

## The Bible and Covenant

The Bible consists of two different sets of manuscripts which are designated as Testaments or Covenants. The Old Testament has thirty-nine documents which are the history of the Jewish people. The New Testament has twenty-seven documents which are the history of the Christian people. The Jewish documents written by Moses and the Prophets of Israel could also be called the History of God while the Christian Document written by Jewish Disciples could be called the History of Jesus of Nazareth who was called The Christ.

These manuscripts are labeled Covenants because the Jewish Documents are the History of God's Covenant with the Nation of Israel, while the Christian Documents are the History of God bringing in a New Covenant by the Resurrection of Jesus the Christ from the dead.

The Christian Documents were joined with the Jewish Documents in the Fourth Century to be one book which we know today as the Christian Bible.

To bring these two Covenants together into one book is making a statement of faith just by the union itself without any particular interpretation. When the two covenants are joined into one book then one becomes old and obsolete while the other takes its place as new and one becomes the first (no more the only) when succeeded by the second. A relationship is established between these two covenants simply by uniting them into one book.

The Jewish people were offended by this Bible because they did not believe that God had made a new covenant at all with anybody and Christian people were divided over the relationship of these two covenants.

The one Covenant people were divided in faith concerning one Covenant. Now there are two Covenant people and much greater division in the faith.

Some questions of faith which resulted from the merger of two covenants were, Does one replace the other or fulfill it? How does one become an heir of Covenant? What is the lifestyle for Covenant living et. & etc.

When Christians joined the manuscripts of two very different Covenants into one Bible they also sought to justify what they had done with creeds of explanation which soon became the Rule of faith and Practice for Christianity.

Judaism has its origin 1500 years before Christianity which began with the Disciples of Jesus

after His death. When Christianity began in the First Century it divided Jewish families in matters of faith and religion resulting in many Jews becoming Christians. Judaism had been in opposition to other religions for centuries; now it is confronted with a faith springing right out of the Jewish religion itself. Moses had told the Nation that of all the tongues and tribes upon the face of the earth they were the only people in the history of civilization to have a Covenant with God and since there is only one God they had the only Divine Covenant in existence.

God broke covenant with the nation and allowed the Assyrians and Babylonians to conquer and destroy them. A remnant from the Tribe of Judah were back in the land under tribute to Rome when Jesus of Nazareth began His teaching ministry, He did not teach a new and different faith or religion. He did not require His Disciples to deny their Jewish faith and follow Him. He only required that they forsake their vocations in order to apprentice full time under Him.

It was much later when Gentiles were required to forsake their religion, He spoke of Himself as being the central theme of the Jewish Covenant and the only hope of the desolated surviving descendants of the Covenant.

He spoke of establishing a new Covenant with the God of Abraham which would be to all people.. Every family, tribe and tongue of the earth would stand to benefit from this new Covenant. He explained that He would not bring peace on earth or get the Covenant people out of tribute rather peace with God for everyone who followed Him. Jesus made His own death necessary in order to accomplish that for which He was born and He predicted that those who killed Him would also seek the life of His followers.

Immediately upon its beginning, Christianity faced the anti-Christian bias of the Jewish people who were faithful to the Covenant given by Moses. There was no anti-Semitism at all at this time because every Christian was from a divided house and family of the Jews. Every Christian sought to bring his family into the faith which believed that Jesus was the one spoken of by Moses and all the Prophets. Anti-Semitism is not to be found in Christianity at this time. Only when the Imperial Church begins do we find Christians persecuting others.

Jesus originally commissioned Christians to be salt and light to the Kingdoms of the world where they lived. If they were persecuted they were not to retaliate. They were to pray for their persecutors, seek the good and benefit of others. Share with others. As you have received the Spirit of God freely give it. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Early Christians did not have much of the things of this world to share because

their goods had been spoiled by anti-Christian conflict. But they graciously shared the riches of their Spiritual possessions.

Christian persecution began by the Jews and continued by the Romans until the Christians obtained political power and became persecutors. This change in purpose and direction for Christianity occurred in the same Century when the Bible became two Covenants.

The Imperial Church issued creeds and edicts to direct every aspect of Christian life and many of them are not found in the documents of either Testament. They forbid marriage for all church servants. They established Church Offices which cannot be found in the original Church. They made certain rituals and sacraments essential to church membership.

By the time that the Christian Bible came into existence the Christian faith and practice was so different from the original that the Christians could not find their faith in their own Bible because it mostly came from documents of the second and third centuries which were not included in their Bible

Christians today are divided more than ever over the Bible which was put together in the Fourth Century from two religions of Two Testaments.

### **From Faith To Faith**

There is only One Testament in the Jewish Bible, but there are Two Testaments in the Christian Bible.

What these Testaments are all about? Who is involved and how they relate to each other is the basis for all the division and controversy in Christian History.

Let us begin with the faith once delivered to the original Church and see it passed on to others and to the next generation in order to see some of the changes when they occur.

Just suppose that all the 66 Books of the Bible were discovered today for the first time. The Hebrew texts in some cave in the land of the Jews which is exactly what happened in 1947 with the Dead Sea Scrolls. Then we discover the Greek Texts in a Roman Catacomb. Each could be dated and assembled much in the same order as we have them today based on physical evidence and content. For instance if a document was written in Greek it would not likely precede Alexander the Great and if it spoke of Caesar it could not precede the Roman Empire.

When assembled in some chronological order we could read the Hebrew Text and observe that they did not finish the History of the Jews nor the theme which they set forth together. Then we could read the Greek text and see that they have no history or foundation for

the story which they set forth together. Each has a religious theme in it's story but one needs an appendix while the other need an introduction. Descendants of each religion would lay claim to the text written by their ancestors.

The Hebrew text can stand alone because it rests upon a foundation set forth within the text, while the Christian text needs a source outside of itself for a foundation and historical justification.

The Hebrew faith can stand alone with hope in the future while the Christian faith must rest upon something in the past.

Christians would immediately claim both texts for their Bible because it would provide a complete story of their faith while the descendants of Israel would only claim one text while looking to the future to finish their story.

When we read the Hebrew Text we find it beginning with Adam and ending with the fallen nation waiting for a Messiah. Then we read the Christian Text which claims to be the fulfillment of that Jewish Hope. No one can believe the text found in Rome without also believing the text found in the Holy Land, but one may well believe in the Hebrew Text without believing in the Christian Text. One may believe in the Jewish religion and not believe in the Christian religion but it is impossible to believe the Christian religion without also believing in the Jewish religion because both are rooted and grounded in the Old Testament.

We find the Old Testament abruptly ending with future expectation which the New Testament begins with and completely fulfills.

Jews today can accept the Christian faith just as they did in the First Century without denying their Jewish faith because both faiths are in the same Messiah or Christ.

One religion is waiting on their Christ to justify their faith while the other is already justified by faith in Jesus who is their Christ.

The text of the New Testament clearly justifies every claim to Gospel truth by quotations and references to the Messianic Text of the Old Testament. The Old Testament can stand alone and remain genuine and true but without the Old the New has no truth to proclaim.

From this we can see how important one Covenant is to the other and why Christians must have both Covenants in their Bible.

Further Bible study of both Testaments with these facts in mind will help solve some of the controversy as well as the mystery which results when the two

Covenants are put together, especially with an overlap as we find in the Bible.

Going from faith to faith does not necessarily mean from one religion to another but it does indicate a difference in (faith) what one believes which may alter his lifestyle and change where he worships.

The Jews of the First Century who believed in Jesus professed the Christian faith which did not change their religion but when Gentiles professed the same faith they had to abandon any and all religious faith and practice.

Christianity is well defined in the New Testament manuscripts of the first century which anchored the faith in the Old Testament Scriptures, but how can it be defined today as one faith when we have so many?

1900 years of Christianity has produced many different versions of the faith. Most of Christianity will justify their faith in some form of faith to faith descent such as Apostolic Succession or Church perpetuity while some like the Mormons will not do so. Rather they will support their faith in latter days revelation.

In Apostolic succession the faith is passed from Apostle to Apostle while in Church perpetuity the Church perpetuates itself by the faith which it passes to another Church.

In both cases there is a Transition from one to another. But no Transition in the faith itself like that which we find in the First Century neither a Transition of the person himself like we find in Saul of Tarsus whose personality was totally transformed.

A transition of faith from the Old Testament to the New Testament not only changed what the faith believed but it also changed the one who believed because of the Spirit of God which was received.

When the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles it produced the same transformation of personality even though they were not in transition from Covenant to Covenant as were the Jewish Christians due to their circumcision.

The Jewish revolt of 66 - 70 A.D. resulted in the death of many Jews and the destruction of their place of Worship. By the end of the Century there were few Jews left and none had any Messianic Hope like that of early decades and few were becoming Christians as they did by the thousands at Pentecost.

The Jewish Christian had long since ceased missionary activity among the Jews. The original Apostles were all gone and none were replaced to go to the Jews. Only the Apostleship of Paul is being replaced in Gentile Evangelism. Christianity which began with all Jews is now mostly Gentile.

The faith (religion) which began at Pentecost among a Jewish remnant is soon given to Gentile heathens who will then pass it on from generation to generation with some modifications of course.

This is why we must put an historical tracer on the Gospel of Christ if we want to find where a doctrine of truth was lost or where some doctrine was added.

The two Testaments of the Bible have a wonderful story to tell and they need each other to tell it. But the custodians of the Bible have failed to preserve the integrity of Scriptures and lost the message.

What the Bible says today to Jew or Gentile will depend upon who you ask. It would be a logistical nightmare to begin with modern Christianity and go backward through the generations, picking up what was lost and throwing out that which was added. A better way would be back to the Bible itself, which means back to Genesis then to Moses, Jesus and Paul bringing two Covenants together and discovering one glorious message.

When Christians put two Testaments together three hundred years after Pentecost they made one complete story out of two Blood Covenants. A person may now read the Bible without stopping in Malachi as Jews did for centuries with a promise yet to be fulfilled. The story continues in the Greek Documents of Christianity beginning with the Gospels and ending with Revelation about the end of all things.

Jesus Himself declared that He was the subject of Old Testament Scriptures and Paul said that Jesus was a Promise in the Old Testament and a Provision in the New Testament.

We see how the Bible consisting of two Testaments is necessary to tell the Gospel Story, but we also see how the merger of two Testaments has produced many different versions of the Gospel in present day Christianity.

### **Conclusion**

The first Christians were Jews who went into Synagogues all over the Empire reading the Gospel to fellow Jews. These Christians read from the scrolls of Jewish religion. When the Gospel went to the Gentiles, it went outside the Temples and the Synagogues and as a result Christianity was drastically changed.

Almost one million Jews perished in the revolt with Rome and many Synagogues were destroyed. When the Temple in Jerusalem fell, under the siege of Titus, not one stone was left upon another - just as Jesus had predicted.

This ended the Jewish priesthood with the many sacrifices, feast days, and sabbaths. As a result, Judaism was also drastically changed.

These changes of the first century (for the people of both Testaments) will be seen in subsequent centuries by those devoted to either covenant. But Christianity will continue to change as it accommodates itself to a pagan world while seeking its roots in Judaism.

The Christian church of the fourth century put two sets of manuscripts together into one book which we now call The Bible. This became the rule book of faith and practice for the Christianity which began to rule over a kingdom of this world.

How to reconcile the doctrines of two covenants was resolved by church councils issuing creeds to establish an orthodox rule of faith for Christianity.

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