

The Covenants of Law and Grace

1) What is a covenant?

A covenant is a contract, agreement or promise made between two or more parties. The Bible is a covenant document divided into two core covenants or testaments – The Old Testament and the New Testament. (The Word “testament” actually means, “covenant” in Latin.) In both testaments, God is the one who takes the initiative and establishes the terms that determine His relationship with man. The following is a list of some of God’s covenants with man.

- A) **The Covenant with Adam** – a covenant made between God and Adam in which Adam would have everlasting life based on his obedience to God. Genesis 2:16-17
- B) **The Covenant with Noah** – God’s promise to Noah never again to destroy the world with a flood. Genesis 9:9-17
- C) **The Covenant with Abraham** – God’s promise to Abraham to give his descendants the Promised Land. Genesis 15:18
- D) **The Covenant with Moses** – God gave the nation of Israel His law and promise of fellowship if they kept it. Exodus 24:4-8
- E) **The Covenant with David** – God gave David a promise that his descendants would have an everlasting kingdom. Psalm 89:3
- F) **The Proclamation of the New Covenant** – This is the prophecy of Jeremiah declaring a New Covenant in the coming Messianic age. Jeremiah 31:31, 33

2) What is the covenant of law?

God’s moral law is clearly declared throughout the Scriptures. We see God’s law in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), other statutes given to Moses by God, the sermons of the prophets, and the teachings from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Man’s failure to keep God’s law showed a need for a new covenant.

3) Are we (can we be) justified (saved) through the old covenant of law?

Deuteronomy 27:26, James 2:10, Romans 3:10, 3:23, 7:4, Galatians 2:16, 3:10, 5:4

4) What is the covenant of grace?

The covenant of grace is God’s promise of salvation based on the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, first foretold in Genesis 3:15.

5) Are we justified through the new covenant of grace?

Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:14, 8:2, Galatians 5:18

6) What is the purpose of the law?

Galatians 3:19-24

7) If the law condemns us, is the law bad?

Romans 7:7,12

8) Should we still obey God’s ceremonial laws?

The ceremonial laws (animal sacrifices, feasts, diet restrictions, etc.) were fulfilled by Jesus Christ and therefore are no longer necessary. God is most interested in our hearts, not outward appearance, outward cleanliness, or ceremonial rituals. Mark 7:14-23, Acts 10:9-16, Hebrews 10:1-14, 13:9-10

9) Should we still obey God’s moral laws?

While God’s law does not justify us, He still wants us to obey His commandments. And if we love God, we will keep His commandments. John 14:15, 1 Corinthians 7:19, 1 John 5:2-3, 2 John 6, Revelation 12:17

Summary: *As New Covenant Christians, we are under the covenant of Grace and dead to the law through the body of Christ (Romans 7:4). By our faith in Jesus Christ we are dead (or free) from the condemnation of the law, which exposes our sin. Just as the widow was free to marry in Romans 7:1-3, we are remarried to Jesus Christ, our bridegroom, and freed from the penalty of the law (free from the law as a means to salvation and from its curse for disobedience). This curse was bore by Christ for all believers. However, this freedom is not a license to sin (Galatians 5:13, Romans 6:18, 1 Peter 2:16). Anyone who insists that they can earn their salvation by their own works is essentially saying that Christ died in vain and denies the very grace of God through the finished work of Jesus Christ at Calvary (Galatians 2:21).*



Minimum suggested Scripture reading on this subject: Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians