

THE NEW COVENANT PART 2: THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM.

Lately, I have been reflecting on the stories of Abraham and the rich young man.

Abraham stood in a place of vulnerability and was totally dependent on God. The rich young man, on the other hand, had confidence in his youth, resources, influence, and an outward obedience to the law.

Both, in themselves, fell short and one was rebuked while the other was commended as faithful – why? The young ruler depended on the law. But the law exposes human weakness and the impossibility of achieving righteousness through effort. When confronted with his limits, rather than running to the saviour, he walked away.

On the other hand, Abraham believed in the promise of God, built a right relationship with He who saves and was counted righteous by faith.

He received the good news from God in advance (Galatians 3:8) and welcomed it in faith. He saw the days of Christ and rejoiced and celebrated the New Testament, had communion and tithed to the priest and king who lives forever.

This is significant because it means that the covenant of promise precedes the Law. The Law, which came **430 years later** (Galatians 3:17), did not replace or nullify the promise but served a temporary purpose until the coming of the Seed.

Therefore, justification has always been by faith, and the New Testament is not a new idea, but the fulfilment of what God had already promised to Abraham.

These two Testaments are also ministries, each distinct and having specific objectives:

A) **The Promise to Abraham – The Blueprint (Ministry of Faith and Grace).**

God's promise to Abraham is the blueprint of redemption, His divine plan to bring reconciliation and salvation to all humanity through the Seed, who is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

The promise - and ultimately the New Covenant - hinges on faith, not works.

It also helps explain why Abraham was **counted as righteous by faith** (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4), even though his journey included moments of weakness, such as fathering Ishmael. His standing before God was not based on flawless behaviour, but on faith in God's promise.

B) **The Law (Old Covenant) – The Ministry of Condemnation.**

Scripture describes it as a **“ministry of death” and “ministry of condemnation”** (2 Corinthians 3:7–9). It does not mean that the law was evil. However, it revealed sin without providing the power to overcome it. Its purpose was:

- To **expose sin as a problem** (Romans 5:20)
- To expose the **limitations of human effort** in eliminating the sin problem
- To act as a **guardian/tutor leading us to Christ - our true solution to the sin problem** (Galatians 3:24)

In doing so, it brings humanity to a place of humility and dependence on God:

“When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time...” (Romans 5:6, NLT)

The Law was never meant to save, but to **prepare the way for salvation by grace.**

C) **The New Covenant – Fulfilment of the Promise (Ministry of Life).**

The New Covenant is the fulfilment of the promise given to Abraham. It does not abolish God's earlier plan—it **brings it to completion in Christ.**

Where the Law was external, the New Covenant is internal:

- written on hearts by the Spirit
- based on grace, not human effort
- producing righteousness, not merely demanding it

Scripture describes it as **the ministry of the Spirit, righteousness and reconciliation.**

Through Christ, the temporary covenant gives way to a **permanent and superior covenant**, where believers are not merely instructed, but transformed.

Romans 6:14 (NLT)

¹¹.....So, Abraham is the spiritual father of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are counted as righteous because of their faith. ¹²And Abraham is also the spiritual father of those who have been circumcised, **but only if** they have the same kind of faith Abraham had **before** he was circumcised.

¹³Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a **right relationship with God that comes by faith**. ¹⁴If God's promise is only for those who obey the law, then faith is not necessary and the promise is pointless. ¹⁵For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. **(The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!).**

The message of grace and the reality of **no condemnation** apply to those who are **in Christ Jesus**—those whose old selves have been crucified with Him, so that it is no longer they who live, but Christ who lives in them (Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:1).

These are those who are **led by the Spirit** and therefore are not under the law (Galatians 5:18). Their lives are no longer governed by external rules, but by the indwelling presence of the Spirit.

Scripture presents a clear contrast between the flesh and the Spirit. We are called to walk by the Spirit and not gratify the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

Because of this new life in Christ, there is no condemnation for those who belong to Him—the Spirit brings freedom from the power of sin and death, accomplishing what the law could not due to human weakness.

And like Abraham and David, because of the covering and grace, God does not condemn even in areas that we deserve condemnation. However, He does not condone the weakness BUT He transforms us by renewing our minds to the kind of Christ.

This message stands in counter-cultural to a world that values self-effort, achievement, and personal glory. The call to die to the flesh and surrender control to the Spirit challenges the idea that we can earn or define ourselves by our own strength. As a result, the message of grace can be confronting and even offensive, because it removes human boasting and centres everything on Christ.

Therefore, believers should not be surprised if this message is not widely accepted or celebrated.

Its preaching salvation through the cross of Christ that landed Paul in all kind of troubles.

Brothers, if you feel like you have toiled throughout the night without a catch, you have been labelled a bad father or husband, the doctor's report doesn't look good, you have tried every online course but your career or business doesn't seem to thrive, you have been hiding in the wine press wondering where are the miracles. I have good news for you this morning! God calls you a mighty warrior, a man after His own heart and faithful. Bring all these negative facts to the cross for an exchange. At the cross, we have died and resurrected with Christ. We exchange facts and sight for faith as we ascend to the throne of grace. Like Abraham, we don't let our weakness define us but we lean on God as he reveals, aligns, forms and authorises us through His Spirit. He alone changes the facts and their deadness into rivers of life.