

## The Story of Salvation

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The theme of Biblical Theology: The Old Testament is the story of God who progressively reestablishes His rule over a people and the earth by His word and Spirit through promise and covenant to His own glory.

God's purpose and its means of execution: the story of the Old Testament.

- A. The Prototype of God's Purpose (Gen. 1-2), a new creation of man in communion with God mediating His rule over the earth. This is the beginning of history (Gen. 2:4) and its goal.
- B. The Prevention of God's Purpose (Gen. 3). Anti-theocratic forces usurp authority over man and the earth; communion is broken but partially restored. And to supply skins for covering Adam and Eve, the slaying of animals must be assumed—the initially faint soft primeval sounds of what becomes a major theme in the symphony of Old Testament revelation—fellowship through sacrifice.
- C. The Promise of God's Purpose (Gen. 3:15). The serpent had gained control over man and the earth. Hence to crush the serpent would be tantamount to reversing his works, to regaining man and the earth. (God would perform this through the broad means of His word and Spirit, more specifically, through an expansion of the promise and the formation of His theocratic nation. He set the stage of the world and the background of the nations.)
  1. The stage of the world was set through the flood and Noachian covenant. The flood geographically altered the world stage but the Noachian covenant guaranteed the permanence (Gen. 6-9).
  2. The background of the nations was established through the offspring of Noah's family, the confusion of languages, and the dispersion of the nations (Gen. 10-11). (Von Rad notes that the Tower of Babel is one of a series of events which marks out the progression of sin—the Fall, Cain, the Song of Lamech, the marriages of the angels and the building of the Tower. And after each act of sin and judgment there appeared at the same time a saving act of God—except at one point: the Tower of Babel ends without grace. What would be God's further relationship to the nations? "The answer to this most universal of all theological questions is given with the beginning of the saving history, the call of Abraham and Yahweh's plan for history therein, to bless 'all the families of the earth through Abraham'" (Von Rad, Vol. I, p. 164).)
- D. The Original Promise Expanded: the Abrahamic promises (Gen. 12:1-3). (These promises might also be conceived as the means of executing the first promise.)

1. The individual aspect—Abraham’s name will be great. (The existence and continuation of the nation throughout the Old Testament is a record of its founders’ greatness.)
  2. The national aspect—his offspring will be a great nation. (Implicit in this promise of a nation is the prospect of a people, a land and a constitution.)
  3. The international aspect—his offspring will be a source of blessing for all nations. (Jonah is a brief light breaking through the clouds of a disobedience which prevented this fulfillment until the Christ would come as a light to the nations (Isaiah).)
  4. A divine aspect—protection and affirmation; protection, for those nations cursing Israel would be cursed; affirmation, for nations would be blessed if they blessed Israel. (Obadiah and Nahum centuries later record God’s faithfulness in providing protection in stark contrast to Israel’s unfaithfulness in effecting international blessing.)
- E. The National Promises Solidified in Covenant and Fulfillment.
1. The implicit land promise is bound in unconditional covenant (Gen. 15). (At this point in a full theology, a thorough discussion of “covenant” in the ancient Near East would be proper, delineating bilateral and unilateral treaties, and interacting with Eichrodt’s work on the subject.) Strictly speaking, only one portion of the national aspect of the Abrahamic promises is covenanted to Abraham—the land necessary for the nation. (In later history on at least two and perhaps three more occasions God will solemnly and unconditionally covenant with the nation different aspects of the Abrahamic promise—the perpetuity of the ruling house of the nation (II Sam. 7:12-16), the perpetuity and blessing of and by the nation (Jer. 30-33), and perhaps the perpetuity of the Levitical priesthood (Num. 25:8; Jer. 33:21; Is. 66:21). In any case, the pattern of promise incorporated into unconditional covenant is established by a comparison of Gen. 12 and 15, and it is illustrative of the progressively binding character of God’s purpose.)
  2. The explicit promise of descendants is fulfilled (2100-1446).
    - a. The births of Isaac, Jacob and his sons mark the beginning of this fulfillment.
    - b. When disintegration factors threaten the unity of the nation (Gen. 38), God providentially preserves his nation in Egypt (Gen. 37-50) through a chosen theocratic leader, Joseph who clearly recognizes God’s providence (Gen. 50:20). (This grand theme of the disobedient nation preserved through providence occurs in later years in Ruth and Esther. For in the former case, God providentially furthers the theocratic program by bringing the ancestors of David together in the otherwise dismal period of the Judges; and in the latter case God providentially preserves a worldly segment of his people in Persia.)

3. The explicit promise of a nation is fulfilled (1446-1390).
  - a. The acquisition of the nations' subjects—through the mediator Moses
    - (1) Their bondage (Ex. 1-10)
    - (2) Their redemption (Ex. 11-18)
  - b. The constitution of the nations' subjects—the conditional Mosaic covenant
    - (1) The moral law (Ex. 19-20)
    - (2) The social judgments (Ex. 21-24)
  - c. The communion of the nation (Leviticus). In Leviticus is contained "a collection of prophylactic ordinances enabling the holy Yahweh to live in residence among his holy subjects."
  - d. The transitional experiences of the nation (Numbers).
    - (1) "the cultic laws of the camp in motion; the military arrangement and census of the tribes and the transport of the sacred palladium. From inside the camp of the enemy the Balaam oracles reveal that God's blessing cannot be frustrated in spite of Israel's failures."
    - (2) Individual blessing is conditioned upon faith.
  - e. The basis of the nation renewed (Deuteronomy). "The covenant renewed in legal prophetic form. (A full theology would include a thorough interaction with the works of Mendenhall, Kline et al. with respect to covenant treaty forms in the Ancient Near East.)"
- F. The Nation of Promise under Covenant: Its Mediators.

Introduction: It has been noted that the original creation, wherein man in communion with God mediated His rule over the earth, was thwarted by anti-theocratic forces. But the first promise guaranteed the destruction of these forces, and implicitly, the renewal of the original communion and rule. The Abrahamic promises and covenant further advanced the purpose and the Mosaic covenant was yet another step in the means for the advancement of that purpose. Nevertheless, the uniqueness of its conditional nature must be recognized, for that uniqueness suggests the possibility of its temporary usage as a means for the accomplishing of God's purpose.

Now, throughout the history of this progressively unfolding purpose and fulfillment, a principle becomes clearer and clearer. God is executing his purpose through mediators—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. Admittedly, other men

mediated communion with God (e.g. Melchizedek or Job), yet the ultimate purpose of God in effecting international rule and communion was being accomplished through a single theocratic mediator. With Moses, however, one comes to the last of the individual mediators of God's purpose, for the national covenant divided the mediatorial responsibilities among four offices—that of the prophet, priest, political leader and wise man. Through these men of the covenant nation, the original purpose of restoring communion and rule was to be accomplished. As each one of these mediators of covenant fulfilled the responsibilities of his domain, the theocratic purpose was advanced. And as each failed in his responsibilities, the theocratic purpose was thwarted. In order to understand the uniqueness of the Mosaic covenant, its conditional nature will be examined and in order to understand Moses' unique position as individual mediator, his functions will be analyzed with reference to the mediatorial offices of the Mosaic covenant. Then, in order to understand the national covenant as means of the advancement of God's purpose, it will be analyzed with reference to its mediators and their responsibilities. Finally, in order to understand the actual accomplishments of the nation under covenant, its history must be traced with reference to the accomplishments of its mediators, upon whose faithfulness to covenant responsibilities success depended.

1. The conditional nature of the Mosaic covenant and its unique position.
  - a. The covenants of the Near East
    - (1) A bilateral parity covenant
    - (2) A unilateral covenant—by a superior to an inferior
      - (a) Unconditional with respect to the recipient: the superior imposes obligations on Himself with none on the recipient.
      - (b) The covenants of the Old Testament
        - (i) Unconditional: Noahic, Abrahamic, Levitical, Davidic, and New
        - (ii) Conditional: Sinaiatic

(Note: The foundation of a covenant is not necessarily an index to the function of a covenant. For example, the unconditional foundation of a covenant does not necessarily relate it to justification or sanctification, for the Davidic covenant guaranteed a ruling house forever, which though related to the effecting of God's eternal purpose of reestablishing rule over the earth, does not address itself to restoring and maintaining communion with man. And the conditional nature of the Mosaic covenant does not preclude its function as a means of sanctification and rule to a believer obedient in the Spirit. For those whose faith was in the Yahweh of promise, the Mosaic covenant offered great opportunity. Of course, it was never the means of justification, nor a sanctification sought in the flesh (Gal. 3). But it was a means for the potential advancement of god's purpose—albeit a temporary and inferior means to that which was to come. For it offered

the chance of communion with God through a priestly mediator, and participation in the rule of God through political mediators. Its relationship to the new covenant I have outline in Appendix B.)

2. The mediator of the Mosaic covenant and his unique position. (At this point, and throughout the entire analysis of the cultus, I find Eichrodt's material very helpful. It is particularly good in displaying contrast with paganism, and showing the relationship of the internal heart attitude to the external worship of the cultus.)
  - a. Moses was the political mediator in his authority, direction and law, though he showed no evident prowess in war, nor was he the initiator of dynasty.
  - b. He was the priestly mediator in giving the Torah and cultus, though Aaron assumed the duties of sacrifice.
  - c. He was the prophet in both his experience of theophanies and his miraculous foreknowledge.
  - d. He was the wise man by virtue of his natural gifts and brilliant mind.
  - e. His enablement was God's ultimate means for the accomplishment of His purpose: the Spirit of God.
3. The mediators of the covenant and their respective domains
  - a. The political mediator
    - (1) The domain of the political leader: secular law and leadership of the nation. (At this point the bulk of Eichrodt's material concerning the uniqueness of Israelite law would be profitably
    - (2) The marks of a political leader: Charisma and prowess in war (the judge), and appointment by God. Ideally, he was submissive to covenant law.
    - (3) His relationship to God's purpose: to lead the theocratic nation in extending its righteous rule over the earth. Hence, under the guidance of the great king David, the kingdom boundaries were extended.
  - b. The priestly mediator—the Levitical priesthood
    - (1) The domain of the priesthood—the cultus
      - (a) The sacrificial system and its divisions would be analyzed here.
      - (b) The festivals and their significance

- (c) The tabernacle and its significance
- (d) Other sacred objects: the ark, the rod, the Urim and Thummen
- (2) The identification of a priest: divine appointment
- (3) His relationship to God's purpose: the priest is not primarily interested in extending God's rule over the earth, but rather in restoring communion between God and man.
- c. The prophetic mediator
  - (1) The domain of the prophet: he was the giver of new authoritative revelation and the guardian of the covenant against anti-theocratic forces.
  - (2) The tests of a prophet: his message was organically united to previous revelation (Deut. 18).
  - (3) His relationship to God's purpose: he guarded the covenant—God's means of accomplishing that purpose, and he was God's spokesman for warning and salvation through a new means.
- d. The wise man
  - (1) The domain of the wise man: practical advice and wisdom in conformity to Torah with respect to marriage, friendship, business, adversity, character, worship and purposes of life.
  - (2) The marks of a wise man: his self-authenticating wise counsel.
  - (3) His relationship to God's purpose: He counsels the man under covenant in skillful living and the fulfillment of covenant responsibilities. With reference to God's essential purpose, he guides man in the image of God in the fulfillment of the original cultural mandate (Gen. 3).

These were the mediators of the national covenant, and through their mediation the covenant nation was to extend God's rule and blessing over the earth. But the mediators that followed Moses did not achieve that purpose. The following stages of the covenant nations' history will reveal what did happen.

#### G. The Nation of Promise under covenant: Its Accomplishments

- 1. The period of securing the land (1405-1390)

- a. The political mediator is prominent in this stage: Joshua “aims to show the historical fulfillment of Yahweh’s promise made to the Patriarchs and Moses to give Israel the land of Canaan by Holy War.”
    - (1) The conquest of the land (1-12)
    - (2) The allotment of the land (13-24)
  - b. The priestly mediator is still necessary for prosperity, as the sin of Achan shows.
2. The period of Judges (1390-1050)
- a. The political mediators were charismatic military leaders.
    - (1) The purpose of the Judges: to deliver His people when they finally cry out for relief from their God-sent adversaries
    - (2) The meaning of the nations’ failure under Judges: to demonstrate the necessity for kingship (Jud. 18:1; 19:1; 21:25)
  - b. The priestly mediators were opportunistic and decadent (Judges 17-19).
  - c. The prophetic voice was evidently silent, “for the word of the Lord was rare in those days” (the last of the days of the Judges – I Sam. 3:1).
  - d. The wise man was silent, but wise counsel was really useless to a people too foolish. For no fool benefits from rebuke or counsel.
  - e. The purpose of God continues: the book of Ruth illustrates that God is sovereignly and providentially preparing the nation for prosperity under David. For the faithfulness of a Moabitess and a godly farmer eventuate in his birth.
3. The period of consolidation (1050 – 931)
- a. Overview: Samuel records the establishment of a human monarchy over the theocracy, continued through I Kings 9. And the kingdom in prosperity is at last mature enough to receive the enriching bounty of overflowing wisdom literature. Many psalms and proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, the incorporation of Job—all these crown the achievements of the monarchy.
  - b. The political mediator is now the king. David’s achievements relegate Saul’s bitter memories to the past. And Solomon, though fluctuating, is carried by the momentum of David’s rule to further kingdom prosperity.

- c. The prophetic voice is once again heard. Initiated by Samuel, the schools of the prophets are born. And such men as Nathan the prophet fulfill their roles as guardians of the covenant and spokesman for Yahweh.
  - d. The priestly mediators flourish. Many psalms enrich their worship and a godly king restores their dignity.
  - e. The wise men with their counsel can now be appreciated. They counsel the man under covenant with respect to:
    - (1) Adversity: Job counsels the suffering believers to trust in the sovereign (Creator).
    - (2) Practical Affairs: Proverbs counsels the student in skillful living.
    - (3) Life's Enigmas: Ecclesiastes counsels the perplexed to live life skillfully by trusting God's sovereign goodness and justice in spite of the apparent futility involved in man's existence.
    - (4) Marriage: the Song of Solomon is a delicately beautiful portrait of the ideal loveliness of marriage: the selflessness and beauty of true romantic love. The relationship awakens and first blossoms in the spring of courtship, matures through the seasons of life and comes to full flower and beauty in a later spring—the paragon of marital love.
4. The period of division (931-586)
- a. Overview: As the book of Acts supplies the historical background for the Epistles, so I Kings supplies the historical background for many of the prophets. And as the period of prosperity was the golden age of wisdom literature, so the period of apostasy must necessitate the golden age of the prophets. For they were the guardians of the covenant and God's covenant and God's spokesmen, and His covenant was being transgressed.
  - b. The Political mediators: their quality was always poor in the northern kingdom, though it vacillated in the southern one. Essentially the book of Kings demonstrates the failure of the theocracy under monarchy.
  - c. The priestly mediators: their quality vacillated. But many were opportunistic "yes men" of the court; they performed the cultus mechanically; worst yet, there was frequent assimilation with the abominable Canaanite practices.
  - d. The genuine prophetic mediators were true guardians of the covenant and spokesmen for God.
    - (1) The northern prophets

- (a) Ahijah, Iddo, Jehu and Micah, as well as Elijah and Elisha, represent faithful prophets, calling the nation back to relationship with God.
  - (b) Jonah is the record of the sovereign Yahweh preaching salvation to the Gentiles through his reluctant prophet while his covenant nation is in apostasy. It is a brief foreshadowing of the fulfillment of God's promise of international blessing through the offspring of Abraham.
  - (c) Amos and Hosea begin a twofold theme evident in all the prophets: judgment and hope, condemnation and consolation. Already in the south Joel had sounded the first notes of new blessing from the outflowing of God's Spirit in the latter days, but only after judgment in the day of the Lord. So also Amos and Hosea sounded the warning of judgment, but latter day prosperity. The judgment came in 722 B. C. with the Assyrian rod.
- (2) The southern prophets
- (a) Shemaiah, Obed, Azariah and Hanam represent faithful prophets known only through Kings.
  - (b) Obadiah and much later Nahum record the faithfulness of God to the abrahamic promise of protection. Edom and Ninevah will be judged by the God of Israel.
  - (c) The remainder of the pre-exilic prophets, however, sound the twofold theme of judgment and hope for the disobedient nation.
    - (i) Micah notes the failure of political, priestly and prophetic mediators (3:11). Hence, there is no social reform and practical righteousness. So he sounds warning, yet portrays a future hope in a coming political mediator (4:1-5, 9).
    - (ii) Isaiah, Micah's contemporary, echoes the warning (1-39 principally) yet sees a future hope in ideal mediators: political (e.g. Is. 9:6-7) and priestly (Is. 52:13-53:12). (These are not necessarily conceived of as the same person, though Psalm 110 might have warranted it in the mind of Isaiah.) Yet the hope is both national and international (40-66; esp. 49:1-12). God had not forgotten his promises to Abraham. An obedient servant mediator would accomplish what the disobedient servant nation did not.

- (iii) Zephaniah and Habakkuk prophesy imminent danger shortly before the exile. Zephaniah provides a needy reminder that "Yahweh" is in control despite appearances, and He will prove this in the near future by the day of Yahweh including immediate and distant chastisement for all the disobedient. Habakkuk, with destruction over the horizon, exhorts just to live by faith "in the face of apparent difficulties hindering the fulfillment of God's promises."
  - (iv) Jeremiah has severest warning yet brightest hope. For Yahweh will fulfill his promises to Abraham through a New Covenant (Jer. 30-33), where in the law they have transgressed is not before them but in them. Therefore when Jeremiah poetically grieves his nations' judgment, he also sings of God's faithfulness and hope for the future (Lamentations).
- e. The wise man is not prominent in this period of division, although some proverbs continue to be written. Of course, as we still profit from the writing of the apostles, though no apostles are alive today, so the people in this period can profit from the writings of the early wise men.
5. The period of captivity (586-536)
- a. Overview: During this dismal period of Israel's history great encouragement was necessary to sustain the people. It is not surprising that in this time of despair God raised up two prophets who proclaimed the certainty and glory of Israel's future history more clearly than ever before, Our of the darkness of captivity came the apocalyptic lights of Daniel and Ezekiel.
  - b. The political mediators immediately preceding captivity had "done evil in the sight of the Lord." Nevertheless the prophets in exile saw a coming political mediator of salvation and righteousness (Ezek. 16:53-63; 17:22-24; 21:25-27; 35-36; Dan. 2:7)
  - c. The priestly mediators before the exile were in apostasy and the glory of God was removed from Israel (Ezek. 2-11). Nevertheless, the prophets in exile anticipated its return in a glorious new temple (Ezek. 40-43) and service (44-46) in a new land (47-48).
  - d. The prophetic mediators were often corrupt, yet Ezekiel and Daniel were faithful to Yahweh.
    - (1) Ezekiel reckoned the captivity a necessary measure for God to chastise His disobedient people, though he spoke confidently of Israel's future glory (Ezekiel).

- (2) Daniel was the prophet of Gentile dominion: he was both the paragon of righteous living under it, and the panoramic historian of its future—not only its progress under increasingly cruel emperors, but also its abrupt cessation with the coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom (Daniel).
- e. The wise men’s writings of previous times were the source of counsel in this period and the following one.
6. The period of repatriation (536-400)
  - a. Overview: The logical outcome of Daniel’s history must have been that the Messiah was the only ultimate hope for the nation. For until His coming, the nation destined to rule the world would itself be ruled by Gentile empires. Nevertheless, the nation would have to endure until that time: the theocracy must be reestablished.
  - b. The political mediators helped reestablish the theocracy.
    - (1) Zerubbabel led in the rebuilding of the temple (536-516) under the prophetic preaching of Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 1-6).
    - (2) Nehemiah faithfully overcame antitheocratic obstacles to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, giving security to the struggling theocracy (Nehemiah).

(Note: Esther, in effect, shows God’s sovereign protection over his disobedient people who are seemingly without a political mediator.)

- c. The priestly mediators aided in the reestablishment of the theocracy.
  - (1) The priestly author of Chronicles reviewed the history of Israel from the dawn of history to the Edict of Restoration. By thus reminding the people of Israel of their spiritual foundations he hoped to encourage them to build again upon them.
  - (2) Ezra records the reestablishment of the cultus—not only the building of its temple under Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-6), but the renewed dedication to its covenant law (Ezra 7-10).
- d. The prophetic mediators motivate the reestablishment of the theocracy.
  - (1) Haggai and Zechariah incite the completion of the temple.
    - (a) Haggai encourages the people to seek first the building of the temple (1:7-11) in the power of the Spirit (2,4,5) for God’s future

blessing was destined for Israel (2:6-9) and individual faithfulness would be rewarded (2:23) (Haggai).

- (b) Zechariah encourages the remnant through his proclamation of the ultimate establishment of the Messianic kingdom. Until then, God would preserve the people of the Messiah through every ordeal (Zechariah).
- (2) Malachi sounded the last prophetic proclamation of the Old Testament. The Messiah would come in judgment and salvation, in fire and rewards, but preceded by a prophet (Malachi).

. . . Until that prophet and Messiah would come, there was silence. It was the eloquent, tingling silence of expectation from some, and the brooding silence of doubt for others. And yet four centuries would pass before the declarations of an angel and the soft cries of two newly born boys would break that silence . . .

H. God's Purpose is Consummated in Christ.

1. Christ fulfills the purpose.
  - a. He will rule upon the earth with those identified with Him.
  - b. He will be in communion with the Father with those whom He has brought in communion with the Father.
2. Christ fulfills the promises. ("All the promises of God have their 'Amen' in Him.")
  - a. Apart from Christ, the name of Abraham has no ultimate greatness.
  - b. Apart from Christ, the nation of Israel has no ultimate greatness.
  - c. Apart from Christ, international blessing would not have come.
  - d. Apart from Christ, who will deliver Israel in the future—punishing her enemies and rewarding her allies, God would not have providentially cared for Israel.
3. Christ fulfills the covenants.
  - a. The Abrahamic covenant: Like Joshua, He will bring the nation to rule over the land, but unlike Joshua's feat, it will be everlasting in effect.
  - b. The Davidic covenant: as the son of David, he will reign over the House of Jacob forever.
  - c. The New Covenant: As the ascended one, Christ sends the gift of the Holy Spirit, and will in the future effect universal blessing among the Israelites.

4. Christ is the single mediator of the New Covenant.
  - a. He is a prophet like unto Moses who combines all the mediatorial offices in His own person. (Now there is one God and mediator.)
  - b. He is the supreme political mediator.
    - (1) In character, He is meek and just.
    - (2) In character, He is sympathetic having been tempted every way like as we are, yet without sin.
    - (3) In accomplishment, He offers Himself as the final and full sacrifice for sin.
    - (4) In cultus, he is the tabernacle to whom we come to worship.
      - (a) He is its bread.
      - (b) His is its light.
      - (c) He is its veil.
      - (d) He is the entire "naos"—for he said if they tear down his temple he would rebuild it in three days, and indeed He did.
  - c. He is the supreme prophet.
    - (1) Like Jeremiah, He weeps over Jerusalem.
    - (2) Like Daniel, He prophesies Gentile dominion until His coming.
    - (3) As the other prophets were rejected, so He.
    - (4) As the other prophets were rejected, so He.
    - (5) Yet He gave the final and complete revelation. As the grand composer of prophecy, He weaves all themes together in the symphony of revelation given John the Apostle. Yet as the sovereign God He also conducts the symphony.
  - d. He is the supreme wise man.
    - (1) He is "a greater than Solomon."
    - (2) He is "Christ our wisdom."

- e. He is the successful Servant.
  - (1) Comparison and contrast with the servant nation.
    - (a) Whereas the old servants were many members, He was one.
    - (b) Whereas the old servant consisted of twelve tribes, He chose twelve men to rule twelve tribes.
    - (c) Whereas Moses appointed seventy to assist him, so Christ appointed seventy to assist Him.
    - (d) Whereas the nation was called out of Egypt, so Christ.
  - (2) The superiority of the servant Christ.
    - (a) Unlike the nation, He succeeded in the wilderness.
      - (i) He was tempted forty days, they forty years.
      - (ii) He overcame Satan, thrice quoting from the revelation given in the Wilderness—Deuteronomy.
    - (b) Unlike the nation, He brought international blessing.
      - (i) The nation was a blind servant that failed.
      - (ii) The Christ was the obedient servant that succeeded.
      - (iii) Unlike Jonah who proclaimed salvation to a few, Christ sends the message of salvation to all.

In the old covenant the law was external placed "before them" (Deut. 5:8; I Kin. 9:6), whereas in the new covenant the law is internal, placed in their hearts. Hence the "writing on the heart" is opposed to writing on tablets of stone (Ex. 31:18, cf. 32:15; 34:8; Deut. 4:13; 9:11; 10:4). The old covenant presented the law before the person to accept as his duty and path of holiness. The new covenant implanted the law within the person by the Spirit of God.

Both covenants have as their object "I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Lev. 26:12; Ex. 29:45; Jer. 31:33). But they differ in their means of attaining the goal. Now both attained that goal through sacrifice, but the old covenant provided an imperfect system of sacrifice, which was superseded by the perfect sacrifice of the New Covenant, the sacrifice of Christ. The old system was a shadow, a two dimensional representation of the final full sacrifice of Christ.

Also both were motivated by grace. But the old covenant was grounded in the physical deliverance from Egypt and the inferior daily sacrificial system. Also, it provided only for sanctification not justification, for it was given to a redeemed people. The new covenant is grounded on complete spiritual deliverance, a more certain forgiveness of sin, and the totality of Israel's deliverance—both spiritual and physical. And whereas under the old covenant only sins of ignorance are expiated by sacrifice (Heb. 9:7), under the new covenant every sin is expiated by sacrifice of Christ. Admittedly, some few old covenant believers (i.e.: the king) were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and many had assurance of forgiveness, but it was not the firm assurance of Christ's sacrifice, and the promised indwelling of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:26) did not come until Pentecost (John 7:39; I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22-23; Acts 1:5, 2:4; 11:15-16). Therefore, because of a more certain forgiveness a more conclusive deliverance, and a deeper experience of the Spirit, the New Covenant offers better motivation based on better promises and a better priesthood.