



THE NEW COVENANT, WHAT IS IT?

By George Lujack

Mainstream Christianity often erroneously teaches that we are living under the new covenant now and the old covenant (meaning the law) is abolished. This article will address what the new covenant is, correct the misconception that the law itself *is* the old covenant replaced by the new covenant, will identify what the old covenant is that was replaced by the new covenant, and will declare that God's laws are eternal.

HEBREWS 8:6-13:

He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says YHWH (the Lord), when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says YHWH (the Lord). For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says YHWH (the Lord): I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know YHWH (the Lord),' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), whose life was holy, perfect, and without sin met the qualifications to permanently take away the sins of the world. Yeshua (Jesus) fully paid for the remission of sin, therefore there are to be no more animal sacrifices or offerings for sin, as required annually under the old covenant, as these sacrificial measures to atone for sin have been made obsolete in the new covenant. Yeshua (Jesus) has sacrificed Himself once and forever to atone for sin (Hebrews 10:1-18).

THE NEW COVENANT WAS FORETOLD IN JEREMIAH

JEREMIAH 31:31-34:

"Behold, the days are coming, says YHWH (the Lord), when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says YHWH (the Lord).

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says YHWH (the Lord): I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know YHWH (the Lord),’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says YHWH (the Lord). For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

THE OLD COVENANT

EXODUS 19:3-8:

And Moses went up to God, and YHWH (the Lord) called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.” So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words that YHWH (the Lord) commanded him. Then all the people answered together and said, “All that YHWH (the Lord) has spoken WE WILL DO.”

The Hebrews failed to live up to their word when they declared, “*All that YHWH (the Lord) has spoken, we will do,*” (Exodus 19:8). The Hebrews would soon make a golden calf graven image idol as well as break God’s laws in many other ways after their declaration of loyalty in Exodus 19:8. When the Hebrews eventually settled in their promised homeland of Israel, they once again sinned, breaking their exclusive covenant with God that they had made. Therefore, God divorced Israel (yet remained faithful to them) as a husband who divorces his unfaithful wife for committing unrepentant adultery and breaking their marriage covenant (Jeremiah 3:8). Israel’s national sin was not only in breaking their covenant with God, for disobeying His laws, but also for worshiping other gods of their neighboring nations - committing spiritual adultery.

The old covenant, given at Sinai to the Hebrews, was an EXCLUSIVE COVENANT. God had declared that He was choosing a people, the Hebrews, of whom He would lead to the promised land of Israel and He would exclusively be their God. God was not going out to the people of the world at this time to teach His laws and offer salvation through repentance. God was dealing exclusively with the Hebrews, to show them as a shining example to the world as a nation that knew the one true God.

The Hebrews, due to their national sins, didn’t live up to the promise offered to them under the old covenant, and YHWH (the Lord) divorced them. Yet, even though YHWH (the Lord) divorced Israel, He remained faithful to Israel due to His EXCLUSIVE COVENANT that He had made with them. It was not possible for God, under the old exclusive covenant that He had made with Israel, to go out among the other nations and proclaim His word, yet it was possible for someone outside of Israel to be grafted into the house of Israel through faith, and learn of God’s word. We see this in the Scripture examples of Ruth and the woman of Canaan.

RUTH 1:16:

... For wherever you go, I will go and wherever you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.

MATTHEW 15:21-28:

Then Yeshua (Jesus) went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

But He answered and said, **"I was not sent EXCEPT TO THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL."**

Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

But He answered and said, **"It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."**

And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

Then Yeshua (Jesus) answered and said to her, **"O woman, GREAT IS YOUR FAITH! Let it be to you as you desire."** And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

YESHUA (JESUS) REMAINED FAITHFUL TO THE EXCLUSIVE COVENANT HE HAD MADE WITH THE JEWS UNTO HIS DEATH

Why did YHWH (the Lord) remain faithful to faithless Israel? Why didn't God make another covenant with another nation or nations? It was because He was under an exclusive covenant with Israel, and ONLY DEATH ends a covenant.

MATTHEW 10:5-6:

These twelve Yeshua (Jesus) sent out and commanded them, saying: **"Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel ..."**

When Yeshua (Jesus) said not to go the way of the Gentiles, to preach to them, it was because He was under an EXCLUSIVE COVENANT with the Jews of territorial Israel. Death ended His exclusive covenant with the Jews.

MATTHEW 28:18-20:

And Yeshua (Jesus) came and spoke to them, saying, **"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of ALL THE NATIONS, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."**

The exclusive covenant between Yeshua (Jesus) and the Jews was broken upon the death of Yeshua (Jesus). His new command to preach the Good News and God's laws to all the nations, in Matthew 28:18-20, superseded His previous command in Matthew 10:5-6 to preach exclusively to the Jews and to not preach to the non-Israelite Gentile nations.

After the death of Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), His exclusive covenant pact with the Jews of Israel ended, and He was allowed to make a new covenant with all the nations of the world. The command to not preach to the Gentiles given in Matthew 10:5-6 was rescinded by Yeshua (Jesus) in Matthew 28:18-20.

In Acts 10, Peter refused to meet with Cornelius - a Gentile, for He believed it was wrong for Jews to interact with Gentiles due to tradition and also because of the command Yeshua (Jesus) gave in Matthew 10:5-6. Peter was instructed through the Spirit that what God had made clean (the Gentiles) he should not call unclean. Peter then realized the meaning of the vision and met with Cornelius and his men.

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT PROVIDES ATONEMENT AND RE-ESTABLISHES THE COVENANT (LAW)

EZEKIEL 16:60-63:

“Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed, when you receive your older and your younger sisters; for I will give them to you for daughters, but not because of My covenant with you. And I will establish My covenant with you. Then you shall know that I am YHWH (the Lord), that you may remember and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I provide you an atonement for all you have done,” says YHWH (the Lord) GOD.

THE NEW COVENANT HAS MADE THE FIRST COVENANT OBSOLETE

The new everlasting covenant is Yeshua’s (Jesus’) atonement sacrifice on the cross that has made God’s word available to all the nations that come to Him through faith and repentance, obeying His laws and doing His will. The new covenant is yet to be completely fulfilled, as in this age many live in ignorance or disobedience, not living righteously according to God’s laws.

The law did not pass away, nor will it ever pass away (Matthew 5:17-19). The law (Torah) is good and rewards those, in this life and in the life to come, who obey it.

WHAT IS THE FIRST COVENANT?

GENESIS 2:16:

And YHWH (the Lord) God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

The actual first covenant God made with man was with Adam in the Garden of Eden. YHWH (the Lord) God made a covenant promise to Adam that if he were to disobey Him and sin, he would die. Adam disobeyed God, sinned, and died. All men have thus inherited sin from Adam and have fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

The first covenant that YHWH (the Lord) God made with Adam was the covenant of sin and death. Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus) has freed mankind from the first covenant, the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2). Death remained under the old covenant, but eternal life is given to us under the new covenant (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25).

Yeshua's (Jesus') sacrifice is the new covenant; His blood has been shed for many, once and forever, for the remission of sins (Hebrews 7:27, 10:10). The new covenant has canceled out the animal sacrifices of the old covenant that were required to temporarily atone for sin, rendering them obsolete (Hebrews 9:11-28, 10:1-10). The new covenant has made the first covenant (Genesis 2:16), the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2), obsolete and the first covenant ordinances, requiring death, are soon to pass away (1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Revelation 21:4).

God also made a first covenant with the Hebrews at Mt. Sinai...

HEBREWS 8:7-9:

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; BECAUSE THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, and I disregarded them, says the Lord.

What was the ‘fault’ of the first covenant given to Adam in the Garden of Eden, and what was the fault of the covenant given to the Hebrews at Mt. Sinai? Was the law itself, a law that was allegedly impossible to follow, at fault? NO! In both cases the fault was not the law itself, it was that neither Adam nor the Hebrews continued in God’s covenant.

JEREMIAH 31:33:

This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says YHWH (the Lord): I WILL PUT MY LAW IN THEIR MINDS, AND WRITE IT IN THEIR HEARTS; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

EZEKIEL 36:26-27:

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and CAUSE YOU TO WALK IN MY STATUTES, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

HEBREWS 8:10-11,13:

I will put MY LAWS IN THEIR MIND AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them....

In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made THE FIRST obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Scripture states that the new covenant has made the first covenant obsolete. Does this mean that the new covenant, Yeshua's (Jesus') atonement sacrifice on the cross, makes the law (Torah) obsolete and that law (Torah) is ready to pass away? NO!

LUKE 21:33:

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”

Yeshua's (Jesus') words, which include His commandments, will never pass away. God will write His eternal laws and statutes on our minds and hearts. There is no fault in His laws, the fault is with us. The New Covenant does not make obsolete His laws, it makes obsolete the faulty way by which they were upheld by mankind.

It is a commonly held belief that the new covenant has replaced law (Torah); that the new covenant of accepting Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ) as an atonement sacrifice for our sins has replaced the law, freeing us from having to obey the commandments and laws (Torah) of God. The new covenant did not replace the law (Torah), but rather it supplemented it with grace and truth.

JOHN 1:17:

For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ).

Scripture declares that the first covenant has been rendered obsolete by the new covenant (Hebrews 8:13). The ordinances of the first covenant, death, will be abolished. The new covenant does not abolish the law. The law is to be strongly established on our minds and on our hearts, so that we will walk according to His laws and statutes for all time, throughout eternity.

1 CORINTHIANS 7:19:

Keeping the commandments of God is what matters.

REVELATION 14:12:

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Yeshua (Jesus).

Blessed are those who now willingly walk according to His commandments and obey His statutes.

Yeshua's (Jesus') sacrifice is the new covenant, which is to redeem mankind and also is to establish His laws and statutes on our minds and hearts for all eternity.