

# The Superiority of Jesus Christ and His New Testament Revelation

Peter Ditzel

Christians rightly believe that the written Word of God consists of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. And, in theory, many Christians would also say that Jesus Christ is the most important figure in the Bible. In practice, however, many of those same Christians elevate Moses above Christ by stressing Old Testament law. But Jesus is not only superior to Moses, He is the pinnacle and goal of the entire revelation of the Bible; He is, in fact, what is revealed. The New Testament, being His New Covenant ("covenant" and "testament" are translated from the same Greek word) in His blood (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25) is, thus, the culmination of Biblical revelation and is the superior testament. This is completely supported by the Bible.

## **The Old Testament Has Ended**

In Luke 16:16, we read, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." This Scripture teaches that the law and the prophets ended with John the Baptist. Many people take the stand that God just wanted to write another book (or section of a book), but both books still have authority. But the Old and New Testaments are not just books, they are covenants. When a covenant ends, its authority ends. "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" (Hebrews 8:13). And it did vanish away soon after this was written when the temple in Jerusalem, which was both central and essential to the Old Covenant, was destroyed in A.D. 70.

## **The New Testament Reveals What Even the Prophets Desired to Know**

Jesus said, "For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Matthew 13:17). Jesus in the New Testament revealed what even the prophets and other Old Testament righteous men did not understand.

## **Jesus Gives Us a Higher Standard**

Jesus does not merely comment on Old Testament texts but uses them as springboards to bring in a new and higher standard of morality in each of the subjects He addresses. He often introduces these superior standards by saying, "ye have heard that it was said by them of old time...but I say unto you." Notice this in Matthew 5:22-44. In fact, it is a profitable study to use a concordance or Bible software to find the 120 places in the New Testament where Jesus says, "I say unto you." You will find that in many of those places, He is giving revelation that is not based on the Old Testament, but on His authority.

## **Jesus Taught With Astonishing Authority**

Matthew 7:28-29 tells us, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." In Matthew 23, Jesus says that the Scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' seat. He tells the people—who were before Jesus' death still living under the Old Covenant—to obey the Scribes and Pharisees, but He then goes on to demonstrate His superiority over those who sat on Moses' seat by raking them over the coals.

## **Jesus Is the One Whom We Are to See and Hear**

On the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter attempted to place Jesus, Moses, and Elijah on an equal footing. But God rebuked Peter and corrected him: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). Now notice Matthew 17:8: "And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only." For more information, see the article, "The Transfiguration of Christ," at this address: <http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/transfiguration.htm>.

## **Jesus Designated the Holy Spirit to Reveal the New Testament**

The New Testament was written by Jesus' followers. It was a revelation given to them by the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus' said. For example, the Holy Spirit reminded them of what Jesus said. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). This was fulfilled in the writing of the Gospels.

As Jesus said, the Holy Spirit would "teach them all things" and "guide" them "into all truth" (John 14:26; 16:13). This was fulfilled in the writing of the Acts and Epistles. Also, as Jesus said, the Holy Spirit would "shew" them "things to come" (John 16:13). This was fulfilled in the writing of Revelation and other New Testament prophetic passages.

### **New Testament Writers Interpret the Old Testament**

There are many passages in the New Testament where the New Testament writers interpret Old Testament Scriptures. Not only that, but New Testament writers frequently put a meaning on Old Testament Scriptures that is not at all obvious from the bare historical context. Notice just one example. Hosea 11:1 reads, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." The context shows that this passage is obviously about the historical event of God calling the children of Israel out of Egypt (i.e. the Exodus). This is what those reading it in the time of Hosea would have understood it to mean. Now read Matthew 2:14-15: "When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." Matthew takes a Scripture concerning an historical event concerning Israel and applies it to an event in the life of Jesus Christ. In dozens of places, the New Testament interprets Old Testament passages in ways that could not be discerned from the Old Testament alone. The New Testament is thus superior to the Old, authoritatively interpreting the Old and giving it new meaning.

Here are just some of the places where the New Testament interprets the Old: Matthew 1:22-23; 2:15, 17-18, 23; 3:3; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:14-15, 35; 21:4-5; 26:54-56; 27:9-10, 35; Mark 15:28; Luke 4:17-21; John 12:37-41; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24, 28, 36-37; Acts 1:16-20; 13:33-35, 40-41, 46-47; 15:15-17; and 1 Corinthians 9:9-10.

### **The Old Testament Was Written for Our Sakes**

The New Testament again takes a superior position to the Old when it says that things happened in Old Testament times and were recorded in the Old Testament as examples for our sakes: "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.... Now all these things happened unto them for

ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11).

### **The Old Testament Is a Testament of Types and Shadows**

The New Testament refers to things in the Old Testament as types and shadows that are fully understood only in Christ in this New Covenant age (see, for example, Hebrews 8:5; 9:9, 24; 10:1; 1 Peter 3:20-21).

The Scriptures that speak of the Old Testament's profitability go on to explain that its profitability is through faith in Christ. The Old Testament is "able to make" us "wise unto salvation" only "through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). That is, its types and shadows (including the law) point to Christ. This understanding of its New Testament fulfillment in Christ is the way that it "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (verse 16). Jesus used the Old Testament types to teach of Himself (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39-40).

When the Old Testament is not perceived as functioning in a complimentary but subordinate way in relation to the revelation of Christ in the New Testament, it blinds: "And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:13-18). The veil prevented the Israelites from seeing that the law was only temporary. This veil is spiritual blindness which remains in the reading of the Old Testament until it is lifted by the Spirit of the Lord.

Today, these shadows have no force and are only artifacts that we can look back upon and see how Christ was pictured in the Old Testament: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Colosians 2:16-17). These shadows of the Old Testament were cast by the body of Christ. Now that we have the reality, we have no need of the shadows.

## **The Old Testament Gendereth to Bondage; the New to Freedom**

Notice the dichotomy taught in John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Grace and truth did not come by Moses (see also Hebrews 3:1-6). Galatians 4:21-26, 31 says, "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.... So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." It should be obvious that a covenant or testament (same Greek words) of bondage is inferior to one of freedom.

Galatians 3:23-25 says, "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." The covenant of law shut up, but now freedom has come through faith in Christ. For more information, see, "Should we preach the law to bring people to Christ?" at this address: <http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/preachlawqa.htm>.

## **The New Testament Clearly Says That It Is Better**

Read these Scriptures from Hebrews: "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament" (7:22); "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith 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 continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (8:6-10).

## **Conclusion**

The evidence presented leads us to the inescapable conclusion that God never intended the Old and New Testaments to be equal revelations. Nor did He intend that we try to understand the New Testament from the perspective of the Old (an error that many Reformed theologians make). Clearly, the New Testament is superior to the Old Testament and has the authority to interpret it.