

A GRAVE MISTAKE

Mistakes cost. If you make a mistake with gravity it can kill you. I don't care how sincere you are. The same goes with mistaking the Old and New Covenants. Many Christians mistake both covenants which are killing their spiritual life. In mistaking the Old Covenant Law, they also mistake the New. These two covenants are diametrically opposed to one another, but by mistaking these many Christians actually make them both very similar, without much distinction.

First we must understand the nature of the Law. The Law was given for two main purposes.

First, the Law was not given to make anyone righteous. It was to reveal sin and that man was unrighteous. [[Rom 3:20](#),[Rom 7:7](#)] The Law was given to arouse the sinful nature in man to commit trespasses so man could see just how sinful they were. Until Law came sin did not have the full opportunity to manifest itself fully. When the Law came sin was stimulated and became very active. [[Rom 7:8-9](#)] You could say that sin and the flesh has an allergic reaction in the presence of Law! The Israelites thought having a set number of clearly delineated rules would help them achieve righteousness and ultimately life. [[Deu 6:25](#)] However, the Law could never impart life, but just reveal and decree death. [[Gal 3:21](#), [2Co 3:7](#)] Man's sinful state was revealed by the 613 commands of the Law. It was incumbent upon man to keep each and every one of these 613 commands each and every day for them to stay alive. [[Deu 16:20](#)] If any of these commands were to be broken, it demanded death! [[Jas 2:10](#)] The wages of sin is death. [[Rom 6:23](#)] That sounds pretty harsh does it not? This shows the level of holiness God demands and the severity of His wrath upon sin. Sin demanded death, which leads to the second purpose for the Law.

Secondly, the Law was given to reveal Jesus Christ as man's answer for forgiveness, righteousness, and life. Jesus is revealed in each and every prescribed sacrifice in the Law. Right after the Ten Commandments are listed, God commanded to build an altar and to make sacrifices. [[Exo 20:24-26](#)] The Ten Commandments were given to

try man and to find Him guilty before God. Ten in the Bible speaks of trial. The altar provided right after the giving of the Ten Commandments was to reveal to man the only way to redemption, righteousness, and true life in God, which was by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

HERE IS THE MIS-UNDERSTANDING OF MANY OF THE LAW, WHICH LEADS THEM TO THE SAME MISTAKE IN THE NEW COVENANT.

When an Israelite sinned they incurred the death penalty. However, under the Law, God had a system of animal sacrifices in which that death sentence could be carried out upon an innocent substitute. The innocent animal without blemish would take the guilt of the sin and die in the place of the sinner. The blood of the innocent animal would cover over the sin of the sinner. In this way the whole nation of Israel would not be wiped out and destroyed for their sins.

Herein lays the misunderstanding of many people back in the day of the Law and also today. They think that God gave His Laws for man to keep it in order to be right with him, and that they were to try their best to do it. They also surmise that God knows that man can't be perfect so in His mercy and grace He provided sacrifices to make up the difference when sins were committed. To many the sacrifices were just a safety net for those who were not perfect, but God still demanded that people gave their very best in keeping His laws, and if they did, He would make up the rest by his Grace- by the sacrifices.

Unfortunately, this misunderstanding has been brought over into the New Covenant. Many look at Jesus Christ's death on the cross and His shedding of blood similar to the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Many believers think that God still expects Christians to try their best to keep the Ten Commandments, and all the rules of morality in the Old Testament, plus a host of New Testament rules. They believe God expects them to do their best to be righteous by their obedience to His laws, but when they mess up like all people do, that Jesus' sacrifice and shed blood makes up the difference. Therefore, they mix the Law and grace. In the minds of many believers the difference between the Old

and New Covenants is that Jesus merely replaces the animal sacrifices of the Old.

In misunderstanding the Old Testament Law they misunderstand the New, and end up making them both the same- a mixture of Law and Grace. God never allowed mixture under the Law, and God does not tolerate mixture today! God did not give the sacrifices in the Old Covenant to make up for where their performance failed. God was not mixing Grace and Law in the Old Covenant. He was revealing two ways of approaching God and showing which one worked! The Laws revealed man's attempt to approach God by works which does not work! The sacrifices revealed an approach altogether different than the works of man. The sacrifices revealed approach to God through faith in the shed blood of His Son Jesus Christ and His perfect work- That approach works! One brings death, the other life! God was not mixing Law and grace, but contrasting the two!

In the New Covenant, God is not mixing Law and Grace. God is not demanding from us works that will lead towards us being righteous, and that Jesus' death for us makes up for any deficiencies in our performance. Many Christians are ignorant that they actually believe this and are doing this. Many are attempting to earn God's approval and blessings by their works and then appealing to his grace by confessing their sins when they fail, thinking God makes up for the deficiency in their performance by His grace. In their view, God is demanding their best efforts in living for Him and then making up the difference with His grace when needed! This is mixing Law and Grace and drains the power right out of the gospel. The mixing of Law and Grace actually drains the power out of both principles. The power of the Law, if you live just by Law, is to bring you to the end of yourself and you admit you are a sinner and need salvation and the grace of God through Jesus. The power of Grace, if you live just by grace, is that by the finished work of Christ's redemption you receive the gift of Christ's righteousness and the power of the Spirit of Christ. These sanctify and empower you to bear the fruit of God's righteousness and to live in victory, totally by the grace of God working in and through you by faith.

Our best efforts fall short of God's standards. We never always do our best anyway! That is a lie! We lie to ourselves when we say we always do our best. God demands perfection, not our best! **God also demands perfection from only one person, not a combination of two!** Many are trying to gain a perfect standing with God on the basis of two people's performance- their own- along with the added grace of Jesus' work for them at the cross. **God only accepts the perfection of One person's performance- not a combination of two.** There has only been and is only One perfect man- Jesus Christ! When we place our faith in Christ and His finished work we receive His perfection, once and for all. [[Heb 10:14](#)] We cannot mix our imperfect works with His perfect work. God will not share glory with man's works.

When we come before God we must come fully upon the grace of God through the finished work of Jesus. We must understand the nature of the Law and the New Covenant or we will experience lack, frustration, and defeat. If we come to God by grace alone by faith alone we will find provision, peace, and victory! If we try to mix Law and Grace we will find lack, frustration, and defeat. I hope you understand the difference, because it makes all the difference!