

Law in the Gospels - Where New Covenant Begins

by Rene P. Brown

At the very outset, I want to make this unequivocal statement: All the books of the bible are true from beginning to end, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," 2Tim 3:16 (NKJV). It is the truly God's revelation to man.

Over thirty years ago when the Lord filled me with His Holy Spirit, I received this revelation: 1) The bible is the word of God and 2) I was saved. Nothing has changed!

With those things made clear, I want to say that where we put verse divisions, where we put the title New Testament, explanations of verses and so on is not necessarily inspired by the Holy Spirit but were put there by man for ease of use. This is very helpful but somewhat misleading in some cases. Even what some of the books were named did not appear in earlier versions but are deductions from the content. This in no way takes away from the truth and literacy of the books themselves.

I. New Testament or New Covenant as a Title to the Books

Modern bibles have the preceding words just before the Gospel of Matthew

A. But are the gospels part of the new covenant message in their entirety?

Answer: Not entirely. Until Jesus died on the cross, the New Covenant could not have been in effect - though part of what Jesus spoke looked forward to that day.

B. The New Covenant is a covenant of Grace - God's grace extended to man based on the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary.

C. The New Covenant is not based on law, not Moses' Law, not the Ten Commandments, nor any other part of the Levitical Law nor is it based on law we can dream up for ourselves.

It is purely a Covenant of Grace through the blood of Jesus Christ.

D. Much of what Jesus said was Law and thus not part of the New Covenant of Grace

E. Jesus was a man under the law, speaking to Jews under the law!

He was speaking appropriate truth for the Jews; it is just not for believers!

F. Some example scriptures

Performance based acceptance = **LAW**

Grace based acceptance = **Jesus Righteousness!**

1. Matthew 6:14-15 (NKJV) ""For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." **This is law teaching!**

It is also a works righteousness teaching: I am forgiven based on performance!

- 1a. Now let us compare that to a completely New Covenant of Grace teaching:

Col 2:13 (NKJV) "And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses," **This is grace teaching.** It is based upon the sacrifice of Jesus, not works.

It is based upon my new identity in Christ Jesus as a result of His sacrifice, not my performance.

"**All**" in the scripture from Colossians means just that: all our sins and trespasses are forgiven based on the sacrifice of Jesus, not anything that I do or can do.

2. (Mat 5:48 KJV) "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

There is no way these people (**or we**) could be perfect before Jesus shed His blood for our redemption. This was Law teaching by Jesus to press them to understand they needed a **Savior!**

Now, it is possible to be perfect in Him: Col 1:28 KJV) "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man **perfect** in Christ Jesus:"

3. Mat 15:26 (KJV) "But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs."

This is **Law teaching** - salvation was only for Jews at that time.

If this were all we had, we would all be left out as we are Gentiles like the woman.

4. Matt 5:6-10 (NKJV) "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. **A great truth before the cross but in limited blessing.**

2Cor 5:21 (NKJV) "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the **righteousness of God in Him.**"

Grace Teaching - everyone in Him is righteous as He is righteous.

5. Matt 5:7 (NKJV) Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

This is limited blessing under the law. It is performance based.

1Pet 1:3 (NKJV) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **according to His abundant mercy** has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"

1Peter is **Grace Teaching**. We have all received mercy.

6. Matt 5:8 (NKJV) Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

This is limited blessing before the cross.

1John 3:2 (NKJV) "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

By the Grace of God, we shall all see Him as He is.

7. Matt 5:9 (NKJV) Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

This is limited blessing before the cross.

Gal 3:26 (NKJV) "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

Grace Teaching - all are now called the sons of God through faith.

8. Matt 5:10 (NKJV) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This is limited blessing before the cross.

1Cor 1:30 (NKJV) "But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God; and righteousness and sanctification and redemption;"

This verse from Corinthians is **Grace based** and for all who are "in Christ".

9. Matt 5:22 (NKJV) ""But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire."

This is true under the Law. I can remember early in my Christian walk worrying that I might call someone a fool!

Rom 8:1-2 (RSV) "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death."

Pure **Grace Teaching!** I am free from the law of sin and death!!!

G. In these previous **Law Teachings**, Jesus was giving them a higher standard than what they had seen in order for them to be very clear that they would never be able to keep the law in their own strength to achieve righteousness.

It was impossible before, and Jesus made it more difficult to keep by setting an impossibly high standard in keeping with the Spirit of the Law.

He was setting them up to make them see that apart from a **Kinsman Redeemer** (Book of Ruth, story of Ruth and Boaz where Boaz is the Kinsman Redeemer, a type of Christ), that is, **a Savior**, they were lost and could not be redeemed!

They were without hope

He wanted them to be ready so that they would receive a Savior when He came after the resurrection.

Sure enough, 5,000 did receive Him on Pentecost Day.

His approach of presenting a totally impossible picture of the Law drove them to the Cross for salvation on the Day of Pentecost. II. Comparing Jesus to Paul

We see that some of what Jesus taught while on earth does not seem to agree with what Paul taught.

You cannot say that "if there is conflict, I will go with Jesus!"

Either the Holy Spirit authored all of the Scriptures, both what Jesus said and what Paul said or we are all deluded about the validity and authority of the scriptures.

No, the scriptures will line up once we see that sometimes Jesus is speaking about **Law Teaching** and Paul was chosen to bring the **Grace Teaching** following Jesus death, burial and resurrection and after the coming of the Holy Spirit in Power.

Also, remember that much of Jesus teaching is still very relevant to the believer today. For example: Matt 6:6 (NKJV) ""But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

Looking forward: Also, some of what Jesus said was impossible for His hearers who were lost in their sins and trespasses but very possible for believers after the coming of the Holy Spirit after the cross.

It became possible after Jesus did it all!

III. Dividing Line

A. The dividing line between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is

Acts Chapter 2:1 when the Holy Spirit arrived on the day of Pentecost.

Following that event, God was reconciled to man Rom 5:10 (NKJV) "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

B. Now all men may be reconciled to God by accepting the work of the cross by Jesus Christ on our behalf.

With our acceptance of His reconciliation, we receive Eternal Life, which very simply is receiving Jesus who is Eternal Life in us.

C. Do not put yourself under law by trying to meet the demands of Law Teachings out of what is supposedly the New Covenant.

Look at what God has shown us **after** the cross!

It is all based on His grace. All of scripture is true but not all applies for us who live after the cross of Christ and the coming of the Spirit. Though all scripture is of value to us, it simply does not all apply after the coming of the grace of God flowing from the Cross of Christ.

We have a new identity in Christ Jesus: Righteous and Holy and Complete in Him.

*******End of Teaching*******