



## The Two Covenants

Biblical Covenant: An agreement between God and His people

Old Covenant: 10 Commandments plus 600+ laws, God's blessings must be earned by Israel, emphasizes works *for* God by His people.

New Covenant: Instituted by Jesus, God's grace given as a gift, emphasizes works *by* God for us.

We are *Covenant*. A *testament* is the written form of the covenant. Our Bible is divided by two covenants between God and His people which we call the Old Testament and the New Testament, or we could call them "the bad news" and "the good news." Today I would like to take you on a quick journey through these covenants which will take us all over the Bible! Are you with me?

## Old Covenant

Old Covenant: The "bad news" of our separation from God.

## 10 Commandments



1. PUT GOD FIRST.
2. DO NOT MAKE FAKE GODS.
3. RESPECT GOD'S NAME.
4. RESPECT GOD'S DAY OF REST.
5. RESPECT YOUR PARENTS.
6. DO NOT KILL PEOPLE.
7. RESPECT MARRIAGE PROMISES.
8. DO NOT STEAL.
9. DO NOT LIE.
10. DO NOT BE JEALOUS.

- 10 Commandments are revealed (Deuteronomy 5).

## Map of Shechem, Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal



- The Conditional Agreement Ceremony (Deuteronomy 11, 27, 28)
- My Right, House Left: Mt. Gerizim was a fertile mount and represented God's blessings: **We are Mt. Gerizim! We represent God's blessings for obedience!**
- My Left, House Right: Mt. Ebal was a rocky, barren mount and represented God's curses: **We are Mt. Ebal! We represent God's curses for disobedience!**
- Middle/Home: **We are Shechem, witnesses of the ceremony**

Lessons from the Old Covenant:

1. **God is a great, righteous God (Hebrews 1:8)**
  - These are good laws that reveal God's good character
2. **We have an unrighteous, self-destructive nature (Rom 3:10) which the Law does nothing to change (Hebrews 7:19, 8:8f)**
  - Jesus taught that we are to obey these laws from our hearts, but we do not. Israel was disobedient and suffered God's curses.
3. **The consequence of sin is death, which could be covered but not forgiven by animal blood sacrifice (Hebrews 10:4)**
4. **This covenant was given temporarily to teach us these truths but would be replaced with a better covenant. Like a Hickory Farms gift box, it was not meant to last forever!**

**"The day is coming," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant... I will put my instructions deep within (my people), and I will write them on their hearts... everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me... And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins." Jeremiah 31**

- This Old Covenant is the "bad news" of our separation from God. **Is this the covenant that Covenant Grove stands for?**

**NO!**



## New Covenant

**New Covenant: The “good news” of forgiveness and was instituted by Jesus. It emphasizes what *God* has done *for us* through Christ and is a unilateral, one-way covenant. The promises of a New Covenant are a thread through the Old Covenant!**

- Adam and Eve:
  - Shalom, God’s promise that shalom would return, their Offspring will crush Satan though He (Jesus) will be wounded (Gen 3:15). This is a promise which Adam and Eve did not earn.
  - Death came to people through Adam but life comes through Jesus, the “second Adam” (Rom 5)
  
- Abraham (Gen 15:9-10, 17-18):
  - Though he is old, he will have a son and all nations will be blessed through his offspring. Abraham’s faith was tested when God asked him to sacrifice his son on Mt. Moriah, then kept him from following through.
  - God would not require such a thing, but He would dare do such a thing, giving the life of Jesus, and on the same mountain, for Golgotha is on Mt. Moriah! **Oh, what a great, loving God we serve!**
  
- Moses:
  - When the Egyptian pharaoh refused to free the Israelites from slavery, God punished Egypt with 10 plagues. The final plague is the Angel of Death killing the firstborn in every home, unless they have the sign of animal

blood placed on the crossbeam and side beams. **The symbol of Passover is the sign of a bloody cross!**

- The New Covenant is announced at the Last Supper, Jesus' last meal with His disciples. This meal is *a Passover ceremony*.

**“The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which is also called Passover, was approaching...Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed.” Luke 21:1, 7**

**“After supper Jesus took another cup of wine and said, ‘This cup is the New Covenant between God and His people—an agreement confirmed with *my* blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.’” Luke 21:20**

The New Covenant is announced here. Within a few hours Jesus sheds His blood and dies on the cross. **The symbol of the New Covenant is the cross of Christ! Jesus is our Passover lamb to rescue us from death!**

**“Hesed: The love that will never let you go. Used 250 times in the O.T.”**

**H E S E D**  
**חֶסֶד**

The Hebrew word *Hesed* is a difficult word to translate. It means God's loyal, covenant love for His people. The Christian singer Bono of the group U2 sings it this way: “You don't know, you don't get it, do you? You don't know just how beautiful you are!” The Apostle John writes it this way:

**“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1)**

**“God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)**

**Oh, what a great, loving God we serve!**

Living in the New Covenant:

**New Covenant Christ Followers:**

1. Recognize we are broken and separated from God, our source of life
2. Recognize there is nothing we can do to fix ourselves nor our relationship with God
3. Recognize that Jesus paid our sin debt and offers us peace with God
4. Embrace God's forgiveness and Lordship in our lives

One more O.T. thread: God promises David that his descendant will be an eternal king in an eternal kingdom (2 Samuel 7). We look forward to that day when Jesus, the King of Kings, returns to take His throne and establishes shalom!

You might be here this morning wondering, "What does Jesus have to do with me? He might have been a great teacher, but didn't he die a long time ago?" Yes, He did, but before He died He explained that He would die in place of our death sentence and then would be resurrected from death. He did! We all will die one day but can be resurrected to new, better lives if we place our trust in Jesus. If you haven't, come talk to me or one of the pastors at the end of the service so that we can answer your questions.

The blessings of the New Covenant are many and take half of the Bible to explain! The songwriter Thomas Chisolm expresses New Covenant blessings this way, "Pardon for sin and a peace that endures. Your own dear presence to cheer and to guide. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Blessings all mine and ten thousand beside!"

**What Does This Mean for Us?**

We are Covenant Grove. Who put the *covenant* in *Covenant Grove*? Jesus, of course.

The Evangelical Covenant Church declares the following:

**We covenant with each other. We cultivate communities of worship committed to prayer, preaching, and study of the word; the celebration of the sacraments; and relationships regardless of status.**

**We equip loving, giving, growing Christians to reach out with the good news of Jesus Christ (the New Covenant)—evangelizing the lost, ministering to those in need, and seeking justice for the oppressed.**

As we face a new year, I am thankful for how the pastoral staff have led faithfully over the last year! **We are praying for a Lead Pastor, but we are not waiting for a Lead Pastor before we lean into covenant living.** Look at what we are doing:

- An invitation tree
- Prayer Open House
- Prayer Fridays and a Refuel Friday coming in January
- Serving at the Gospel Mission
- Beginning the “Investing in the Kingdom” class on personal finances
- Middle School confirmation
- Ministries for Kids, Youth, Young Adults, Men, Women, Life Groups for all
- Serving Teams, Care Team

We are God’s lighthouse on the NE corner of Modesto. Let’s go all in in spreading the light of the good news of His love and forgiveness, because He went all in for us.

Let us pray!

“And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.” (Eph 3:18f)

*When do I try to earn God’s love rather than accepting and responding to it gratefully?*

**For Further Reading:**

- 2 Corinthians Chapters 3-5 (Old and New Covenants compared)
- Hebrews Chapters 8-10 (Old and New Covenants compared)
- Ephesians 1 (The benefits of the New Covenant)

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Many of my high school students are fearful, reluctant learners, doing just enough not to be in trouble with their parents. If parents tell a student they must pass, the student views any effort above 60% as wasted effort; others want an A and view anything above 90% as wasted effort when they are capable of learning much more. Fear causes avoidance. I am working to change their mindset by challenging them to love learning rather than fearing grades, and when they do, they learn more and enjoy it more.

Perhaps the same principle is true for us. Do you find yourself living as though you are under the Old Covenant, needing to earn God’s acceptance and knowing that you are not good enough? The good news is that you don’t need to be good enough because He is good enough for us. Embrace God as Lord of your life. Learn more about His goodness and love and respond in gratefulness. That is this good news message of His grace.