

The Old Covenant Law And New Covenant Law Are They

George M. Ella | Added: Apr 08, 2025 | Category: Theology

Under the above heading, Peter Ditzel tells us that apples and oranges, elephants and crocodiles are not the same, neither are God's commandments in the Old Testament the same as Christ's commandments in the New. Ditzel, confuses 'Covenant' with 'Testament' and uses that false logic which mars most of his articles. He produces his orange and crocodile misleading evidence to demonstrate a contradiction between Old Testament Trinitarian teaching and the New, leaving us with a divided God, a divided Christ and a divided or broken Covenant. Ditzel refutes the unity of God's Word and denies that there was a Covenant in the Old Testament which included both law and grace. He then places mankind under a New Law, a New Grace and a New Gospel and a 'New Age'. Ditzel's 'logic' leads him to deny that Christ preached the continuation of Law within the Covenant of Grace and that Christ was bringing in His sheep from the foundation of the world. Indeed, the grave error of the NCT movement, following pioneer John Reisinger, is their denial of God's Covenant of Grace. Ditzel thus removes from Scripture all its redeeming elements. However, Ditzel fails to give us one single Scriptural passage referring either to an 'old testament' or an 'old covenant'. Indeed, there is only one reference, overlooked by Ditzel, found in 1 Corinthians 3:14 where Paul says there is a veil over the eyes of those who do not understand it.

Ditzel quotes two 'new' Scriptural passages out of context which he does not find in the Old Testament as 'evidence'. Galatians 6:2 which says we fulfil the law of Christ by bearing one another's burdens, and John 13:34, which Christ says the disciples should already know concerning loving one another. Concerning the first 'New Commandment', Moses, knew it well and learnt the necessity of bearing one another's burdens from his father Jethro which he then anchored in his laws of grace as we read from Exodus 18:22 and passim. The second quote, Matthew tells us (22:36-40) was the answer to the question, 'Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Which Christ answers from the Law and the prophets.

Ditzel claims there are 'many other commandments' in the New Testament which prove that Old Law has made place for a New Age Law, yet all his 'proof texts' are based on Old Testament teaching. Ditzel's relies heavily on the Book of Hebrews for his 'proof', though the author is expounding Old Testament truths which Ditzel rejects. All the references to what is

‘old’ and what is ‘new’ in the Book of Hebrews are taken from Jeremiah, whose interpretation the New Testament writer follows, but not Ditzel.

What makes Ditzel’s arguments unbelievable, is that though Moses is precise in expounding God’s Everlasting Covenant of Grace in the Law, Ditzel is full of confusion, searching for new ideas which the Scriptures do not help him to find, as they always teach God’s grace alongside His condemnations of sin. God told Jeremiah clearly that His Everlasting New Covenant meant an all-time knocking down of sin and a building up of mercy but Ditzel claims that the Covenant God called Jeremiah to preach was merely one of condemnation. Yet, Christ always took His disciples back to the OT to show how He was revealed there.

Ditzel teaches that the Antitype (Christ) does not need the Word of God which points to Him

Ditzel tells us that the Old Testament Law refers to ‘type’ but his New Covenant Law refers to ‘antitype’. Ditzel concludes from this that Old Testament laws, including the Ten Commandments, were mere shadows or types of New Testament commands and can now be disregarded. However, Christ was Keeper of His own Covenant from the foundation of the world. The Antitype was working throughout creation and the new creation. He keeps the Covenant for His people throughout all time as the Author and Perfector of faith. He kept the Covenant for Abraham just as He kept it for Jeremiah, David and His elect in all time. Moses and the prophets were quite clear in their minds about the type and antitype relationship between law and grace and preached this constantly as testified by our Saviour.

Unbelievers did not, and still do not, accept this fact as it reveals their sinfulness and need of the Saviour, but the Lord always preserved a remnant who were given faith to believe in a Redeemer, alias the Suffering Servant, or the Messiah. These were all Old Testament concepts believed there and then. Why Ditzel calls God’s work of salvation in Old Testament times ‘the Old Covenant’, which he finds obsolete, I do not know. Ditzel’s two-covenant dilemma is that he will not accept that the New Covenant was known by the Old Testament saints. It is from there that the New Testament writers gained their teaching. The Old Testament was the only Bible they had and used.

To show that the ten commandments are irrelevant for today’s Christians, Ditzel picks out only one, Sabbath observation, and ‘spiritualises’ it away, leaving the other nine alone. Moses and the prophets taught all to see the spirit, or the ‘tenor’, to use Moses’s term, perhaps we would say, ‘implications’ of the gospel, in all the Law. This made the Old Testament saints our tutors in the faith according to the New Testament, especially the Books of Galatians and Hebrews.

Now Ditzel makes another exegetical blunder, writing ‘The Decalogue was external, written on stone. The New Covenant commands are internal,

written on our hearts'. He has now stopped referring to his 'Old Covenant', which he mistakes for the Old Testament as a whole and now narrows his criticism to the Decalogue alone which was never a stand-alone. These commandments, he claims, were merely engraved words and are now rendered purposeless. Christians, Ditzel teaches, now believe that stoney hearts must be removed and the Law must be written on hearts of flesh. However, the Old Testament expounds this very doctrine throughout its pages, though in a way that Ditzel does not understand. If any saving doctrine was ever rubbed into the conscience of Old Testament sinners, this was. The teaching of the Old Testament is that the just shall live by faith and that God makes of stoney hearts, hearts of flesh. Indeed, this vital topic is mentioned more often in the Old Testament than the New. Christ, the Creator of all things, teaches what Ditzel denies and we read in Luke 24:25, 26 how Christ calls those fools who ignore the truth that Moses and all the prophets preached.

Ditzel, however, sticks to his quite un-Biblical theory that: 'Under the Old Covenant (whatever he means by that), the law could only condemn'. The Old Testament writers tell a different story. They knew that the Covenant rebuked sin but opened a door to grace. Ditzel constantly claims that Galatians 3 is his source for his disbelief. This chapter proves the 'better Covenant' and the very opposite to Ditzel's bad news. God's Covenant has always come as a savour of death to some but a savour of life to Christ's sheep who hear His call. Galatians 3 clearly shows the use of both sides of the Covenant in bringing salvation to the lost.

Laying a false 'table'

Now Ditzel presents what he calls 'a table' comparing his theoretical 'Old Covenant law' with his theoretical 'New Covenant law'. I use the term 'theoretically' as it appears that Ditzel calls the Broken Covenant, the Old Covenant and the Kept-Covenant the New. I think there is a great truth in this if we remember we are talking of one Covenant which mankind breaks and God keeps and not two. Ditzel's list of Bible proofs is unbalanced as he removes from the Old Testament and parts of the New their Covenant message of divine comfort and hope.

Ditzel claims that his so-called Old Covenant Law has vanished away and a New Covenant Law has come. He gives Hebrew 8 as a proof text which is an exposition of the Book of Jeremiah taken from the Old Testament and accepted, not denied, by Jeremiah. The prophet was ordained of God for this very purpose. Ditzel adds, as further 'evidence', 2 Corinthians 3. This chapter, compares serving the letter of the law with the spirit of the Law as did the Old Testament saints before him. This gives Ditzel the impulse to say that the Old Testament was a shadow of the New and therefore now non-existent. Yet Old Testament covenant teachers like Isaiah pointed to a living faith under a vicarious God-man. Ditzel claims that the Old Testament brought only bondage and condemnation. Though Ditzel picks out the teaching regarding bondage in Galatians, he leaves out the good

news of liberation which accompanies it, and which was preached throughout the whole Bible. Then Ditzel takes up the theme of a better Covenant, quite misusing the Book of Hebrew again. The author of the Book of Hebrews is showing the superiority of God taking the entire care of His covenant rather than leave it to man's desiring. Hebrews 8:6 refers to Christ being the mediator of a better Covenant, but here he is again referring to Jeremiah's teaching that the one work of the Covenant is to knock down and the other to build up. Indeed, the Hebrew word for 'New' points to a covenant always being restored, repaired and kept in working order both ways. This Covenant brings life when accepted - and death when rejected.

The Jews were allegedly given the wrong Covenant

Now Ditzel tells us that his 'Old Covenant' which he has still not defined, was only meant for the Old Testament Jews, but the Covenant which Christ founded was for all nations. This is a complete distortion of the Bible's Covenant teaching which was for all nations from the beginning. It was the Covenant to the entire goim from the start. It was a Covenant given the Holy Goi of God. Both the Old and New Testaments understand this goi to be a chosen people from all nations. Thus Jeremiah, who saw the blessings of the Covenant going out to God's remnant, as Isaiah had preached before him, states clearly to whom the condemning and healing factors should be preached. We also read in Jeremiah 1:10, that the prophet was ordained to take the Covenant Gospel to the nations with the words: 'See, I have this day set thee over the nations and the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down and to destroy, to throw down, to build, to plant.' Ditzel does not accept the whole story of Covenant Salvation recorded in Jeremiah but fixes his gaze on those who break the Covenant as his mentors.

Ditzel claims that Galatians 3:19, again out of context, teaches Christ's abandonment of the Law of Moses. What Paul is saying, however, is that the Law was made part of the Covenant of Grace to convict mankind of its sin and provide the means of leading sinners to the Saviour. Thus, if the Law is abolished, there is no need for a Saviour. This is indeed what many pastors are telling their people nowadays with their free-will and duty-faith preaching. The Atonement for sin has been taken out of Christ's hands and given to those free-willers who dutifully save themselves. I have never met such a human superman and do not believe there is such a person. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The words 'before faith came, we were under the law' shows that faithless ones are still under God's Law until Christ frees them from this bondage and gives them faith as a gift of grace. This is the gospel given by God to both Old and New Testament sinners who form Christ's Bride, the Church. Those pastors who deny this fundamental Biblical doctrine are called by Jeremiah 'Brutish Pastors' and he condemns them seven times. For Jeremiah, the wages of sin is death but

the gift of God is eternal life within God's Covenant. When dealing with sin, Jeremiah condemned those who put confidence in themselves which, of course is what free-willism and duty-faith nowadays teach and thus come under God's condemnation now, as they did in the time of Jeremiah.

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