

What Is New In The New Testament?

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The word "Bible" means "the book". Of all the thousands, yea millions of books in the world, there is only one entitled to the name "the book", the Bible. It stands without a peer.

It is one book with one author. While it contains two testaments it has One who testifies. The Bible has two sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament, but it has one voice. The Bible, we are told in Hebrews 4:12, is like a sharp two-edged sword. It has two sharp edges but it is one sword.

Some have thought that seeing there is a New Testament, then the Old Testament has been superceded. We do well to consider just what is new in the New Testament? What has changed in the New Testament?

GOD IS NOT NEW

In Malachi we read "I am the Lord, 1 change not." And in James 1:17 the Father is described as of "no variableness, neither shadow of turning." There can be no change in God between the old and the New Testament.

JESUS IS NOT NEW

John 17:5 records the prayer of Jesus to His Father in which he speaks of "the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Jesus was certainly not new.

THE SAVIOUR WAS NOT NEW.

St. Peter, when referring to the name of Jesus declared "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. Did you notice that, The Savior was "given". "God gave his only begotten son". As the Son was given, He must have been in existence before He was given. He was the Father's "unspeakable gift." He existed before. The Savior was not new.

GRACE WAS NOT NEW

Some people have thought that grace only came with the New Testament, but in Titus 2:11 we are told that "The grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men." That wonderful life-giving grace is and has been available to every one of the sons of men. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord". Genesis 6:8. Grace saved Moses. In Exodus 34 several times we read that Moses "found grace" with the Lord. Grace is all through the Old Testament. It is certainly not new with the New Testament.

THE GOSPEL IS NOT NEW

In the last book in the Scriptures we read of "the everlasting gospel." Revelation 14:6. The gospel was preached unto Abraham. Galatians 3:8 "For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them." Hebrews 4: 2. The gospel was not new with the New Testament.

FORGIVENESS WAS NOT NEW

David could say over a thousand years before our Christ walked the dusty roads of old Palestine, "Thou

forgave the iniquity of my sin." Psalm 32:5. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven whose sin is covered." Psalm 32:1 "For you Lord, are good and ready to forgive and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." Psalm 86:5 "It shall be forgiven him." Leviticus 4:26. This is repeated again and again throughout the Old Testament. Therefore forgiveness is not limited to the New Testament. As the two cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant faced each other so the two testaments of the Bible look in harmony on all the wonderful truths of Holy Writ. They are in harmony. They tell the same story. They proclaim the same message.

FAITH IS NOT NEW

Hebrews chapter eleven reveals that all the old saints were saved by faith and trust. Certainly Faith is not new.

THE CHURCH IS NOT NEW

In Ephesians 3:6 we read "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body." The "same body" is the same church, for the "body" is the church. In Colossians 1:18 we have the clear statement, Christ "is the head of the body, the church." As it is the "same body" it is clear that the New Testament does not give us a new and different church. It is the same church, but renewed. The bringing into the church of the Gentiles, meant they were brought into the same body." This is clearly revealed. In Acts 15:14 we are told that when "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, it was a fulfillment of the prophecy which stated - "After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down. And I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up." It was really a renewed church. The old church remade. As the "born again" are reborn, made again, by a new birth so the church was reborn. As the "new earth" is a renewed earth, the old earth made new. "Behold" our God declares "I make all things new." Revelation 21: 5. So the church was remade, it was built "again."

Some have claimed that Christ built His church on the day of Pentecost, but such is never stated in Scripture. Acts 7:38 refers to "the church" at "Mount Sinai". There is only one church of God. It spans all time and covers all history. The New Testament does not give us a new and different church, but the gentiles are made partakers of the "same body", the same church. Christ had foretold this very thing. "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof." Matthew 21:43. In the Old Testament the church is often called the "kingdom of God".

Note, Christ did not say that the kingdom would be destroyed. Not at all. But it would be "let out to other husbandmen." Matthew 21:41. This was when the Gentiles became fellow heirs.

In Romans 11:17 "Some of the branches were broken off. The tree was not cut down and a new one planted. There was not a new church, but new members brought in, they were "grafted in" to the church, the Israel of God. The change is only in the branches. The root and trunk is the same. The church is the same. "The first fruit is holy." Romans 11:16. Jesus, the foundation and head of His church is holy, and as people, Jews, or Gentiles, are linked to Him, they become part of his church He turns "away ungodliness from their lives." Romans 11:26. They become part of Israel. They are God-ruled people. They permit sin to be taken from their lives. Even gentiles can be made "fellow-citizens". Ephesians 2:11, 12. Thus both in the Old and the New Testament, the church has the same God, the same Savior, the same truths, and marches toward the same kingdom.

THE COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT NEW

In the last book in Scripture, long after the Cross, the revelator was shown into heaven. There "in heaven" "was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." Revelation 11:19. The ark contained God's

eternal Ten Commandments. They are seen enshrined in the glory land. They are “forever settled in heaven.” Psalm 119:89. Twice our Lord draws our attention to the fact that even at the end of time his people will “keep the commandments of God.” Revelation 12:17; 14:12. This was long after Calvary when some would foolishly tell us the Commandments were abolished. They are still here. The Ten Commandments are not new.

The Ten Commandments of our God bare the fruit of peace and life. Two of Joshua’s spies carried the bunch of Canaan’s grapes home to the camp of Israel. So the two tables of God’s eternal ten take us to the camp of the saints. They are not new, neither will they ever grow old. Their fruit is sweeter than grapes, and their sweetness is everlasting. The last page of the Holy Scriptures declares “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Revelation 22:14.

THE SABBATH IS NOT NEW

It will be kept in the new earth. Isaiah 66:22, 23. It began in Eden, and runs like a golden ribbon through all time and spans all ages, and abides forever in glory. “There remains therefore a rest to the people of God.” Hebrews 4:9. The margin states “Keeping of a Sabbath.”

Yes, the Sabbath, like the “Lord of the Sabbath” remains for the saints, “the people of God”. “God did rest the seventh day from all his works.” So states the New Testament. Hebrews 4:4. The Spanish reads “There remains the Sabbath for the true people of God”. The Syriac: “It is therefore the duty of the people of God to keep the Sabbath.” This Sabbath rest remains for the people of God. “it remains.” It has not passed away. It is eternal, and will be kept eternally in glory.

The first human pair were made “One flesh” and God declared “Let no man put asunder.” So the two Testaments form one book - the Bible. Let no man attempt to put the knife of separation between what God has joined in One great volume.

WHAT THEN IS NEW IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

The Old Testament looks forward to a Savior to come. The New Testament looks back to a Savior that has come. Thus the great difference is that in the Old Testament the ceremonies, hopes and problems pointed forward to a Savior who would come. In the New Testament the ceremonies and rites point back to a Savior who has come.

The ceremonies and sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed forward like John the Baptist “Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.” John 1:29. Like Abel, the Old Testament saints offered their sacrifices “by faith”, in the Savior who was coming. In the Old Testament they had the “Commandments of God” and the teachings or faith of Moses. Today we have “the Commandments of God and the faith or the teachings of Jesus”. Revelation 14:12. The New Testament ordinances such as baptism, and the Lord’s Supper, point to a Savior who has come. They show “the Lord’s death”. When travelling to a city, all the sign posts point forward to that city, but when past and one is travelling away, the sign posts point back to the city that is passed. So in the Old Testament the ordinances all point forward to the coming Messiah, and the New Testament ordinances point back. Baptism shows our faith in the Savior who died, was buried and rose again for us. The Lord’s Supper shows “the Lord’s death”. When Christ died, naturally the Old Testament’s rites and typical ceremonies finished. They were nailed to the cross, for they were a “shadow of things to come.” Colossians 2:14-17. So with the New Testament ordinances they pointed back to the Savior. They, like the Old Testament ordinances are temporal and function “till He comes” again.