

Reading the Psalms & Proverbs through the Eyes of The New Covenant

Part One: Law/Flesh/Works vs. Grace/Spirit/Faith

1. As New Covenant believers it is important for us to read the Bible in light of the finished work of the cross. His death initiated the New Covenant which is NOT the same as the Old.
2. Many believers today are merging the Old Covenant into the New Covenant resulting in something that falls woefully short of what God accomplished in Christ. When Old Covenant principles are mixed with New Covenant truths, the truth of the cross of Christ is nullified.

Galatians 2:16-21¹ (Paul, publicly to Peter)

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. ¹⁷ But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸ For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. ¹⁹ For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. ²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

3. When New Covenant believers try to live the Christian life with a mixture of new and old, they end up **frustrated**. This is because the law strengthens sin. So, if a believer who is free from sin due to being under grace has elements of the law system at work in their life, that person will be constantly fighting off sin instead of living in the freedom from sin that Christ provides.

1 Corinthians 15:56

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

Romans 6:14

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

4. The dividing line of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is the death of Jesus. All writings prior to His death are to be examined in the light (truth) of the NEW Covenant.

Hebrews 9:11-17

*But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, but **with His own blood** He entered the Most Holy Place **once for all**, having obtained **eternal** redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve*

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all scripture is taken from New King James Version (NKJV)
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the living God? ¹⁵ And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. ¹⁶ For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. ¹⁷ For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.

5. This includes the teachings of Christ.

- a. His teachings were absolutely true, of course, but we must keep in mind that Jesus was born under the law and ministered to those under the law.

Galatians 4:4-5

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

- b. He was preparing the Jews for the New Covenant and often reasoned using the law while introducing a higher standard, not that of outward compliance but one which would require that they have a new heart (new birth).

Matthew 5:27-28

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

- i. There were many Jews who followed the letter of the law and felt justified by doing so, but Jesus knew that their hearts were not pure. He was pointing out their need so they would come to Him.

6. This understanding does not negate Genesis - Malachi. However, the realization that the New Covenant has come and the Old Covenant has been replaced should be our frame of reference when reading those passages.

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

Hebrews 8:13

In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete.

7. Many Christians today believe that even though they are free from the ceremonial law and saved by grace through faith, they must still keep the Ten Commandments to stay saved). This is not true. The Old Covenant was based on the Ten Commandments, and the Old Covenant is now obsolete.

Exodus 34:28

So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

Deuteronomy 4:13

So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.

Hebrews 8:13

In that He says, “A new covenant, ” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is

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becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

2 Corinthians 3:5-9

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. ⁷ But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, ⁸ how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? ⁹ For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.

8. Of course, this includes the Psalms and Proverbs. They were written by saints devoted to the Old Covenant law. We need to examine each and every word of what they wrote and not take their confessions as ours if they do not line up with the accomplishments of the cross; otherwise, we risk nullifying the New Covenant.

Part One:**Grace-Spirit-Faith vs. Law-Flesh-Works**

1. The words grace, faith, and Spirit are often used in opposition to the law, flesh, and works. Here are some scriptures that show them in opposition to each other.

a. Grace vs. Law**John 1:17**

*For the law was given through Moses, but **grace** and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

Romans 6:14

*For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under **law** but under **grace**.*

Galatians 2:21

*“I do not set aside the **grace** of God; for if righteousness comes through the **law**, then Christ died in vain.”*

Galatians 5:4

*You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by **law**; you have fallen from **grace**.*

b. Spirit vs. Law**Romans 7:6**

*But now we have been delivered from the **law**, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the **Spirit** and not in the oldness of the **letter**.*

Galatians 5:18

*But if you are led by the **Spirit**, you are not under the **law**.*

c. Faith vs. Law**Romans 3:28**

*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by **faith** apart from the deeds of the **law**.*

Romans 4:16

*Therefore it is of **faith** that it might be according to **grace**, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the **law**, but also to those who are of the **faith** of Abraham, who is the father of us all.*

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This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Galatians 3:5

Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—

Galatians 3:11

But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.”

Galatians 3:24

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Philippians 3:9

And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith

d. Grace vs. Works**Ephesians 2:8-9**

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Romans 11:6

And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace.

2 Timothy 1:9

Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.

e. Spirit vs. Works**Titus 3:5**

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

f. Faith vs. Works**Galatians 2:16**

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Ephesians 2:8-10

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

g. Grace vs. Flesh**2 Corinthians 1:12**

For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.

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*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the **flesh**, but according to the **Spirit**...⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the **flesh** but according to the **Spirit**, For those who live according to the **flesh** set their minds on the things of the **flesh**, but those who live according to the **Spirit**, the things of the **Spirit**...⁹ But you are not in the **flesh** but in the **Spirit**, if indeed the **Spirit** of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the **Spirit** of Christ, he is not His.*

Galatians 3:3

*Are you so foolish? Having begun in the **Spirit**, are you now being made perfect by the **flesh** ²?*

Galatians 4:29

*But, as he who was born according to the **flesh** then persecuted him who was born according to the **Spirit**, even so it is now.*

Philippians 3:3

*For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the **Spirit**, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the **flesh**.*

Getting the Most Out of Psalms and Proverbs

1. Appreciate the Psalm for what it is. Who wrote it? Why? How did the writer's Covenant influence his perspective? What did he long for that we already have?
2. Consider what the author would have written had he been a partaker of the New Covenant.
3. Be thankful that your perspective is based on better promises.
4. If you'd like, compose your own Psalm reflecting a similar sentiment in light of the New Covenant.

EXAMPLE ONE

Psalm 1 does not tell us who wrote it. It is thought that Solomon wrote it and that his son, David, used it as an introductory Psalm in order to honor his father's writings. It is apparently written by someone under the Old Covenant Law.

A mistake made in understand Psalm 1 is to change the intent of the original writer by changing "law" to "word of God" which would mean that meditating in the word of God brings about these virtues, but the writer is clearly referring to the Law of Moses as the word translated "law" is the word for "torah" which usually refers to the Pentateuch which is in large part, the Law of Moses.

² Notice the term "flesh" often refers to man's efforts to be right with God through religious traditions or works.

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<p>Psalm 1 <i>Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. ⁴ The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. ⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.</i></p>	<p>Verse 1-3 The Psalmist delights in the law/torah of God, as well he should. He meditates in it day and night</p> <p>Verse 3, 6 According to the law, those who obey the law are blessed with prosperity.</p> <p>Verse 4 Those who do not obey the law are cursed.</p> <p>Verse 5-6 The ungodly person (including Old Covenant believers) will be judged and perish</p>
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This above Psalm is very comforting but also a warning for Old Covenant believers. If someone does what is right and delights in the law of God, he is going to prosper. On the other hand, if he doesn't he won't. Not only will he not prosper, he will not be able to stand when judged by God.

Cathy's Psalm 1

Blessed is the man
 Who puts His faith in Jesus.
 His delight is in the grace of God
 And for this grace he gives thanks day and night.
 Because he is blessed due to his faith
*He shall be like a tree
 Planted by the rivers of water,
 That brings forth its fruit in its season,
 Whose leaf also shall not wither;
 And whatever he does shall prosper.*
 Because his faith is in Jesus
 He will stand with confidence before the judgment seat of Christ
 The Lord not only knows his ways, but knows him personally.
 He will not perish but have everlasting life.

5. Some Psalms (which we will discuss in Part 3) apply to either covenant or have minor necessary changes, but others such as Psalm 119 are specifically about the law, and will need major adjustments. Here is a portion of that Psalm. You should see immediately how praying this Psalm as a New Covenant believer would be inappropriate.

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Psalm 119:33-40	
<p>Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, And I shall keep it to the end.</p> <p>³⁴ Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.</p> <p>³⁵ Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it.</p> <p>³⁶ Incline my heart to Your testimonies, And not to covetousness.</p> <p>³⁷ Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, And revive me in Your way.</p> <p>³⁸ Establish Your word to Your servant, Who is devoted to fearing You.</p> <p>³⁹ Turn away my reproach which I dread, For Your judgments are good.</p> <p>⁴⁰ Behold, I long for Your precepts; Revive me in Your righteousness.</p>	<p><i>This Psalm is beautiful in light of the Old Covenant saint. You can sense his sincere desire to be taught the Law of God from God and his longing to keep the law. He delights in God's laws for they are the assurance that he will not be led away by worthless things. This prayer is entirely appropriate for this person who was under the Old Covenant. However, it would not be correct for us to long after a law that has been replaced with grace.</i></p>
Cathy's Psalm 119	
<p><i>Your Holy Spirit constantly teaches me because your anointing abides within me. Your grace, not law, is what teaches me now, to abstain from worldly lusts. You help me to understand your grace toward me. Because I am right with you, I will live righteously for I delight in Your love for me. You turn my eyes away from worthless things and revive me everyday. You establish your word in me. I am devoted to being loved by You. You have turned away my reproach by the sacrifice of Your Son. How I love Your grace. You have made me Your very righteousness.</i></p>	
<p>Proverbs 28:9 One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.</p>	<p><i>If an Old Covenant believer did not obey the law (if he sinned) God would turn His back on Him. God does not turn His back on us, even if we sin. His forgiveness toward us is permanent and our prayers are always received.</i></p>
<p>Under the New Covenant, it is not rejection of the Law that brings damnation, but ➔ rejection of Jesus. ⬅</p>	
Hebrews 2:1-4	
<p><i>Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?</i></p>	

Reading the Psalms & Proverbs through the Eyes of The New Covenant***Cathy's Song of Praise***

Written as thanks she is not under the Law of Moses

How I thank you my Father that my right standing with you is not based on my perfect performance, on obeying the Law, nor on following a long list of "spiritual disciplines", but on my faith in your Son. I thank-you that I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Thank-you for this forever forgiveness and that I am Your child. How I praise You that I can come boldly to Your throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. I stand before you blameless and holy and unashamed. How glorious it is to be free from sin because I am not under law but grace.

More Psalms that Need Some New Covenant Perspective**Psalm 19:7-11**

The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul;

The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

⁸ The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;

⁹ The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever;

The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired *are they* than gold,

Yea, than much fine gold;

Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover by them Your servant is warned,

And in keeping them *there is* great reward.

Psalm 112: 1

Praise the LORD!

Blessed *is* the man *who* fears the LORD,

Who delights greatly in His commandments.