

Law – Old Covenant Obsolete

Hebrews 8:7-8,13 NASB

For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. [8] For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT a NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; [13] When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

"Two factors, however, suggest that the new covenant replaced the Mosaic one and rendered it obsolete in salvation history: (1) the contrast with the old covenant stated in Jeremiah 31:31–34, and (2) the replacement theology expressed in the book of Hebrews."

— Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface Between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theology* - eBook, (Zondervan Academic, 2010), 100.

"the new covenant stands as a replacement for the Mosaic covenant, it bears an entirely different relationship to the covenants of promise, that is, the covenants made with Abraham and David."

— Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface Between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theology* - eBook, (Zondervan Academic, 2010), 100.

"God has made the first one old. "By promising a new covenant, God made the first covenant obsolete and showed that the whole Age of Moses would be terminated and superseded. In actual fact, the Age of Moses terminated at the Cross (see Colossians 2:14 and note). But the Jewish priests continued their service in the temple until Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. See notes on Matthew 24:29-31."

— Ice, Rhoderick D. *Commentary on Hebrews 8:13. "The Bible Study New Testament.*

"The Sinai covenant, before it was abrogated by Christ, was become old, or useless, in three respects; 1st, By its curse condemning every transgressor to death without mercy, it was designed to show the necessity of seeking justification from the mercy of God. But that necessity being more directly declared in the gospel, there was no reason for continuing the former covenant, after the second covenant was fully and universally published. 2d, The covenant of the law was introduced to prefigure the good things to come under the covenant of the gospel. But when these good things were actually bestowed, there was no longer any use for the typical services of the law. 3d, The Jewish doctors, by teaching that pardon was to be obtained only by the Levitical sacrifices, and the Judaizing Christians, by affirming that under the gospel itself men are pardoned only through the efficacy of these sacrifices, both the one and the other had corrupted the law; on which account, it was fit to lay it aside as a thing whose tendency now was to nourish superstition."

— Benson, Joseph. *Commentary on Hebrews 8:13. Joseph Benson's Commentary* (taken from MacKnight).

"In contrast, the Mosaic (Old) Covenant does not relate organically but "was added" (Galatians 3:19), as an appendage. It explained how the Israelites could maximize the benefits God had promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. Consequently when God terminated the Old Covenant it did not eliminate anything He had promised Abraham. Another difference is that the Mosaic Covenant was bilateral and conditional ("If you will do this, then I will do this."). The other biblical covenants are unilateral and unconditional ("I will do this."), though they sometimes contain conditional elements subsumed under the divine promises."

— Constable, Thomas. *DD. Commentary on Hebrews 8:13". Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas Constable.*

Abrogation of the Mosaic Covenant. To abrogate means "to abolish or annul by authority." In Hebrews 7:11-28 several principles are enunciated: (1) Mosaic Law could not perfect the believer in his or her relationship to God (7:11). (2) A change (JV2, F4H, metathesis) has taken place in the Law of Moses (7:12). (3) The ordinance or commandment regarding the priesthood under the Law has been set aside (•2XJ0F4H, athet'sis, 7:18). (4) The reason for the change in the ordinance of the priesthood is related to the New Covenant which is better than the Mosaic Covenant (7:22). (5) The change provided an unchangeable priesthood

Moral (Exod 20:1-17). Keeping the sabbath is part of the Ten Commandments, the so-called moral law. The legal

stipulation concerning the sabbath was promulgated at Sinai, not at creation (Neh 9:13, 14). The sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic Covenant (Exod 31:13-17). According to Walton, circumcision was the individual sign of participation in the Mosaic Covenant while keeping the sabbath (cf. Exod 31:13-17) was the corporate sign.⁵⁸ The covenant at Sinai was based upon the historical deliverance of Israel from Egypt, a deliverance in accord with the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Lev 26:13, 45). One of the purposes of the Mosaic Covenant was to identify the people of Yahweh more narrowly, supplementing the Abrahamic Covenant's identification of the generation who would inherit the land of promise. The sign of the Abrahamic Covenant was circumcision; the sign of the Sinaitic Covenant was observance of the sabbaths (cf. Lev 25; 26:2, 34-35, 43). The sign of each covenant affected the realm of the other covenant. The covenant regarding the land (Abrahamic) was related to the people by circumcision, and the covenant regarding the people (Mosaic) was related to the land by the sabbaths.⁵⁹ Thus these two covenantal elements (the land and the people) were bound together. The land was for the people, and the people for the land. The sabbath was ordained for those who were delivered out of Egypt and who would inhabit the land of promise.

Civil (Exod 20:22-23:33). Putting a disobedient child to death is one of many social or civil stipulations included in the Mosaic Covenant (Exod 21:15). This particular stipulation is directly tied to the fifth commandment in the so-called moral law (20:12). It was the commandment with the promise of life—physical life. The child's opportunity for a long life was ended by execution.

Ceremonial (Exod 25:1-31:18). Laws of blood sacrifice, ceremonial ablutions, and religious festivals abound in the ceremonial laws of the Mosaic Covenant. The ceremony was the means of regular reinforcement and instruction as well as the vehicle of worship. The sacrifices were theological preparation for the Messiah's atoning work.⁶¹ To be disobedient to any one of the stipulations of the Mosaic Covenant is to be guilty of disobedience to all of the stipulations of the covenant (Jas 2:10). In a discussion of the theological legacy of the Mosaic Covenant, it is necessary to bear in mind the unity of its stipulations.

Theological Legacy The particularism of the Mosaic Covenant would seem to eliminate the church from direct subjugation to its stipulations. "Quite clearly the national element is lacking in the concept of the church in the New Testament."⁶² The Law of Moses had a fivefold purpose: (1) to reveal man's sinfulness (Rom 3:19-20); (2) to reveal the hideous nature of sin (Rom 7:8-13); (3) to reveal the holiness of God; (4) to restrain sin so that the sinner might come to Christ (Gal 3:24); and (5) to restrain wrong doing in order to protect the integrity of the moral, social, and religious