

**"The New Covenant"**

**Part 3**

**2 Corinthians 3:6-18**

**Introduction:** We are currently in a section of 2 Corinthians in which Paul is defending his ministry of the New Covenant. Paul had been plagued over and over again by Judaizers who were a group of Jewish people who desired to live under the Old Covenant and despised the teaching of the New Covenant. They would often infiltrate a church and they would do all they could to mix the Law with grace. This is what was happening at Corinth.

So in the section we are in Paul is explaining why the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant. Last week we looked at 2 Corinthians 3:6 and it was here that Paul explained that the Law was a KILLER but the Spirit or the New Covenant was life.

We considered how the Old Covenant was not able to save one person and it was never designed to bring salvation. The Law condemns every person that it faces and that was the purpose of the Law.

**Romans 3:20**

*<sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

**Romans 7:7**

*<sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

This brings up a question which we need to consider and then answer;

**"How were the people of the Old Testament saved?"**

I have heard many "thoughts" on this over the years. I had talked with one man a few years back and he was a Pastor and he had taught his people and he believed that the people of the Old Testament were saved by keeping the Law. But we know the verses we just looked at make that impossible. Paul said that by the deeds of the Law no flesh shall be justified!

People of the Old Testament were saved by grace through faith just as we are. When we were saved it started with a conviction. The Holy Spirit made us aware of our sin and we

came under conviction and we then came to the place of repentance. It was then that we looked back to the cross and we believed that Jesus died for our sins and that He was our Substitute on the cross, and that He was buried and He rose from the dead on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.

The people of the Old Testament also had to come under conviction and had to make the choice to repent.

### **Genesis 6:1-3**

*And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,*

<sup>2</sup> *That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.*

<sup>3</sup> *And the LORD said, **My spirit shall not always strive with man**, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.*

Here we see that even back in the days of Noah the Holy Spirit worked to convict man of his sin along with man's conscience. After the Law came through Moses man's sin was exposed and he was condemned by the Law. This was designed to drive man to repentance and to turn man to God and believe in His promise of a future Redeemer. Let me show you the attitude that is required for salvation.

### **Luke 18:10-14**

<sup>10</sup> *Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.*

<sup>11</sup> *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.*

<sup>12</sup> *I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*

<sup>13</sup> *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

<sup>14</sup> *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

Here was a man who saw himself for what he really was under the Law and he was BROKEN and REPENTANT. Remember the ministry of John the Baptist and his baptism?

### **Matthew 3:1-2, 5-11**

*In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,*

<sup>2</sup> *And saying, **Repent ye**: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

<sup>5</sup> *Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,*

<sup>6</sup> And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

<sup>8</sup> Bring forth therefore fruits meet **for repentance**:

<sup>9</sup> And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

<sup>10</sup> And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> I indeed baptize you with water **unto repentance**. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

John was called to preach repentance in preparation of the coming of Jesus Christ.

So when a person of the Old Testament came to the place of brokenness it was then that they looked ahead in their mind's eye to a Future Redeemer who would come and would die for their sins.

Now let us get back to 2 Corinthians 3. Paul will explain why the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant.

#### I. The New Covenant Brings Life

##### Notice 2 Corinthians 3:6

We looked at this last week so we are going to move on.

#### II. The New Covenant Brings Justification

##### Notice 2 Corinthians 3:7

Paul approaches the contrast very carefully. The Law which here is referred to as the ministry of death was glorious. It was glorious for several reasons.

1. It revealed the nature of God.
2. It brought the broken sinner to see their need of a Saviour.

##### Galatians 3:23-25

<sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

<sup>24</sup> Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

<sup>25</sup> But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Now the glory of the Old Covenant was seen in the countenance of Moses.

### **Exodus 34:29-35**

<sup>29</sup> And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.

<sup>30</sup> And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.

<sup>31</sup> And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them.

<sup>32</sup> And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai.

<sup>33</sup> And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face.

<sup>34</sup> But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded.

<sup>35</sup> And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

The glory of the Law was seen in the countenance of Moses.

### **Notice 2 Corinthians 3:7-8**

The glory of the Law was not permanent for the glory of the Law would fade away just as the shining in Moses' face.

### **Notice 2 Corinthians 3:9**

Here is Paul's reasoning. If the ministry of death was glorious how much more glorious should the ministry of RIGHTOUSNESS be. Paul has now went from calling the New Covenant the ministry of LIFE to calling it the ministry of RIGHTEOUSNESS.

This is another reason why the New Covenant is so much better than the Old Covenant. The New Covenant makes the person who comes to Jesus Christ RIGHTEOUS or in other

words when we come to Jesus Christ we are JUSTIFIED. The Law could not bring one person to JUSTIFICATION.

**Romans 3:20**

<sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

No flesh is JUSTIFIED by keeping the Law! But under the New Covenant we are JUSTIFIED.

**Romans 3:24-28**

<sup>24</sup> Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

<sup>25</sup> Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God:

<sup>26</sup> To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

<sup>27</sup> Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

<sup>28</sup> Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

The word JUSTIFIED means "to declare righteous".

When the Bible tells us that we are JUSTIFIED by the blood of Jesus Christ then it means we are seen in the eyes of God "JUST AS IF WE NEVER SINNED". That is what JUSTIFIED means.

The Old Covenant could not do this for one man and the reason is seen in Hebrews 10.

**Hebrews 10:1-4**

*For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.*

<sup>2</sup> *For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*

<sup>3</sup> *But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.*

<sup>4</sup> *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

The blood of the bulls and goats could not take away their sins under the Old Covenant. They offered the blood every year but it only covered sin. The sacrifices of the animals could not even clear the conscience because it could not clear the record.

**Hebrews 9:9**

*<sup>9</sup> Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, **as pertaining to the conscience;***

Every year they were reminded of the previous sins which were still on their account.

But the BLOOD of the New Covenant completely removed our sins from our account.

**Hebrews 10:16-22**

*<sup>16</sup> This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;*

*<sup>17</sup> **And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.***

*<sup>18</sup> Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*

*<sup>19</sup> Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,*

*<sup>20</sup> By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;*

*<sup>21</sup> And having an high priest over the house of God;*

*<sup>22</sup> Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

**Conclusion:**

The New Covenant is better because it gives life and it justifies the sinner. This is two things the Old Covenant could never do. This is why Paul was so concerned that the Corinthians did not get pulled in under the Law.

There is more which we shall see next week.