



# The Patriarchal Age

Raymond Harris

## INTRODUCTION

The word “patriarch” is a combination of two words: *pater*, meaning *father* and *arches*, meaning *to rule*. Hence, in early Bible times the father or oldest male was the ruler of the family or tribe.

Through the years, many have erroneously supposed that the expressions “Patriarchal Dispensation” and “Patriarchal Age” are synonymous. Such is not the case. The words *dispensation* and *age* have very different meanings.

In the New Testament, the word *dispensation*, is found four times (Eph. 1:10; 3:2; 1 Cor. 9:17; Col. 1:25). W.E. Vine defines the word to primarily signify the management of a household. In 1 Corinthians 9:17, Paul uses the word to explain the responsibility entrusted to him to preach or dispense the gospel, a stewardship. So the patriarchs had the responsibility to rule over and manage the affairs of the family or tribe and they were stewards to teach and pass on to each younger generation the word of God. Since that first Law of God was not in written form, it had to be propagated by word of mouth. Vine adds the very interesting note: “A dispensation is not a period or epoch (a common, but erroneous use of the word), but a mode of dealing, an arrangement or adminis-

tration of affairs.” This misconception of the word “dispensation” has likely caused many people to suppose that the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Law of Christ each had very specific times of beginning and ending.

On the other hand Vine tells us the word *age* “signifies a period of indefinite duration, or time viewed in relation to what takes place in the period.”

Hence we see that the word *dispensation* has to do with the management and education of the family or tribe! Whereas the word *age* has to do with the time or duration of a thing.

## THE BEGINNING

In the garden of Eden, in the time of Adam and Eve’s purity, there were no temples, altars, sacrifices, or religious activities. There was no need for such. As long as there was no rebellion or disobedience, they enjoyed a sweet, wholesome relationship befitting their innocence. At that time there was only one law. It was put there to prove their love and submission to their gracious creator and Father. That one law was: “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: see “Patriarchal Age?” on p. 343

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## The Mosaical Age

Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

In executing his eternal purpose to give mankind a Savior, God formed a nation from the descendants of the patriarch Abraham through the lineage of his son, Isaac, and grandson, Jacob. Under the watchful eye of God and the power of his providence, this family was developed into a nation in the land of Egypt. They were called the “children of Israel,” after the name God had given to Jacob (Gen. 32:28).

Though initially treated favorably, the children of Israel, as their numbers grew, became a source of slave labor for the Egyptians. God raised up Moses, one of the children of Israel, who had been brought up as the Pharaoh’s grandson, to deliver the Israelites from this bondage into the land that God had long ago promised to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 12:7; 13:14-15). It was there that they were to become a great nation.

Three months after escaping Egypt, by way of the Red Sea, the children of Israel came to the wilderness (or desert) of Sinai. There they camped near the mountain (Gen. 19:1-2). God called Moses up to the mountain and delivered his law for his nation — the law that came to be known as the law of Moses.



This law set the Israelite nation apart from all other nations of the earth. The period of history in which God governed the children of Israel by this law has become known as *Mosaical Age*. This age lasted from the giving of the law to Moses until Jesus took it away and established the new covenant (Heb. 10:9). Hence, the law of Moses is now also known as the Old Testament (or Covenant) law (2 Cor. 3:14; Heb. 8:13)

The law of Moses was theocratic in nature. It was religious and civil law all rolled up into one with God at the head of state. For many years, under this law, Israel had no earthly king — only God reigned over them. Periodically God would raise up “judges” to lead them in time of trouble and distress. Eventually they demanded an earthly king and God granted it but not without warning them *see “Mosaical Age” on p. 345*

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## The Christian Age

Stan Cox

In Hebrews 11, the writer records for us a litany of faithful, Old Testament figures to engender confidence in his readers. The conclusion of his exercise is found in chapter 12, as he writes, “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:1-2).

Such faithful men and women serve to strengthen us in our efforts to serve God and secure our heavenly reward. One of the most amazing aspects of their faith is that they all lived and died without receiving “the promise.” Note chapter 11, verses 39-40, “And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.” They did not receive the promise because they lived and died before that better thing, provided by God. Their time on earth predated the establishment of the Christian Age. Notice that their faith did not go unrewarded. Rather, something “better” came along *later* to perfect them along with those to whom the epistle was addressed.

The purpose of this text, indeed the entirety of the Hebrew epistle, was to establish for those Jewish Christians that they had something *better* than what was supplied during the Mosaical age. Where Moses had given them the Law, Christ had established his own Law for man (1:1). Where the blood of bulls and goats was ineffectual in paying the penalty for sin, Christ offered up himself as a blood sacrifice to purchase once for all our redemption (10:1-10). Where the high priest, himself a sinner, entered the holiest place in the temple once a year to offer a sacrifice of atonement, Christ, our perfect high priest, entered heaven itself, and there ever lives to make intercession on our behalf (7:11-28). Truly, the Christian Age, with its new covenant, new worship, and greater blessings is a blessed one, and we are fortunate to live during Christ’s reign.

When did the Christian Age begin? Simply answered, “in the fullness of the time.” As Paul wrote, “But when the *fullness of the time* had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). All other ages were preparatory to the final age, when the Father would redeem man through his Son Jesus. Scripture also refers to this time as the “last days,” as in Hebrews 1:1-2, “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, *has in these last days*

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spoken to us by His Son.” Luke recorded Peter’s sermon in Acts 2, where the great apostle claimed the events of the day to be a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy, “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the *last days*, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’”

The Christian age is the last age upon the earth. We are living in the last days, and through the new covenant are witnesses to the accomplished redemption of man. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:16-17).

To set the exact time of this change from the Mosaical age to the Christian Age, it is necessary to establish a point about testaments or wills. In Hebrews 9:16-17, Scripture establishes, “For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.” Concisely stated, the Christian Age, ushered in with the establishment of the new covenant of Christ, did not begin until the death of our Lord. It was necessary for Jesus to fulfill the Law. Having done so, in his death he abolished it, “Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (Col. 2:14). The abolition of the Law brought the Mosaical age to an end. The ratification of the new covenant of Christ (with his blood) ushered in the age that carries his name.

A significant event transpired a short time after our Lord’s death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. On the feast day of Pentecost, the promised Spirit fell upon the apostles of our Lord. They all began to speak in tongues concerning Christ’s kingdom. The historian Luke records Peter’s sermon, where for the first time in the history of man, the terms for redemption and inclusion into that kingdom were revealed. Jews on that day, convinced of their guilt in putting to death their Messiah, cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter’s answer establishes for all time the means by which we can be granted the privilege of participating in the blessings of this glorious age. “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of

Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:37-38).

There are two significant points to be made as Peter’s answer is examined. *First*, in the Christian age, the absolute forgiveness of sins is found. Where the blood of bulls and goats failed, the blood of Jesus Christ is effectual. Because of his death, God will remember our sins no more (cf. Jer. 31:31-34). *Second*, all men are amenable to Christ’s law, and are privileged to be qualified to enter into a covenant relationship with the Savior. Notice again Peter’s statement, “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (v. 38). Later, as Peter recounted the conversion of Cornelius and his household, it is written that the Jews “glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life’” (Acts 11:18).

Finally, how long will the Christian Age endure? It must be noted that the Scripture refers to this age as the “last days.” Simply, there will be no other Age to follow. Last of all, God sent his Son (cf. Heb. 1:1-2). When Christ appears again, it will not be to establish a new Age, rather it will be the *end!* “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. *Then comes the end*, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power” (1 Cor. 15:22-24).

Peter describes that event in his second epistle. “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). Time will end. The universe will cease to exist. All that will be left is an eternal reward for the faithful, as “He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Heb. 9:28); and punishment for the lost, who will be separated for eternity in outer darkness, “where ‘Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched’” (Mark 9:46).

The only thing that stands between men and the end of the Christian Age is the longsuffering of God. “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). As this is so, it is important to diligently prepare for that day. “Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matt. 24:44). No man knows when that day will come. All we can do is be ready, for it is certain. “Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, *what manner of persons ought you to be in*

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# A Change in Covenants

Connie W. Adams

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**For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law (Heb. 7:12).**

One great hindrance to understanding the Bible is a failure to distinguish between the various covenants God has made. God made covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the nation of Israel. The covenant with Israel was also identified as the law of Moses, given at Mt. Sinai. On the brink of Canaan, Moses addressed the generation which was about to occupy the land of promise. He said, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day. . . . The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb" (Deut. 5:1-2). He proceeded to restate the Ten Commandments, followed by the various statutes and judgments which were also a part of the covenant. Notice that this was addressed to Israel. This was a special covenant for a special people, a nation formed in Egypt and now delivered from that land with its bondage. At the first statement of these commands, God began by saying, "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Exod. 20:2).

This was further verified by these words: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with

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*holy conduct and godliness*, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?" (2 Pet. 3:11-12).

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (Rev. 22:20).

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Israel. . . . And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments" (Exod. 34:27-28). The statutes and judgments amplified the last six of the Ten Commandments. The first four concerned their relationship with God; the last six, their relationship with each other. But they were all part and parcel of the same covenant. Included in that was the priestly function administered by those of the tribe of Levi. The Hebrew writer showed that Christ was of the tribe of Judah "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:14). Christ is a priest after a different order (that of Melchisedec). So, now that the priesthood is changed, of necessity the law (the covenant which included that) also is changed. Christ is now our high priest and all Christians are priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). We are a "royal priesthood" offering up, not the sacrifice of animals but "spiritual sacrifices."

## A NEW COVENANT

While this covenant with Israel was still in force, God through Jeremiah looked to a new day with a new covenant which would be different from the old one. In Jeremiah 31:31-34, the prophet set out the differences in the Mosaic covenant and the "new covenant" he would make. The Hebrew writer quoted this passage and applied it to the covenant God has made through Jesus Christ, a covenant which would include Israel but not be limited to them. Consider the Jeremiah passage and the application of it.

**1. It would be "a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah."** The fact that it would be "new" shows that it was not a continuation of the old one. In fact, Hebrews 8:13 says, "In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:13). But this new covenant would certainly be for Israel and Judah; it would just not be limited to them. To Abraham God had promised that his seed would "bless all nations of the earth" (Gen. 12:1-3); "all nations shall flow unto it" (Isa. 2:2-3). Jesus said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). This "one fold" is the same as the "one body" of

Ephesians 2:16. Speaking of both Jews and Gentiles, Paul said, “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (v. 18).

**2. The new covenant would differ from the old.** “Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers . . . which my covenant they brake” (Jer. 31:32). It would differ in several important respects. The old was written on tables of stone. The new would be implanted in their hearts. That is not to say that Israel was not to learn God’s law and imbed it in their hearts. But they were already Israelites by natural descent when the covenant was made with them. Under the new covenant, “they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them” (Jer. 31:34). The first covenant was given to a people who were already the unique people of God. They were his children first and then taught their peculiar role. Under the new covenant, adherents would first be taught and learn. The seed of the gospel would be planted in their hearts first. Jesus said, “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:45).

Paul further explained this point when he wrote, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent. . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:12-17). During the first covenant, they were children of Israel by a natural birth and then later taught as to their uniqueness. But now, under this new covenant, people are first taught and then choose either to accept the gospel or reject it.

**3. “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:34).** The old covenant was sealed by the blood of animals. “And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words” (Exod. 24:8). “But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10:3-4). As they kept the law of sacrifice, they paid the interest on the debt but the debt itself remained. Their forgiveness was in hope of the coming Christ who would cancel the debt with his own sacrifice.

“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the *redemption* of the *transgressions* that were *under the first testament*, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal

inheritance” (Heb. 9:15). Not only did the blood of Christ provide an all-sufficient sacrifice to forgive sin throughout the tenure of the new covenant, it also reached back to validate every blood sacrifice offered until that time. “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” (Heb. 10:1). The sacrifices under the law were a shadow. The blood of Christ is the substance. “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:22-26).

### BETTER THINGS

The old covenant served its purpose in bringing the Jew to Christ; but “now that faith is come we are no longer under the schoolmaster” (Gal. 3:25). The law with its priesthood, sacrifices of animal blood, incense, Sabbath keeping, instrumental music and all the others types and shadows has now been taken out of the way and nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14-17). Jesus came to “fulfill” it (Matt. 5:17-19). “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10:4). Now we live under a new covenant which has a better spokesman than Moses, a greater priesthood than Levi, and a better sacrifice than the blood of bulls and goats. We have “a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Heb. 8:6). Those under the old covenant lived with the promise of a coming Messiah. We live in joyful expectation of a Messiah who is coming AGAIN to claim us. Why would anyone want to return to the types and shadows of the first covenant when we have in Christ the reality of all God promised to the patriarchs and prophets? Jesus, our sacrifice, was also raised from the dead and that guarantees our hope for that “moment,” that “twinkling of an eye” when we shall be changed.

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (1 John 3:4). It is that hope which anchors our souls in times of turbulence, persecution, grief, and distress of every kind (Heb. 6:19-20).

The new covenant is God’s final revelation to man. It is all-sufficient to teach us how to be saved and how the church functions. It equips the saint fully for service. All we need to know about worship is found there. It is our pattern

# Sacrifices: A Type of Christ

Olen Holderby

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The words “type” and “antitype” are not to be found in the Scriptures; but the idea has a solid place in the text, especially in the word “shadow.” “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” (Heb. 10:1). Referring to some of those things practiced under the law, Paul said, “Which are a shadow of things to come” (Col. 2:17). The “good things to come” are the realities of the new covenant, in contrast to the shadows and prophecies of the old (Heb. 8:5). Here, then, we see the word “shadow” used in the same way in which we would use the word “type.”

The basic idea, of the above mentioned sacrifices, was that of blood. “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life” (Lev. 17:11). “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22).

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10:4). The fact that man sinned made it necessary for man’s blood to be shed for man’s sins. The simple justice of God would require that each man should, thus, pay for his own sins. However, we have “this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins

for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:12). He did not die for the sins of one just man, but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Peter views his sacrifice as “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:19). John 1:29, has John the Baptist saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” This was the Lamb provided by God (Gen. 22:8; John 3:16); the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8); the Lamb that was without blemish (1 Pet. 1:19); the Lamb sacrificed for us.

When Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me” (John 14:6), he was probably on his way to the cross. We are justified by his blood (Rom. 5:9); we are sanctified by his blood (Heb. 10:29); we have peace with both God and man by his blood (Col. 1:20); we are redeemed by his blood (Eph. 1:7); we are washed from our sins in his blood (Rev. 1:5); and, “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). Finally, we hear John describe the redeemed in Revelation 7:14, “. . . these are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” I am persuaded that these Scriptures are dull and dry statements to many, with little meaning; and, what a shame that is! In view of this possibility, permit me to ask a couple questions:

1. How do you feel when reading these passages?
2. Do you feel regret? Sad? Joy? Guilt?

Perhaps we could appreciate the shedding of Christ’s blood for us more, if we really saw or understood the blood which his blood replaced. So, let us take a brief look.

## SACRIFICES UNDER THE LAW

Animal sacrifices were offered before the existence of the Law: Abel (Gen. 4), and Noah (Gen. 8), are examples of such. However, our present story begins with the altar of burnt offering, before the door of the tabernacle. This 7 ½ x 7 ½ x 4 ½ feet altar was the place of an almost un-

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(Heb. 8:5), our rule (Phil. 3:16). We dare not go beyond it (2 John 9-11). What men say is not equal to it (1 Cor. 4:6). It is the standard that will judge us (John 12:48). Yes, there has been a change in covenants. Thanks be to God!

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thinkable number of sacrifices, if the Jews were faithful in their offerings.

**1. Burnt offerings (Lev. 1).** These could be offered by any Israelite any time he desired. We may well imagine that every faithful Israelite would feel called upon to appear there often, so that thousands of animals, per year, would be offered.

**2. Meal offerings (Lev. 2).** Products of the soil were offered, just when the circumstances required or permitted.

**3. Peace offerings (Lev. 3).** This required the death of a defenseless victim. Our conclusion would be that many animals were offered, every year, for this purpose.

**4. Trespass offerings (Lev. 5).** This one would appear to force the conclusion that there was scarcely a day or hour that someone was not there to reconcile himself to God or to his neighbor.

**5. Feast of weeks (Lev. 23).** This was in recognition of the harvest, and thirteen animals were here sacrificed.

**6. Feast of tabernacles (Lev. 23).** This was in remembrance of the forty years in the wilderness when they dwelt in temporary dwellings; and, it required the offering of one hundred ninety-nine animals.

**7. National offerings (Exod. 29; Num. 28).** These were offered every morning and evening and double on the Sabbath. This would mean that approximately eight hundred animals per year were sacrificed. Thus, it is probable that the blood around the altar seldom got cold (Lev. 17).

**8. Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread (Exod. 12).** This was a family feast and it required a lamb of the first year for each family. How many families do you imagine were there? Thousands upon thousands of lambs would be offered during this seven-day feast.

**9. Feast of new moons (Num. 28).** Eleven animals were sacrificed.

**10. Feast of trumpets (Num. 29).** Ten animals were sacrificed.

**11. Feast of annual atonement (Exod. 28; Num. 29; Lev. 2; 16).** This feast was more involved and was related to other sacrifices, but at least fifteen animals were sacrificed

to God. Some of the blood from this sacrifice was taken into the Most Holy Place and offered as an atonement for all.

**12. Sin offerings (Lev. 4).** There were four different classes of sin offerings. We shall skip the details, but we can know that there was a large number of animals offered since all were considered to be sinners — goats and calves — whose blood flowed from this altar — the amount of which would almost defy the imagination of man — blood that was replaced by the *blood of the Son of God!*

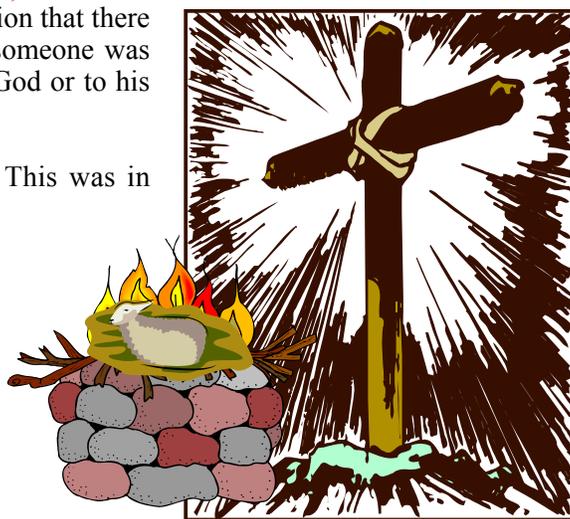
In view of the above, one author referred to the altar of burnt offering as a “slaughter-house”; and it remained such throughout the history of Israel. Blood appeared to flow daily from this altar. All of this was in the background of the statement in John 1:29, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” His blood washed away all the sins of the faithful from that point backward. But, his blood flowed in another direction — covering my sins and your sins, but not unconditionally. Just as they had to be obedient, so must we!

Animal sacrifices under the old covenant was the only means of approach to God, even though they formed no permanent part of his will. They were to serve as reminders of the perfect sacrifice later to be offered, of which they were the types. They were yearly reminders of their own inadequacy and imperfection;

this, in turn, should instill a deeper appreciation for the “real thing” when it came.

While these old sacrifices were in force, some of the men of God saw their inadequacy and said so (Pss. 40:6-8; 51:16); some of these were quoted in Hebrews 10. The blood of animals dedicated the first law (Heb. 9:18-20), but the blood of Christ dedicated the new law (the gospel — Heb. 10:9-10). The former was the type; the latter the anti-type. Unlike the “year by year” sacrifices under the Law, there is no repetition in the sacrifice of Christ, “Once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:24-25).

Maybe, now, we can better appreciate the sacrifice of Christ more deeply. When we read, “This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. 26:28), cannot we see the value and power of his blood? In Hebrews 13:20, the writer makes mention of “the blood of the everlasting covenant.” This blood was the blood of the Son of God, and this covenant was the new



# Differences In Worship

David Dann

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Jesus said, “God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). The Lord’s statement brings to light and reinforces the timeless truth that the only acceptable object of our worship is the true God of heaven. Throughout the Bible the point is consistently made that the expression of reverence and praise offered by mankind must only be directed toward God. On the other hand, the worship of idols is roundly condemned in both Testaments (Deut. 17:2-5; Rom. 1:18-25; 1 Cor. 10:14).

While the object of man’s worship is the same in the Old Testament as it is in the New, many other aspects of worship are not shared between the two covenants. In fact, as one closely examines the worship of the two testaments, marked differences are clearly exposed. It is vital for us to see that the worship of the old covenant is different from the worship of the new covenant. It is also vital for us to understand the particular ways in which the manner of worship prescribed in the first covenant is distinct from that prescribed in the second.

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covenant, that will “make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ” (v. 21). The sacrifice of Christ was not the unwilling death of an unintelligent being, but the willing obedience unto death of a free moral agent. He came by God’s will (John 8:42); he came to do God’s will (John 6:38), and he died for God’s will (John 10:18). All of the types, in animal sacrifices, under the old law, found fulfilment in the one antitype, the perfect sacrifice of the Son of God.

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## **GOD HAS PRESENTED A PATTERN FOR ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP**

**1. Both covenants present a God-given pattern for acceptable service.** When the old covenant was given to Israel through Moses, God did not leave the people to worship in any way they pleased. Instead, he set Aaron and his sons apart as priests (Exod. 28:41) and centered the worship of Israel around the tabernacle. God then instructed Moses saying, “According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it” (Exod. 25:9). The worshipers of the old covenant were to model their worship after the instruction presented by God on Mount Sinai. In the same manner, the New Testament presents a “pattern of sound words” to which each local church must adhere (2 Tim. 1:13; 1 Cor. 4:16-17). The only kind of worship that God will accept is worship that is according to his pattern of revealed truth, for, “those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

**2. The Old Testament pattern is not the same as the New Testament pattern.** The Old Testament pattern of worship is referred to as “the Law of Moses” (Josh. 8:31), or “the first covenant” (Heb. 9:15), among other designations. On the other hand, the New Testament pattern of worship is referred to as “the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16-17), “the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42), and “the doctrine of Christ,” (2 John 9) as well as other designations. The two patterns are just as different from one another as “old” is different from “new,” and as “Christ” is different from “Moses.” Since the two patterns of worship are different, it follows that the manner of worship prescribed for each would be different. The old covenant was brought to an end when Christ died on the cross (Col. 2:14-17; Heb. 9:16-17; Rom. 10:4). As “ministers of the new covenant” (2 Cor. 3:6), the apostles of Christ presented a pattern of worship that is new and distinct when contrasted with the old covenant pattern.

## **KEY DIFFERENCES IN WORSHIP**

The differences between the worship of Old Testament Israel and the local church of the New Testament are numer-

ous. While space constraints will not allow an exhaustive investigation into every detail of difference between the worship of the respective covenants, we will examine and contrast some key areas of difference.

**1. A geographic center of worship.** Moses told Israel that God would select a place to put his name and that this particular place would serve as the center of their worship (Deut. 12:5; 16:2). In time, the Lord appointed Jerusalem as the geographic center of worship for Israel (1 Kings 9:3). However, in pointing the Samaritan woman toward the worship of the new covenant, Christ said, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father” (John 4:21). Under the new covenant there is no geographic center of worship, thus we find congregations of the Lord’s people worshipping acceptably in places such as Ephesus (Eph. 1:1), Corinth (1 Cor. 1:1-2), Philippi (Phil. 1:1), Antioch (Acts 13:1), and numerous others.

**2. A separate priesthood.** In making the first covenant with Israel, God said that the Israelites would be his priests (Exod. 19:6), and went on to specify the family of Aaron in particular (Num. 3:10). As priests, Aaron and his sons were set apart from the rest of the people (Exod. 28:41), given special garments (Exod. 28), and given the responsibility of ministering to God in worship on behalf of the people of Israel (Deut. 21:5). However, in the New Testament, every Christian is considered a priest without regard for nationality or family lineage (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6). Every Christian has the right to approach God directly through Christ (Heb. 4:14-16; 1 Tim. 2:6).

**3. Location of assembly for worship.** Under the old covenant the worshipers in Israel assembled and ministered at first at the tabernacle, and later at the temple (1 Kings 8:5-6). The physical sanctuary was a vital part of the worship of the Old Testament. On the other hand, a physical sanctuary finds no place in the pattern of New Testament worship. Throughout the New Testament we find churches of Christ assembling for worship in an upper room (Acts 20:7-8), in a school house (Acts 19:9-10), and in private homes (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19), as well as other places. While each local church must assemble in one place for worship (1 Cor. 14:26; Heb. 10:25), the type of location is largely inconsequential.

**4. Sacrifices.** There is, perhaps, no clearer distinction between the worship of the two covenants than that seen in the sacrifices offered. The Old Testament law featured a complex system of animal sacrifices and burnt offerings

(Lev. 1:2-9), as well as grain offerings and drink offerings (Exod. 29:41). The Hebrew writer says that the sacrifices offered under the old covenant could never take away sins (Heb. 10:11). But the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ is able to take away sins completely (Heb. 10:12-14). Apart from the physical sacrifices of the old covenant, worshipers under the new covenant are expected to offer “spiritual sacrifices” (1 Pet. 2:5), which involve good works (Heb. 13:16).

**5. Day of worship.** While the priests of the old covenant ministered to God daily, the seventh day of the week was set apart as a day of devotion to the Lord and hallowed as the Sabbath day (Exod. 20:8-11). But Sabbaths are not part of the worship of the new covenant (Col. 2:16-17). In the New Testament, we find Christians assembling for worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).

**6. Feasts.** A number of feasts were associated with the worship of the Old Testament including the three annual feasts (the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and Feast of the In-gathering) which all the men of Israel were required to attend (Exod. 34:18-23). But these feasts are not a part of the worship of the new covenant (Col. 2:16-17). The only feast clearly associated with the worship of the local church in the New Testament is the Lord’s supper, which is an emblematic memorial of the sacrifice of Christ (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Rather than being observed once a year, the Lord’s supper is to be observed on the first day of the week when the church meets for worship (Acts 20:7).

**7. Music in worship.** Old Testament worship involved singing as well as the use of mechanical instruments of music. This fact is seen early in the history of Israel’s worship with regard to the Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23-25), and later with reference to the worship of the temple (2 Chron. 29:25-26; see also Pss. 81:1-4; 150:1-6). In contrast, the only music authorized in the worship of the local church in the New Testament is singing (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:18-19; 1 Cor. 14:15). The use of musical instruments is not part of the worship of the new covenant.

**8. Methods of giving.** According to the Law of Moses, the Israelites were required to give a tithe (ten percent) of the increase of their livestock and produce once a year (Deut. 14:22). But as part of the worship of the local church in the New Testament, each member of the church is commanded to give as he has been prospered on the first day of the week, rather than giving a certain mandated percentage once a year (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7).

## A FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENCES IN WORSHIP

Many either fail to see or refuse to acknowledge the differences in worship revealed in the two covenants. This failure has led to an exceptional amount of religious error. A failure to recognize the differences in worship listed above leads to:

**1. Denominational worship.** It does not take one long to see that the worship of the Roman Catholic Church is patterned largely after the worship of the old covenant rather than the new. Catholic worship features a geographic center of worship (Rome), a separate priesthood wearing priestly garments, a physical sanctuary, the candles and incense of the tabernacle worship (Exod. 37:17-28), special feast days, instrumental music in worship, tithing, and many other practices borrowed from Old Testament worship. Since Protestant denominations trace their origins to Roman Catholicism, it is not surprising to find many of these same worship practices, which are based on Old Testament worship, in the worship of nearly all of these religious groups today.

**2. Unscriptural arguments put forth to justify Old Testament worship practices in the worship of the church.** Many arguments have been formulated in an attempt to establish justification for ignoring the distinction between Old Testament worship and its New Testament counterpart. (a) Some want to justify the use of instrumental music in worship because King David engaged in it. However, King David also had several wives (2 Sam. 3:2-5). If we can justify instrumental music in worship today because David engaged in it, then we can also justify polygamy today since he engaged in that as well.

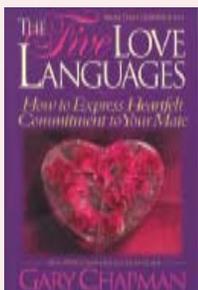
The argument that justifies one will justify the other. (b) It is also argued that the church today can have a separate priesthood, incense in worship, and engage in the practice of tithing since these practices are found in the Bible. But something is not justified solely on the basis that it is found in the Bible. In fact, numerous sinful activities are recorded in the Bible. Furthermore, the offering of animal sacrifices is found in the Bible as well. Shall we have animal sacrifices in the worship of the church today? (c) Others say that Old Testament worship practices such as the use of instrumental music and the observance of feast days can be carried over into the worship of the church since these practices are prescribed in the Psalms. It is assumed that the Psalms are not part of the Old Testament law, and therefore, are still binding today. But Jesus said the Psalms are part of the Old Testament Law (John 10:34; 15:25). The Old Testament law, including the Psalms, was abolished when Christ died (Eph. 2:15).

## CONCLUSION

It is vitally important that we understand and acknowledge the differences found in the respective worship of the two covenants. Jesus said, "If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). Let us make sure that in our worship we are abiding in the word of Christ, and not in the Law of Moses.

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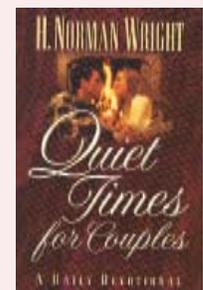
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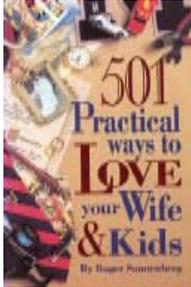
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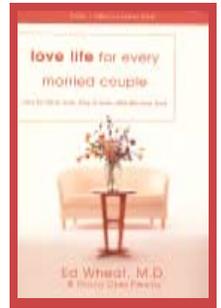
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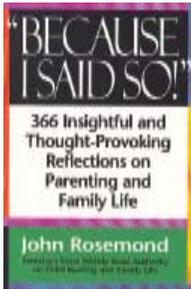


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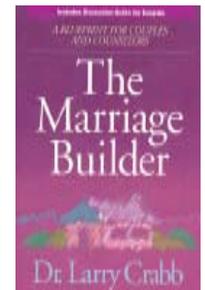


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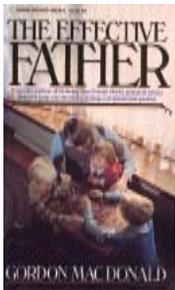


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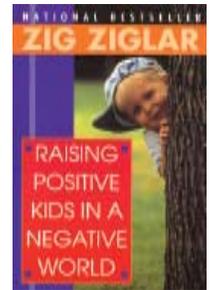


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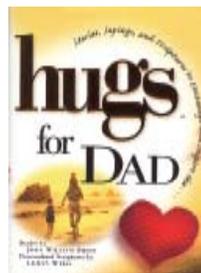
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# Differences in the Priesthood

Harold Fite

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A priest is “one who performs sacrificial rites.” The Levitical priesthood offered sacrifices for themselves and for the people. They represented the people to God; they were the people’s mouthpiece to God. The high priest was “taken from among men” and was “appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he might offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Heb. 5:1). The high priest entered the most holy place on the Day of Atonement, offering sacrifices for the sins of the people, the priest, and his own house (Lev. 16). The work of priests involved offerings, ministrations, and mediation.

The Hebrew writer instructs us to consider the high priest of our confession (Heb. 3:1). He is a “great,” “merciful,” and “faithful” high priest. While there are several similarities between the priesthood of Aaron and the priesthood of Christ, there are real differences. We anticipate the differences when we read, “for the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change in the law” (Heb. 7:12). Jesus came from the tribe of Judah, “as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests” (v. 14). “Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer gifts according to the law” (Heb. 8:4). Christ was not, nor could be our priest while in the flesh.

The Priesthood of Christ is after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:20). Melchizedek is first mentioned in Genesis 14:17-24. He was both king and priest. Upon returning from the slaughter of the kings, Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek. In turn, Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. Melchizedek is described in the Hebrew letter as “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither the beginning of days nor end of life. But made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually” (Heb. 7:3). We are not concerned about the “person” of Melchizedek; we are concerned about the priestly office of Christ “after the order of Melchizedek.” The prophet Zechariah saw him as king and priest on his throne (Zech. 6:13). Melchizedek was priest and king on his throne; so also is Christ. No priest of the Levitical priesthood was a priest on his throne. This reveals one of the differences between the Aaronic

priesthood and the priesthood of Christ, and sets forth clearly the superiority of the Priesthood of Christ over the Levitical priesthood.

There is no record of Melchizedek’s lineage. He had no predecessors and no successors. Christ had no predecessors and no successors. This was his order. Christ is a priest “forever after the order of Melchizedek,” made “not after the law of carnal commandments, but after the power of an endless life” (Heb. 7:16).

The Levitical priests were many in number, but because of death, they were hindered from continuing (v. 25). Unlike the Levitical priest, Christ will never die. He lives forever. For this reason “he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (v. 25). Unlike the priesthood of Aaron, Christ “needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself” (v. 27). Jesus was without sin! He didn’t have to offer up sacrifices for his own sins, as was true of the Levitical priests. He offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin. He possessed impeccable character: He was “guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners and made higher than the heavens” (v. 26). He accomplished what the blood of bulls and goats could not accomplish. “For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointed a Son, perfected for evermore” (v. 28).

Melchizedek took tithes of Abraham and blessed him (v. 6). “Without any dispute the less is blessed of the better” (v. 7). The Levitical priest who received tithes, paid tithes through Abraham. “For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him” (v. 10). Christ, whose priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek, is superior to the Levitical priests.

The baptism of Christ didn’t ordain him as priest. Christ was never a priest on earth. “Now if he were on earth, he

# Conditions For Salvation — Then And Now

Joe R. Fricke

Larry Ray Hafley

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One has but to read the book of Leviticus to understand the truth of Hebrews 9:22. “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.” The figure of John the Baptist, when he referred to Jesus as “the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” is better understood by those who know the place of animal sacrifice under the law of Moses (John 1:29).

The first five books of the Old Testament make us appreciate the simple plan of pardon which we have through Christ. In order to be forgiven, an Israelite could offer a burnt offering (Lev. 1:17). A meat or meal offering, consisting of products of the earth could be offered at any time when the situation in a particular case permitted (Lev. 2:1-16). Peace offerings demanded the death of an innocent animal, without spot, blot, or blemish (Lev. 3:1-17). Trespass offerings were preceded by confession of sin and a lamb or a kid from among the goats was offered for sin (Lev. 5:1-19).

would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law” (Heb. 8:4). He became a high priest through the resurrection. Christ was crucified, rose from the dead, and entered heaven as our high priest. Christ is our forerunner in heaven: “whether as a forerunner, Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 6:20). We therefore have a great high priest “who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession” (Heb. 4:14). Unlike Aaron, Christ entered into a holy place not made with hands, into heaven itself, “now to appear before the face of God for us” (Heb. 9:24). “We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man”

Today, we can “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16). Of course, this does not mean that we can come with arrogance, that we can come to God knowing that he is “forced” to receive us because he is merciful and gracious. No, it means that we may come without fear because of what Christ has provided. There are no obstacles, no elaborate ordinances for us to hurdle. The way is free, clear, and open to all penitent children of God. “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:28-30; cf. Rev. 22:17).

As Hebrews 9 reveals, the “gifts and sacrifices” of the first covenant could neither purge the conscience nor procure eternal redemption (vv. 12-14). Only the blood of Christ could do that. Under the first covenant, the high priest, with all his service and sacrifice, could not appear

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(Heb. 8:1, 2).

The priesthood of the Patriarchs, Melchizedek, and Levites has passed away. The only priesthood left is that under Christ. As our high priest he sits on the right hand of God, making intercession for us. No Levitical priest ever sat on the right hand of God. He is our high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

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in the way of the holiest of all, in the presence of God, for us. Again, that would be accomplished by “the high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (vv. 23-28).

One was born a child of Abraham, born of the flesh into “a kingdom of priests and an holy nation” (Exod. 19:6). Upon this physical birth did Nicodemus and others rely as their assurance of the kingdom of heaven (John 3:1-21; 8:30-47). However, one’s spiritual sonship is decided, not by the flesh, but by whom he hears, by the one who is his teacher, and by the one whose will he obeys (John 8:26, 28, 29, 38; Rom. 6:16). Jesus granted that the Jews of his day were descendants of Abraham. “I know that ye are Abraham’s seed” according to the flesh, said Jesus (John 8:37). He denied that they were children of God. Rather, he said, “Ye are of your father, the devil” (John 8:44). “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham” (John 8:39). “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness” (Rom. 6:16). “He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God” (John 8:47).

That one must hear God and submit to his will is the indispensable element in obtaining forgiveness. The Jew, too, had to learn it. The Jews had trusted in the multitude of their offerings and in the glory of their ordinances, but God said, “That is not what I want; that is not what I have desired” (Isa. 1:10-20). Note these two startling statements. In view of Exodus and Leviticus, they sound like contradictions of what Scripture says God had required. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices” (Jer. 7:21, 22). “For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering” (Ps. 51:16).

Is there a contradiction? No, for though God *did* make demands and give commands “concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices,” that was not the whole of it (cf. Eccl. 12:13 — the whole of man is to fear God and keep his commandments. Note the order, “fear,” then, “keep”). Now, hear the end of Jeremiah 7:21-23: “But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you” (Jer. 7:23). Note what follows Psalm 51:16, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Ps. 51:17).

Let Micah make the point we have sought to set forth. “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself

before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God” (Mic. 6:8)?

Yes, when one sinned in the Old Testament, the offerings had to be offered, but they were not sufficient in and of themselves. They had to be accompanied by a “meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” In the New Testament, children of God must have the same disposition, the same spirit. They need not offer an animal sacrifice, for Christ, our sacrifice, has been offered for us (Heb. 10:10-12). They also must, with zeal and godly sorrow, repent, confess, and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22-25; 2 Cor. 7:10; 1 John 1:9; Rev. 3:19).

Of course, no one can please God who does not believe in him. “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” God has required obedient faith in every age and stage of his dealing with man. It was true of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3). It was true of Abraham (Jas. 2). It was true of the nation of Israel (Deut. 28-32). It is true today (Rom. 1:5; 10:1-16; 16:25, 26). The humble, penitent, trusting heart of the prodigal son must characterize all who would come to God, no matter in what generation or dispensation he may live.

Israelites were raised and taught to “know the Lord.” But God said that it would not be that way under his new or second covenant (Heb. 8:8-13). No, a child of God does not have to be taught, saying, “Know the Lord,” for one could not be of God, he could not be saved, if he did not already “know the Lord,” for, “this is life eternal, that they


might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

To be a child of God today, one must be instructed. “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath *heard*, and hath *learned* of

the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:45). One must hear and understand the word of God before he can be converted (Matt. 13:15, 19, 23). In order to “obey from the heart,” one must know and understand the truth (Rom. 6:16-18; cf. John 8:32; 1 John 2:3-5). Upon understanding and believing the word preached, one repents of his sins, confesses that Jesus is Lord and submits to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:36-41; 8:5, 12, 35-39; 16:30-34; 22:16). Doing this is called “obeying the truth through the Spirit” (1 Pet. 1:18-22). By this process one has his soul purified and is “born again . . . by the word of God” (1 Pet. 1:22-25). By obeying the truth, by submitting to its terms and conditions, which were given by the Spirit, one is “born again” (1 Pet. 1:18-25; 3:21). That is, one who does not know God comes to him through faith, through the system of faith, and not through the works of the law (Gal. 2:16).

Therefore, it may be said of all such people that they “are” now, presently, “children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26). They are not children of God by the works of the law, nor because of their fleshly heritage (Gal. 3:10-14). Why “are” they now “the children of God”? What is the reason for that? “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27).

It is when one is baptized in the name of Christ that it can be said that he belongs to Christ (1 Cor. 1:12, 13). Two things are required. The first, that Jesus died for us, is a “given”; that is, it is understood that Jesus tasted death for “every man” (John 3:16; 6:51; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2). The second is that one must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. That is Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 1:12, 13.

Thus, when one has been baptized in water and “in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins,” that man belongs to Christ (Acts 2:38; 10:47, 48). Of such Paul says, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). (For an extended, thorough argument on this point, see W. Curtis Porter’s affirmative speeches in the Porter–Tyngley and the Porter–Bogard debates.)

Hence, though one today might have the blood of Abraham coursing and pulsing through his veins, he is not “Abraham’s seed.” He is not an heir “according to the promise” made to the great patriarch. “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. 2:28, 29; cf. Phil. 3:3-7). The only way to be an heir of the promise made to Abraham is to be obedient to the gospel and be a member of the body of Christ. It is only in that “one body,” that “same body,” the church, that one can be a partaker or sharer of “his promise in Christ by the gospel” (Eph. 2:11-16; 3:6, 8-11, 21).

Have you been “baptized into Jesus Christ,” into his body, the church (Rom. 6:3, 4; 1 Cor. 12:13)? If not, you are lost in your sins, for eternal life is *in* Christ, not out of him (1 John 5:11). If you have not been “baptized into Christ,” you are not in him and are not of the seed of Abraham and not an heir according to the promise.

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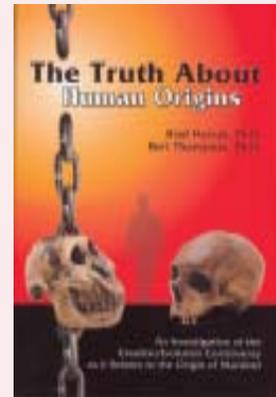
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# The Old Testament Theocracy vs. The New Testament Church

Daniel H. King, Sr.

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Many differences exist between the Old Testament and the New. One of the most noteworthy, and immediately recognizable, is the fact that in the Old there is a theocracy whereas in the New, God deals with a spiritual body called the “church” (*ekklesia*, “assembly, congregation”). The appellation “kingdom” is applied to both Israel and the church. Paul saw Christians as “translated into the kingdom of the son of his love” (Col. 1:13). And it is in this idea that the reign of God is most frequently described. Jesus spoke often of the “Kingdom of God” and the “Kingdom of heaven.”

Consequently, in order to discuss the differences between the two Testaments, it makes sense to speak in terms of the four things that are necessary to constitute any *kingdom*. These four things are: a *king* or ruler, a *territory* or area of control and subservience, *subjects*, and a *law*. All four of these are present in every kingdom of which we are aware, and they are present in both the Old Testament and the New, as we shall immediately see. When we understand each of them in the context of their respective kingdom, we have a genuine grasp of God’s reign among the children of men.

## A KING

God’s reign over his people in the Bible is a continuous theme throughout the Book. From very early beginnings in the history of the people of Israel, God asserts his authority over those who are connected to him in terms of “kingdom” and “kingship.” The term “king” was familiar to all who lived in those times because it described an office common in the ancient Near East. The general pattern was that of a ruler who held sway over a particular settled region, often centered in a city. The book of Genesis provides numerous instances of this idea in the cases of rulers like the kings of Shinar, Elam, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, etc. (cf. 14:1-2). Among foreign peoples this idea of kingship was often related to divinity. The king was a god. In Egypt, for example, the pharaoh was considered divine. In Assyria, on the other hand, he only represented the deity.

In Israel God was King. No king was ever seen as god. Samuel appointed the first human king at the insistence of the people (1 Sam. 8:4ff.). In a sense this was an apostasy from the theocracy: “Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but *they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them*” (8:7). Under the reign of King Saul, God retained his position as the ultimate King over Israel, as can be seen in Saul’s inferior position relative to Samuel, the Lord’s prophet (cf. 1 Sam. 13:13, 14; 15:24-31). God was still the true King even though a human king was reigning over the political aspects of the Israelite economy.

King David established a dynasty that lasted over 400 years, until the breakup of the state in the year 587 B.C. Jerusalem became the capital of this united kingdom (2 Sam. 5:5ff.), and the Lord promised an abiding and continuous dynasty for David (Ps. 132:11-12). The kingship was passed from father to son by hereditary succession (2 Sam. 7:12-16; 1 Kings 1:28-30; 2 Chron. 21:3, 4; Ps. 89:35-37). The kings of Israel, after their revolt from Solomon’s son, were mostly wicked men. They followed in the footsteps of Jeroboam I “who made Israel to sin.” Many of the sons of David in Judah, as well, were evil men. In the final analysis, God only continued the monarchy because of his promise made to David (1 Kings 15:4, 5).

The promise of the messianic king is found throughout the Old Testament in the form of many direct and indirect prophecies. At his death, Jacob promised regarding the future of his son Judah (Gen. 49:9-10) that “the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet *until Shiloh come*.” This latter phrase seems to mean “until he comes whose right it is” (cf. Ezek. 21:27). With the arrival of the house of David upon the scene of history came an ideally righteous ruler, and many flawed sons. The messianic hope therefore crystallized into the “David” of the future: “Therefore will I save my flock. . . . And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall

be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it” (Ezek. 34:22-24).

Two groups of passages in the Old Testament are particularly predictive of the messianic future. First, there are those texts in the Psalms which center upon the king and utilize language and phraseology which goes far beyond anything Israel or Judah had seen in an earthly monarch. He establishes a world-wide rule (2:8-12; 18:43-45; 45:17; 72:8-11; 89:25; 110:5, 6). His rule is everlasting (21:4; 45:6; 72:5). His kingdom is peaceful (72:7) and prosperous (72:16), and does not deviate from the will of the Lord (72:5). He is the friend of the poor and enemy of the oppressor (72:2-4, 12-14). He is remembered forever (45:17), possesses an everlasting name (72:17), and is recipient of unending thanks (72:15) and everlasting blessing (45:2). He is the heir of David’s covenant (89:28-37; 132:11-12), and of Melchizedek’s priesthood (110:4). He is the son of God (2:7; 89:27), and is seated at God’s right hand (110:1). Furthermore, he is himself divine (45:6, 7).

The second group of texts that powerfully predict the messianic king is found in the book of Isaiah. Two primary sections deal with the messiah. The first is in chapters 7-12. There he is called “Immanuel” (7:14), born of a virgin, royal deliverer (9:1-7) and righteous king (11:1-16). He sits on David’s throne (9:6). He who springs out of the stock of Jesse is also the root of Jesse (11:1, 10). He is the “mighty God” and the “Everlasting Father” (9:6). Of the increase of his government there shall be no end, and he will establish it with judgment and justice forever (9:7). The other section of Isaiah that speaks of the messianic king is chapters 40-55, where he is consistently portrayed as God’s ideal “Servant.” The Servant is the Lord’s anointed (42:1), who exercises the royal functions of judgment (42:1, 3-4) and dominion (53:12). He displays the marks of a prophet (49:1-2; 50:4), extends his ministry to the Gentiles (42:1, 4; 49:6b) and to Israel (49:5-6a). He is the agent of world-wide revelation (42:1, 3-4) as well as salvation (49:6). He voluntarily submits to death on behalf of others (53:4-6, 8, 10-12). Elsewhere in the Old Testament he is the “seed of woman” (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; 49:1; and perhaps also Jer. 31:22), the Son of man (Daniel 7), and the anointed prince (Dan. 9:24-27).

The New Testament sees these passages realized in the person and work of Jesus Christ. He is the messianic king whom the Old Testament promised. To begin with, he is frequently referred to as *christos* or Christ (Matt. 2:4; 26:68; 27:17, 22; Mark 12:35; 15:32; Luke 23:2). This is the Greek word “anointed,” and a translation of the Hebrew word for “messiah.” Peter proclaimed him to be the Christ in a private gathering at Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:16), and later at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost after the resurrection he did so before assembled thousands (Acts 2:34-36).

The followers of Jesus were eventually called *christiano* or “Christians” because they were followers of the one whom they believed to be the Christ (Acts 11:26). Jesus was manifestly claimed to be the “blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15; see also Rev. 17:14; 19:16). In the New Testament Jesus is the King over God’s Kingdom. The apostles now reign with Christ (Matt. 19:28) in that they were used by him to declare to Israel the conditions of entrance into, and continuation in, the Kingdom of God (Acts 2:36-42).

### A TERRITORY

For a kingdom to exist, there must also be an area of control and subservience. A king must have his kingdom, and his kingdom is usually associated with a country and its boundaries.

Old Testament Israel was promised the land of Canaan first to Abraham: “Unto thy seed will I give this land” (Gen. 12:7). Later, God pronounced the borders of that land in Genesis 15:18, “Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” These were the northern and southern boundaries. The other two physical boundaries were natural ones. On the west the country was bounded by the Mediterranean Sea, and on the east by the Arabian Desert.

Moses renewed the land promise to Israel during his days (Exod. 23:31; Num. 34:1-12; Deut. 11:24). After the death of Moses God made the identical pledge to Joshua (Josh. 1:3, 4). That same prophet many years later declared that God had kept his solemn promise to his people: “Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing hath failed” (Josh. 23:14). Solomon made a similar declaration: “Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised; there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by Moses his servant” (1 Kings 8:56). This was true because “Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt” (1 Kings 4:21; 2 Chron. 9:26). The land promise, along with all the others, was fulfilled when Israel inherited the land of the Canaanites. Premillennialists today yet argue that the land promise has never been fully realized, but this notion flies in the face of these plain Scriptures.

In the New Testament Jesus is seen as King over his Kingdom, not reigning over some land area in particular, but over the whole world. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). The Lord’s rule does not involve land at all. Physical boundaries mean absolutely nothing in his Kingdom. The angel Gabriel said to Mary when he announced that Jesus would be born, “He shall reign over the House of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom

there shall be no end” (Luke 1:33). There is no terminus to his Kingdom, either in the sense of time or of extent.

Because there is no land area prescribed in the Kingdom of God does not mean that there is no place where the Kingdom is to be found. The Lord’s Kingdom has a rightful place. But that place is not in this physical world (cf. John 18:36). Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). God’s Kingdom, or divine rule, is located squarely in the hearts of men wherever they may be. The territory of his Kingdom, then, is a spiritual sphere of influence and cannot be determined by looking on a map or a globe, or by examining political boundaries. The Kingdom of God exists anywhere that men fully give their allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord and King.

### **SUBJECTS**

The third essential for a kingdom is subjects. There can be no king without human beings who are his subjects, and there can be no kingdom without subjects or citizens of the nation. For one to be a ruler, there must be subordinates within his realm.

When Samuel presented Saul to the people for the first time as their king, he said to them, “See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?” Their response was joyful submission, “And all the people shouted and said, ‘Long live the king!’” (1 Sam. 10:24). Forty years later, when the forces of Saul were utterly defeated and king David was established as ruler over all the tribes of Israel, Scripture tells us that all the tribes of Israel came to David in Hebron and said to him: “The Lord said unto thee, Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel.” The decision was unanimous among the elders of the people to surrender their allegiance to David as king. It was the will of God: “So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the Lord; and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign” (2 Sam. 5:1-4). The subjects of an earthly sovereign made a covenant with him to obey his commandments (2 Chron. 23:1-3, 16).

The New Testament has its own counterpart to this. Jesus was born at Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1, 5-6; Luke 2:4-7), the city of King David and his father Jesse (1 Sam. 16:1). Psalm 110 predicted the reign of the Christ, explaining that his servants would be willing subjects: “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power” (vv. 1-3).

Who are the subjects of God’s spiritual Kingdom?

Remember that Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). So, his Kingdom cannot be identified with a political or national subdivision of this earth. Since the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan are both universal in their extent, every living person is subject to the one or the other. “God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Pet. 5:5b-6). The subjects of Christ’s Kingdom are those from among all nations who submit themselves willingly to his reign. Their spirits and lives are given over in total submission and obedience to Jesus as King.

Because this submission is consenting and the product of one’s own volition does not mean that it is not necessary. In the end every knee will bow to him and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Isa. 45:23; John 13:13; Phil. 2:10, 11; Rom. 14:10-12). Make no mistake about it: We shall all submit to his reign. We will either be his willing servants now, or confess that he is Lord in the humiliation of the judgment. Whatever our own status with him, Jesus Christ is Lord and King!

### **A LAW**

The subjects of every kingdom must submit to the law of that ruler who holds sway or else be held to account for not doing so. In modern times, the law is usually formulated as a written constitution. Since the Magna Charta, this has been done to limit the power of monarchs. Since the time of the Codes of Lipit Ishtar and Hammurabi, however, it has also been done to place the law before the people in written form to give public notice and warn them against breaking it.

When one travels to a foreign country, it is important to understand the laws of that country. One can wind up in prison, sometimes in most unpleasant circumstances and for a very long time, because he was ignorant of some law and broke it. Laws are different and sometimes very foreign to our own experience. Stealing in America will often get a criminal only a slap on the wrist. In some countries his hand will be cut off!

In the Old Testament the Law of God was crystallized in the five books of Moses, later described as the Torah or “Teaching.” Later scholars remarked that there were precisely 613 commandments. At the heart of these, however, lay the “Ten Commandments” (literally, “the ten words”) given by God in a special revelation to the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai. They were engraved upon two Tables of the Law by “the finger of God.” The commandments appear in two places, the first one in Exodus 20:2-14, and the second in Deuteronomy 5:6-18. Man was not to tamper with this law. Moses warned the people: “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you this day, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the

Lord your God which I command you” (Deut. 4:2; cf. Prov. 30:6). The Ten Commandments constituted the essence of the covenant God made with his people (Exod. 34:28).

In the very heart of the Old Testament, however, God promised a “new covenant” that was not to be like the Old (Jer. 31:31-34). This new covenant was to be an “everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David” (Isa. 55:3). It was to be given by “a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people” (Isa. 55:4), and “thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God” (Isa. 55:6). Gentiles were thus to be embraced in this new covenant community, for God set him (Christ) for an ensign to the peoples (Isa. 5:26; 11:10, 12) and a light to the Gentiles (Isa. 42:6; 49:6). God’s covenant is his law, and Isaiah predicted that “a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people” (51:4). As he had before said, “out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3).

Notwithstanding the declamations of those who deny the existence of divine law in the New Testament, God intended his new law to be proclaimed first in Jerusalem and then in every corner of the world. *Christ has a law.* The New Testament says so: “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2); and, “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2).

Moreover, the law of Christ is now to be identified with the New Testament itself. Paul said, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;

that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). Like a final sentry standing guard over the book of Revelation, and with it the corpus of all the books contained in the biblical collection, John placed the following words: “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18, 19).

God’s word is not to be tampered with, *for it is the law of God.* In every age, lawbreakers face the certainty of punishment: “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, ‘Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense’ saith the Lord. And again, ‘The Lord shall judge his people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:28-31).

So, God has a *Kingdom* or reign among the sons of men. And like all kingdoms, his sphere of influence has a *King*, a *territory* or area of control, *subjects* or citizens and a *law* or constitution formulated to direct its population. All of these aspects are found in every Kingdom that has ever existed. They are found also in the Kingdom of God.

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## Faith in Both Testaments

Bobby L. Graham

A more basic study could not engage us than one concerning faith. “And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him” (Heb 11:6, ASV). Because the verse declares faith essential in pleasing God, it becomes fundamental to all else required by God. Apart from faith nothing will make any individual fit in God’s sight. Faith causes him to respond to what God says and requires. The relationship of faith to the rest of his life is comparable to that of a building’s foundation to its superstructure. Without

faith nothing else counts, but with faith there is spiritual structure in one’s life!

In this series of articles concerning the change that God made in covenants, it is imperative that we understand, as earlier demonstrated, that faith is (1) a fundamental divine requirement and that (2) faith found under the first covenant is the same as the faith found under the new covenant. It shall be the burden of the rest of this study to prove the second element of the preceding statement.

## DISTINCT COVENANTS

Without treading on the territory of others in this series, we relate faith to the change elsewhere proved. If faith is fundamental to pleasing the Lord, one must believe what God says about his plans to make a change in his arrangements with men. He must believe that God planned to make the change (Jer. 31:31-34), that the change did come in due time (Heb. 8:8-13), and that the change was necessary for anyone to benefit from the better priesthood of Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:12). There is no way for Christ to serve as high priest (in offering himself once for all time as sacrifice) apart from the change that God indicated in covenants. If the previous covenant is still in effect, then the blood of Jesus Christ is merely the spilled blood of a sincere martyr, but powerless to save. Likewise, all allegiance to him is misplaced, obedience to Christ being unneeded. Such is the logical conclusion to which the Scriptures drive us, because of the crucial role of faith in assimilating the facts and principles of truth and in motivating the obedience that God desires, regardless of the covenant in force (Heb. 5:8-9).

## NO CAUSE FOR DIFFERENCE IN FAITH

The termination of a covenant with the origination of a different covenant in no way demands the conclusion that faith is somehow different. It is understandable that what one believes and obeys under the two covenants will differ. When God had Moses deliver the Mosaic covenant to the Israelites at Sinai, the same people who had earlier functioned under the system of Patriarchy underwent an immediate change in what they did in service to God. Whereas the fathers had previously offered sacrifices to God for their families and had received revelations from him as his prophets, men from the Tribe of Levi became the priests and God chose specific individuals as his prophets. Some of the fathers ceased their priestly/prophetic function that they had maintained under the earlier arrangement, and others began such work under the new arrangement. The change in principles and practice was dictated by the operation of the new covenant. There was a fundamental change in what they believed and did at the change in covenants; but there was no change in nature, meaning, essentiality, or use of faith.

Faith did not change because it was the willingness to take God at his word, to trust his promises, and to embrace his ways in an obedient life. To believe God at one time, when he spoke to the patriarchs, obligated the same hearers to believe him when he spoke about a different arrangement under Moses. Their willingness to believe him was strengthened by the display of miracles at Mount Sinai in Exodus 19. When the Lord sent the mighty display of lightning, thunder, fire, and smoke, he was providing them sufficient reason to believe him. He wanted them to believe him regarding the restrictions imposed concerning approaching the mountain and to believe his later words that would form the covenant that he was making with

Israel. In that case, to believe God was to abide by the restrictions and, later, to accept both the positive and the negative legislation set forth in the Mosaic Law.

The case just discussed is similar to the transition from the Mosaic arrangement to that of Christ (Heb. 7:12). Some of the very people living under the Mosaic Law would hear Peter and other apostles declare the preeminence of Jesus Christ over Moses and Elijah, just as those apostles first had to be convinced of the same truth they would later declare (Matt. 17:1-8). Observe that the verse just noted in Hebrews underscores the need for change, in accord with the law upon which the arrangement is based. The change in law dictated a change in what people have to believe and do in order to please the Lord. Beginning on Pentecost in Acts 2, the Lord's apostles instructed people how to profit from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, not to continue offering their daily, weekly, and annual offerings under Moses. Sabbath observance was no longer a part of God's plan for people, but meeting with other Christians on the first day of the week to remember Christ (Acts 20:7). They can no longer serve according to the sacrificial/priestly system of the Old Testament. To do so is to show a lack of faith in God/ Christ, even as the Letter to the Hebrews indicted former Israelites and present Jewish Christians with unbelief throughout the book because of their willingness to abandon the teachings of Christ and retain those of Moses. Faith is as necessary now as ever; but it leads one to believe Christ, not Moses.

Faith is somewhat similar to hope and love under different covenants. The nature of hope does not suddenly change because of a change in covenants, nor does the force of love in one's life. Hope is the product of faith, assured by one's faith (Heb. 11:1). Whatever one believes will determine his hope. A misplaced, even unscriptural faith, like that of the Jehovah's Witnesses as to the end of time, still causes one to hope for inclusion in either the 144,000 ("little flock") in heaven or the Great Crowd ("Jonadabs") on earth. Their faith is the foundation of their two hopes, not the one hope in Christ (Eph. 4:4). While the content of one's hope might change as covenants change, faith remains the same vital force. Likewise love does not change just because the covenants do. Love moves one to accept the instruction and the requirements of the person loved (John 14:15). Even a change in those instructions and requirements, as happened on Pentecost, does not change the basic nature, application, and operation of love in motivating behavior.

## TREATMENT OF FAITH IN VARIOUS PASSAGES

The treatment given to faith in various passages demonstrates that faith is unchanging from the time of Abraham to the time of the Law and then to the time of first-century Christians. When New Testament writers illustrated faith for the benefit of their readers, the Spirit directed their use of examples like Abraham, Rahab, and various other Old Testament persons (Rom. 4; Heb. 11; Jas. 2). Abraham is

the man of faith most often selected.

The faith of Abraham stands out as exemplary for a century. Beginning with God's call to Abram in Genesis 12, we find a faith that believed what God said, trusted God's help, and obeyed God's commands. Again in Genesis 15, we observe his faith accepting God's promise of many descendants. In two instances God certified his faith as genuine by counting it as (crediting it to his account) leading to his justification (Gen. 17; Rom. 4:11-12). Perhaps the most severe test of faith found in the inspired annals appears in the requirement that Abraham offer his son Isaac in Genesis 22. In this case, also, he proved faithful, doing all that God allowed and willing to do more.

Time fails us to recount the examples, action, characteristics, and rewards of faith in Hebrews 11. The reason for such an inclusion in the Hebrew letter is that faith as found in the worthies of previous covenants can be helpful to those under the present covenant. They needed faith that persisted unto the saving of the soul, and they could learn about it from the faith of the Old Testament faithful (Heb. 10:35-39; 11:39; 12:1-2).

#### ELEMENTS COMMON TO ACCEPTABLE FAITH

A summary of our study reminds us that faith under every economy instituted by God has been a constant requirement: no one has ever been able to please God without it. This great need explains why God so frequently demonstrated the veracity of his words by the miracles used in such abundance in the early scenes of Bible history. Faith also has another constant throughout the Biblical record — accepting the truthfulness of whatever God says. Propositional truth (divine declaration) is often the object of faith, because faith depends upon what God speaks (Rom. 10:17). Faith is never just a feeling or some subjective twinge, based on an existential moment with God. Trust in God is part of faith in Hebrews 11. Faith believes the incredible, because of the One assuring the reality of it all. Finally, faith always obeys God's demands. Thayer's definition of "faith" includes all of the elements which we have emphasized: (1) conviction, (2) trust, and (3) obedience. We must acknowledge the need for these elements in our faith. How does our faith compare?

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#### "Patriarchal Age" continued from front page

for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Once Adam and Eve sinned, the punishment was implemented! When it was acknowledged that Eve had sinned and led Adam into the same, God responded with what must have been a mournful exclamation, "What is this that thou hast done?" I'm sure the child-like Eve had no idea what a monumental thing she had done. They had never witnessed death. But, God had said that disobedience would bring death: *separation!* Immediately there was a spiritual separation from God, and the process of physical death set in. Then the awesome scene, as God pronounces the curses on the serpent, the woman, and Adam! After Adam and Eve sinned they witnessed death for the first time. God was not pleased with their withering fig leaf aprons. Genesis 3:21 tells us that *God* made them coats of skins. Is it too presumptuous to think that God made them witness the death of the animals that provided their clothing?

#### THE PATRIARCHAL LAW BEGINS TO UNFOLD MARRIAGE AND ADULTERY

As we read Adams statement in Genesis 2:24, it is evident that God had already laid down the universal proclamation regarding marriage. Jesus restates this law in Matthew 19:4-6:

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Then in Matthew 19:9, Jesus explains that the unauthorized putting away of one's companion results in the sin of adultery. This is true of both husband and wife when they marry new companions! It is obvious that the sanctity of marriage and the sin of adultery were universally understood. In Genesis 12:10-20; 20; and 26:6-11, we have three occasions where Abram and Isaac stirred the anger of the King of Egypt and two Philistine kings. Abram and Isaac did this by leading the kings to believe that their wives were only *their sisters*. This could have led to their committing adultery with Sarai and Rebekah. In Genesis 20:6, God told Abimelech that if he had committed adultery with Sarai, it would have been a *sin against God*. It is obvious that the Egyptians and the Philistines understood that adultery was a sin. (It is interesting that both the Egyptians and the Philistines are thought to be the descendants of Ham, through which the Patriarchal Law was propagated.) Then in Genesis 39:9, we see that Joseph had the same understanding of the law and fled from Potiphar's wife. He said, ". . . thou art his wife: how then can I do this *great wickedness, and sin against God?*"

#### WORSHIP AND SACRIFICE

From Genesis 4:3-7, we learn that, early on, God had instructed Adam and his family regarding worship. Cain offered the fruit of the ground and it was rejected. Abel offered the firstlings of his sheep and the fat thereof and it was accepted. We cannot miss the fact that here in the beginning of worship, God specified *how* he was to be worshiped. Acts of worshiping God have never been left to the pleasure and imagination of man! Hebrews 11:4 informs us that Abel carefully and faithfully followed the instructions given by God in this the Patriarchal Law. It is written, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Abel offered "by faith." And Romans 10:17 tells us that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Next we look at the worship of Noah. In Genesis 7:2-3, we learn that God had made a distinction between clean and unclean beasts and fowl. Then in Genesis 8:20 it is written, "And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every *clean* beast, and of every *clean* fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar." In this passage we find the first *altar* mentioned and that God had made a distinction between various beasts and fowls that would be acceptable for sacrifice. This was all part of the Patriarchal Law!

Then from Genesis 12 through Genesis 35, we find over and over the accounts of the worship and sacrifices of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They all lived and died worshiping according to God's commandments in the Patriarchal Law! In Genesis 26:4-5, God reaffirms his promises to Abraham, "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept *my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws*. Yes the Patriarchal Law had well known and well defined commandments, statutes, and laws.

In Genesis 14:18, Melchizedek, king of Salem, is identified as "the priest of the most high God." As we study Hebrews 5-7, we learn that Melchizedek was the *one and only* high priest mentioned in the Patriarchal Age. As to his functions, we have no knowledge. However, a parallel between the priesthood of Melchizedek and that of Jesus is explained.

### THE DEATH PENALTY — CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

From Genesis 1:26-27, we learn that the God made man a very special being. He was made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore man has a spirit or soul that is eternal, it will never die! In the eyes of God, the life of a human being is very special. All other creatures may be killed with no consequences. But, to kill a human, is murder, a crime punishable by death. God said, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Gen. 9:6).

### HOMOSEXUALITY

In Genesis 18-19, we learn of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Their annihilation should be more than enough to convince any honest person that homosexuality was strictly forbidden by the Patriarchal Law. In the Garden of Eden, God stressed that the man is to cleave to his wife and they are one. Can any honest person really think that in the eyes of God, homosexuality is an acceptable, "alternative life style?"

### THE PATRIARCHAL LAW — THE LAW OF THE GENTILES AFTER SINAI

In Exodus 19-20 we are told how God gave a special covenant or law to the seed of Abraham. Israel was to be to God "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." They were to receive and obey the Law of Moses to prepare themselves to bring forth the Messiah into the world.

Meanwhile, *God did not abandon the remainder of the world!* Contrary to the thinking of some, the Patriarchal Law did not cease with the giving of a special law to the Jews. Rather it continued to serve as the Law of God for all the Gentiles or (non-Jews) till Jesus came and nailed both old Laws to the cross. The Law of Moses continued till Pentecost and the Patriarchal Law continued to Cornelius.

Let's look at some examples of Gentiles who knew about the one true God. Let's consider some who continued to receive the word of God as it was passed down from father to son.

In Exodus 3:1, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, is called "the priest of Midian." In Exodus 18 we learn of Jethro coming to Moses when he and the Israelites reached Sinai. Let's look at two or three verses.

"And Jethro, Moses' father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God" (Exod. 18:5). Then in Exodus 18:10-12, it is written: "And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God." Here a Gentile, who was called "the priest of Midian," acknowledges that there is but one true God and proceeded to offer sacrifices to him, continuing under the Patriarchal Law.

### MIDIAN AND MOAB — BALAAM AND BALAK

We have already shown that the Midianites had some knowledge of God. Balaam was a Midianite with a special relationship with God. In Numbers 22:18 Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." As we read

Numbers 22-24, we find Balaam: *speaking by inspiration* the words that God put in his mouth (see Num. 22:38). Balaam told Balak to build seven altars and offer oxen and rams to God (Num. 23:1). Also, Balaam understood the difference between the death of the righteous and the death of the wicked and said, "Let my last end be like his" (Num. 23:10). Balak was the king of the Moabites and Moab was a son of Lot! Patriarch Lot, evidently had passed God's law down to that nation. These events took place about forty years *after* the Law of Moses was given on Mt. Sinai.

## NINEVEH

As we come to the book of Jonah we are told of events that took place some 700 years *after* Moses received the special covenant for the Jews. In Jonah 1:1, we see evidence of God's continued concern for others besides the Jews. Indeed, Jonah was a Jewish prophet. But, God instructed him to go to the great but wicked city of Nineveh and cry out against its wickedness. Easton's *Bible Dictionary* notes that God's actions here shows that God's "grace has never been confined to his covenant people." After some detours, God prevailed upon Jonah to go and preach to Nineveh (Jonah 3:2). Jonah obeyed God and warned them that they would be overthrown in forty days. Their knowledge and fear of God is seen in their response. "So the people of Nineveh *believed* God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them" (Jonah 3:5). It was proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king. "Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water." They were to cry mightily unto God: and to turn every one from his evil way. This was done in the hope that God would repent, and turn away from his fierce anger. And, we are told that God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not.

Surely this is sufficient to prove that God was known by the Gentiles and that they were under the Patriarchal Law until the gospel of Christ was first preached to the Gentiles in the person of Cornelius!

God absolutely did *not* abandon the entire Gentile world for 1500 years until Jesus came. In Acts 10:2, we learn that Cornelius "feared God" and that he had taught his house do the same. He was devout, he helped the poor, and he was steadfast in prayer. Even though he had a covenant relationship with God, he, like those Jews on Pentecost, needed to hear from Peter what he needed to do!

The Jews were in covenant relation with God. However, they needed to hear the gospel of Christ in order to enjoy the remission of sins, membership in the body of Christ, and citizenship in the Kingdom.

It was exactly the same with Cornelius. Though he was in covenant relationship with God, he needed to hear the

gospel of Christ. God was granting to the Gentiles "repentance unto life." Yes, the time had come ". . . *in every nation* he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

Remember — at judgment, the books will be opened. The patriarchal law, the law of Moses, and the gospel of Christ!

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## "Mosaical Age" continued from page 2 of the consequences (1 Sam. 8).

The law of Moses was not a universal law for mankind, but a national law for Israel (Duet. 5:1-3; Lev. 26:46). The Sabbath, for example, had a significance for Israel that was not shared by another other nation:

"Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the *children of Israel* shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and *the children of Israel* for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God (Exod. 31:15-18).

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. *And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt*, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day (Deut. 5:14-15, italics mine — eob).

The law of Moses was truly a "schoolmaster (tutor) to bring us to Christ" (Gal. 3:24-25). Many of the practices under the law were designed to be types to foreshadow that which was to come under Christ and the New Covenant (Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 8:4-5; 10:1). The offering of the blood of animals for the sins of the people was a type of the blood of Christ that was to be offered to take away the sin of the world (Heb. 9:11-14). The tabernacle (and eventually the

temple) with its priesthood and sacrifices foreshadowed the church purchased by the blood sacrifice of Jesus and serving under his priesthood (Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:6-28).

The prophets, living under the law, pointed to Christ in their prophecies. The fulfillment of these prophecies is among the strongest of evidences of the Messiahship of Jesus. Every phase of the Jesus's earthly mission, from his birth until his coronation at the right hand of God, was prophesied during the Mosaical Age. How one can read Isaiah 53 or Psalm 22, with any knowledge of the life and death of Jesus, without concluding that Jesus was indeed the son of God, is a mystery beyond this writer's comprehension. And these are but two of the multitude of prophecies fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.

The coming of Jesus signaled the end of the Mosaical Age. He declared that he came not to destroy the law (or the prophets), but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17). He fulfilled it in every way. He lived his entire earthly life under the law without ever breaking any part of it — thus fulfilling every requirement of the law with his sinlessly perfect life. He fulfilled every prophecy that had been uttered by the prophets under the law concerning the coming Messiah and Savior. He fulfilled it in that he brought that system to its intended conclusion and ushered in the new system "established on better promises."

After about 1500 years of existence, the Mosaical Age came to an end with the events of the day of Pentecost when the kingdom/church was established. One of the reasons given for the death of Jesus was to take away the Mosaical law by nailing it to his cross (Col. 2:14). The sacrifice of Christ began with the cross (the slaying of the sacrifice) and was completed with his priestly entrance into heaven (the holy place) with the blood of that sacrifice (Heb. 9:12). With this act he ushered in the New Covenant and terminated the old (Heb. 9:12-28).

Did the end of the Mosaical Age mark the end of end of the Ten Commandments? This question has been around for years. Many concede that the New Testament teaches that the law of Moses was abolished and that we are now under the New Covenant. But they make a distinction in the "moral" and "ceremonial" aspects of the Old Testament. The claim is made that the law that was done away is the "ceremonial law," but that the "moral law" (mainly the Ten Commandments) remains under the New Testament system. The Bible does not make the moral-ceremonial distinction. It simply speaks it all as one law. Paul made it clear that the Ten Commandments were part of the law that was done away:

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. 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 (Rom. 7:6-7).

The law from which we are delivered (v. 6) is the same law that said, "Thou shalt not covet" (v.7). "Thou shalt not covet" is the last commandment of the ten and is the only place (Exod. 20:7) that this quotation is found in the Old Testament. Hence, the Ten Commandments part of the law ended when the rest of the law was abolished.

Does that mean that we are now free to covet since we are delivered from that law? Or, even steal, lie, commit adultery, etc.? No, a thousand times, No! But, not because of the Ten Commandments. They passed away with the rest of the old law. It is because such things are sins under the law of Christ. The Sabbath day observance is nowhere commanded in the law of Christ. It belonged to "the law from which we are delivered." It was to be kept by the Jews throughout the Mosaical Age and, as we noticed earlier, had a significance to the Jews that it did not have to any other people. To ask the Christian to observe the Sabbath would be about like asking a Briton to observe the fourth of July.

Should we, then, ignore the Old Testament part of the Bible as we study, teach, and preach? Paul, after arguing forcefully throughout the book of Romans that we are no longer under the law, referring to Old Testament law, says,

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Someone has said, "The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed." Neither testament can be really understood without a working knowledge of the other. We need to diligently study and teach both as the word of God, but learn to make the necessary distinctions as we "rightly divide" or "handle aright" the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15)

The Mosaical Age was a great age in which God had made the children of Israel his "peculiar people" (Deut. 14:2). He committed unto them the oracles of God (Rom. 3:1-2). Though they were "disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. 10:21) throughout most of the age, God preserved them and kept a knowledge of himself in the earth through them, until "the fulness of time" when he revealed himself and his purpose more fully to the world through his Son, Jesus Christ.

The age served its purpose well in God's great scheme of redemption. Let us thank God that we are no longer living in that age, but are privileged to live in a much greater age — the Christian age — discussed elsewhere in this

# First Annual Truth Magazine Lectures

## The Renewing of Your Mind

July 12-15, 2004

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“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:1-2).

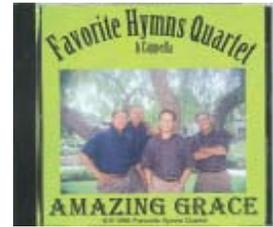
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8:00 - 8:50	Scientific Fore-knowledge and the Bible (Larry Dickens)	House Churches (Harry Osborne)	Testifying in the Worship Assembly (Bobby Graham)
9:00 - 9:50	Renewed View of Morals (Aaron Erhardt)	Renewed View of the Church (Larry Hafley)	Renewed View of Jesus (John Isaac Edwards)
10:00 - 10:50	Renewed View of Sexual Morals (Lewis Willis)	Renewed View of Unity (Russell Dunaway)	Renewed View of Biblical Interpretation (Marc Gibson)
11:00 - 11:50	Renewed View of Marriage (Brett Hogland)	Renewed Commitment to Balanced Preaching (Ron Halbrook)	Renewed View of Worship (Jason Longstreth)
<b>Lunch Break</b>			
<b>Ladies Classes</b>			
1:30 - 2:20	Material available for Children's Classes (Vernita Goodall)	A Biblical View of Femininity (Anne Stevens)	Issues for a Preacher/Elder's Wife (Bobby Adams)
<b>Auditorium</b>			
1:30 - 2:20	Evangelism in Canada (Brian Sullivan)	Evangelism in India (John Humphries)	Evangelism in Nigeria (Karl Diestelkamp)
2:30 - 4:00	Open Forum: No Assigned Topic	Open Forum: Role of Government in Divorce/Remarriage (Mental Divorce): Ron Halbrook, Harry Osborne, Donnie Rader, Greg Gwin	Open Forum: Sunday Evening Communion (Al Diestelkamp, Dick Blackford)
<b>Singing: 7:00 - 7:30 Led by R.J. Stevens</b>			
"The Renewing of Your Mind" (Rom. 12:1-2) (Mike Willis)	Renewed View of Parental Discipline (Weldon Warnock)	Renewed Commitment to Evangelism (Connie W. Adams). This service will begin at 8:45 p.m.	Recommitment to Biblical Authority (Bill Cavender)

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