**The Old And New Testaments**

Jarrod Jacobs

One of the most basic divisions found within the Bible is the division between the Old and New Testaments (Covenants). Yet, this division is something unknown to many. Unfortunately, many do not respect Biblical context, and this has produced many false doctrines. There is a difference between the Old and New Testaments. Today we live under the New Testament, rather than the Old.

Since we are under the New Testament today, some may ask, “What purpose does the Old Testament serve?” The apostle Paul answered this question when he wrote, “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

At times, we in the church of Christ have been accused of not believing in the Old Testament because we teach that we are subject to the New Testament today. To say that we don’t believe in the Old Testament is not true. In fact, when we teach that we are under the New Testament (Covenant) and not the Old, we are teaching what the Old Testament teaches! Please read Jeremiah 31:31-34 and see that Jeremiah prophesied of a day coming when God will “make a new covenant”. Several centuries later, Hebrews 8 records that this prophecy was fulfilled! Thus, we are under a New Testament today, just as the Old Testament said would happen!

When we read the New Testament, the end of the Old is a consistent theme. II Corinthians 3:7-16 speaks of the Old Testament, telling us that it has been “done away.” “Taken away” and “abolished” are other terms used in this text to let us know that we are not subject to the terms and conditions of the Old Testament today.

Galatians chapter 3 states in very clear terms that the Old Testament was a “schoolmaster” (tutor, trainer, guardian, servant) to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). This is another purpose the Old Testament served. The term “schoolmaster” paints a word-picture of a servant that faithfully brings a student to his teacher. In this case, the Old Testament was “added” to the promises God made to Abraham “till the seed (Christ) should come” (Gal. 3:16-19, 24)! It led folks to Christ. The Old Testament has served its purpose, and we are subject to the New Testament today!

Another passage we can study is Colossians 2:14. In this passage, we see that the Old Law was nailed to the cross with Christ! If we wondered about the place of the Old Testament in our lives today, let us not wonder anymore. Its place is at the cross. At the death of Christ, His covenant came into effect (Heb. 9:15-17), and the Old was “done away.” It passed away (Heb. 8:13)! Can there be any question as to what God’s thoughts are concerning the Old Testament? Knowing this is true, who are we to say that the Old Testament is still binding upon men? To say such is to contradict the very Scriptures that were inspired of God (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:20-21).

In light of the passages we have studied, why would someone want to teach that the Old Covenant is still binding? Excluding those who are genuinely ignorant of the differences between the Old and New Covenants, the only reason I can think of is because there are folks trying to justify their “pet” doctrines. When they cannot justify them from the New Testament, they turn to the Old Testament. For example: Instrumental Music in worship, Observance of the Sabbath Day, and justifying divorces and remarriages for reasons other than fornication (Matt. 5:32, 19:9) are just a few reasons why folks try to say the Old Testament is still in force today.

Let us respect the Lord’s will, handle it accurately (II Tim. 2:15), and obey it completely. When we do, we will respect the fact that the Old Testament, while needed at one time, has been done away through the crucifixion of Christ. We now live under the New Testament, and need to follow what Christ has said.

*-- You are invited to visit with the Caneyville church of Christ. Times of services: Sun.: 10:00 am, 10:45 am, 5:00 pm; Wed.: 7:00 pm. Website: http://caneyvillechurchofchrist.com Tune in to our radio program on 99.9 FM at 1:00 pm and 1570 AM at 8:30 am, Mon-Fri. Questions? Call: (270) 589-4167*