Hebrew way of worship (AD 70).

When was God's covenant with Israel *abolished*? In AD 70 when God used the Romans to utterly destroy the Temple. There could be no more sacrifices for the Old Covenant people (the Jews), no more holy days, no more worship at the Temple, no more Old Covenant worship.

I. The New Covenant changes the way you worship God every day of your life.

The Old Covenant agreement between God and Israel was a *come see* religion. Come see the Temple. Come see the rituals. Come see the festivals. The New Covenant is a *go tell* religion. Go tell sinners of the Savior who has guaranteed the Creator's goodness to those who trust Him. Christianity is radically *spiritual, internal, personal, and trans-cultural* (all the people). One of the dangers of modern churches is they substitute themselves for Old Temple worship.

II. The New Covenant changes the way you apply Scriptures from the Old Testament.

The "If ... then" Scriptures are seen as part of God's promises to the people of Israel. Let me give you three examples of "if/then" promises that Christian people use wrongly.

a. "***If*** my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; ***then*** will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chronicles 7:14). (Compare with Ephesians 3:20).

b. "***If*** you bring the tithe ... ***then*** I will rebuke the devourer for you" (Malachi 3:10).
In the New Covenant, Jesus died and in His death He "*destroyed the devil*" (Hebrews 2:14).

c. "***If*** you call upon me in the day of trouble; ***then*** I will deliver you" (Psalm 50:15).
In the New Covenant, God delivers His people "when they are dead in their trespasses."

These are "if/then" promises for Old Covenant Israel which are part of the old agreement.

III. The New Covenant changes the way you encourage people to know God.

How does one come to know God? What encouragement do you give them? Actions? "*He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him*" (Hebrews 7:25). When a person is ready to know God, they feel their inadequacy and their sins, and they have a "spirit of bondage" within. They have no sense of God's presence or goodness. It is precisely at this time that we proclaim Jesus Christ to them. We speak of who He is and what He has done. Your best days with God will be your worst days in this life.