

# THE NEW COVENANT

Does It Do Away With  
God's Law?



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# THE NEW COVENANT

Does It Do Away With  
God's Law?

Did Christ do away with the Ten Commandments? Was the law “nailed to the cross”? Are Old Testament laws about the Sabbath, clean meats, tithing, and annual holy days “done away”? Did Christ make Christians free from any obligation to *obey* God? Need Christians just “believe” on Christ, but need not fulfill the requirements of any of God's laws?



“Clinging to the legalism of the Old Covenant is like walking around outside in the sunshine, trying to see where you’re going with a *flashlight*,” said the television evangelist. “The Old Covenant was *complex*,” he said, reminding his audience of at least thirty-nine points concerning Sabbath-breaking detailed in the Mishna, each containing thirty-nine additional points, “but the New Covenant is *simple!*”

His audience eagerly listened to his words, nodding in agreement as he contrasted the “simplicity in Christ” with the terribly complex, legalistic, ritualistic, hard-to-remember, almost-impossible-to-obey points of Judaism.

“Christ gave only TWO LAWS!” he shouted. “One: ‘Love the Lord thy God with all your heart and all your mind,’ and two: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself!’ When I love God,” he explained, “I am *keeping the first four commandments*. When I love my neighbor as myself, I will not lie to him. I will not covet his wife. I will not steal from him. I will not lust after his property. When I love my neighbor as myself, I am *keeping the last six commandments!*”

I doubt if his audience heard the enormous contradiction in his message. Was this televangelist “*keeping the first four*

commandments" in his professed love for God?

He observes Easter, Christmas, and all other pagan holidays. He goes to church, preaches on *Sunday*, not God's Sabbath day. He ignores God's laws of health involving clean and unclean. He ignores God's annual Sabbaths. He believes in the pagan doctrines of the immortality of the soul, an ever-burning hell, and believes Christians' souls flit off to heaven at death.

If *you* had been in his audience, listening to clever analogies, watching his continual, frenetic pacing, sudden poses, quixotic actions, would *you* have agreed?

Most professing Christians would have, for most accept one of the commonly-assumed doctrines of mainstream Christianity—that Christ nailed the Old Covenant laws to His cross.

Why? What was so bad about the Old Covenant that Christ had to come to do away with it?

### What Was the Old Covenant?

Writing of the Old Covenant, Paul said, "In that He [Christ] saith, 'A New Covenant,' He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Hebrews 8:13).

Why did Christ come as a Messenger of a "New Covenant"? What was *wrong* with the old one? Was it flawed? Did God make a mistake? Was the Old Covenant a harsh, cruel, rigorous set of do's and don'ts; a legalistic, *complex* system of laws that were impossible to obey; a heavy *burden* on the backs of poor, suffering people who could never measure up?

A covenant is, according to your dictionary, "A solemn agreement between two or more persons or groups to do or not to do a certain thing: compact. 2. *Law. a.* a formal agreement that is legal, especially one that is under seal.

Contract."

Then is a covenant a law? No, read your dictionary definition again. A covenant is an *agreement*, not a law! Fix that in your mind, and *understand* what God's Word says about His New Covenant He proposes between Himself and all mankind!

A covenant is an agreement *about* certain obligations: "to do or not to do a certain thing." A covenant is a formal agreement concerning *performance*, and IS NOT A LAW!

Notice the moment in time when all Israel listened to the terms and conditions of God's Old Covenant: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, *if ye will obey My voice indeed*, and *keep My covenant*, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine:

"And ye shall be a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Exodus 19:4-6).

God's proposal was that Israel should "obey [His] voice indeed!" Why? So they would become a *special treasure* in God's sight—His *chosen*! He said, "for all the earth is mine."

Any agreement has two facets. One party says, "I will do such and such if you will do so and so." The other party *agrees* to perform his part. This *agreement* becomes the covenant.

After Moses had explained in great detail all the laws of God involving fair and equitable human relationships; laws governing landmarks, inheritances, marriage, diet, crime—wonderful laws which would guarantee Israel's happiness, "...he took the book of the covenant [the book represented the "Torah," or the first five books of the Bible. It is the book "of" or *about* the covenant, but is not the covenant. The covenant is the agreement between God and

the people], and read in the audience of the people: and they said, 'All that the Eternal hath said WILL WE DO, and be obedient'" (Exodus 24:7,8).

Their *agreement* was the covenant!

### A Covenant With Two Parts

The Ten Commandments of God were *not the covenant!* The covenant was a two-part agreement between God and the people.

God promised, "If you will keep my laws, I will bless you."

The people agreed. Thus, the covenant contained *two parts*: a proposal, and an acceptance. If the people kept their part of the bargain, God would keep His. But if the people *failed* to keep their part of the agreement, then God was under no obligation to keep His part!

This was cause and effect, hazards and benefits! If the people kept God's laws, which were *good* for them, which would bring *automatic* blessings, then God would miraculously *add* to those blessings. The *cause* would be obedience, and the *effect* would be fabulous blessings.

The Ten Commandments formed a foundational *part* of the Old Covenant, but the laws Israel agreed to keep included dozens of other points, included in "statutes" and "judgments," or written laws (statutes), and oral decisions rendered by God's appointed judges (judgments). If a man had a bull that was known to be dangerous, for example, he was required to keep him penned up, so he could not hurt anyone. If a thief stole a neighbor's cattle, he was required to repay double. Dozens of laws regulating society were laid down; laws protecting widows and orphans; laws protecting private property; laws regulating recovery of lost items. As you search through these Old Testament laws, you are hard put to fine a single one of them which would not be *good* for

society today! Certainly, the laws involving criminal justice, if obeyed today, would rid our peoples of the terrible curse of *crime!*

When God proposed the terms and conditions of the Old Covenant, He outlined the tremendous *blessings* that would come with obedience, the curses and wrong results which would come with disobedience. Always, He emphasized the great *goodness* of His laws.

"...thou art an holy people unto the Eternal thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

"The Eternal did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

"But because the Eternal loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Eternal brought you out with a mighty hand...know therefore that the Eternal thy God, He is God, the Faithful God, which *keepeth covenant* [fulfills His promises! Does what He says!] and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations.

"And repayeth them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them: He will not be slack to him that hateth Him, He will repay him to his face.

"Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them" (Deuteronomy 7:6-11).

Now, *why* did God command them to keep His laws? *Why* did He propose the terms of the Old Covenant to them?

"Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Eternal thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant [the PROMISES: the AGREEMENT] and the mercy which He sware unto thy fathers [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose name was

changed to Israel]:

“And He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: He will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine [cattle], and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which He sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

“Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle.

“And the Eternal will take away from thee *all sickness* and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee: but will lay them upon all them that hate thee” (Deuteronomy 7:12-15).

What fabulous blessings.

Think of it! What would it be worth to you as a husband or wife, as a landowner or businessman, to experience the blessings listed above? To be guaranteed happy marriages, healthy children; a total absence of sickness and disease; long, fruitful, successful, happy lives?

But there is more. Much, much more. Notice:

“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Eternal thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Eternal thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

“And all these blessings will come upon thee, and overtake thee...

“Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

“Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

“Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.

“Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

“The Eternal shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways...” (Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

What *fabulous* promises!

God says *obedience to His laws* would make them the world's only *superpower*. Study each great blessing, and ask whether our peoples today are experiencing even *one* of them in full.

Are our cities “blessed”? Or are they, instead, seething, festering hotbeds of crime, racism, violence; decaying infrastructure; ugly, smog-choked, soot-laden collections of run-down, graffiti-besmirched apartments and tenements; a frenetic, chaotic jangle of massive traffic jams, wailing sirens, tangled highlines and billboards; trash-laden, vacant lots, abandoned buildings, crack houses and homeless wanderers?

*Why* are we experiencing, instead of fabulous blessings, the *curses* of disease like AIDS, a monstrous crime rate, drug abuse, wrecked marriages, abortion, illegitimacy, child abuse, divorce, kidnappings and mass murder?

God answers: “But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Eternal thy God, to observe and do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these *curses* shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

“Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.

“Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.

“Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

“Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

“The Eternal shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and

rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken Me.

“The Eternal shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until He hath consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it.

“The Eternal shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.

“And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.

“The Eternal shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed... The Eternal will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.

“The Eternal shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:

“And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee... The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.

“He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail” (Deuteronomy 28:15-44).

If they *kept* their part of the agreement, blessings! If they *broke* their word, failed to keep their part of the agreement, curses!

This is simple cause and effect. For every evil we experience, there is an underlying *cause*. That cause is *broken law*; the casual ignoring of God's laws which were set

in motion for our great *good*, and which, when we break them, bring an automatic wrong result!

### A Proposal Of Marriage

God likened the Old Covenant to a *proposal of marriage*. God, as the handsome young suitor, approached Israel, the blushing young bride, and said, in effect, “If you will marry Me, I will be faithful to you; I will protect you, provide for you, forsake all others and cling to you only. But if you say ‘yes’ to My proposal, then you must forsake all others, and love Me, and obey Me, and be faithful to Me.”

We have seen how Israel, after having heard all the terms and conditions of the covenant, said, “All that Thou hast spoken *we will DO!*” They *accepted* God's proposal. But they soon *broke* their part of the marriage agreement.

Notice: “Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the Eternal” (Jeremiah 3:20).

“Behold, the days come, saith the Eternal, that I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

“Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, *although I was an husband unto them*, saith the Eternal...” (Jeremiah 31:31,32).

Study the entire sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel for a fuller understanding of the analogy. Here, God likens Israel to a little abandoned baby girl: “...in the day thou was born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou was not salted at all, nor swaddled at all.

“None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day thou was born”

(Ezekiel 16:4,5).

In recent years, I have heard of several instances where young mothers have cruelly “disposed” of unwanted, illegitimate babies by throwing them into a trash barrel! Only last year, one such little baby was discovered in Dallas, was taken in by the authorities, and put up for adoption.

Likening Israel to such an abandoned baby, God said: “And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee...‘Live.’

“I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou was naked and bare.

“Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, *and entered into a COVENANT* with thee, saith the Lord Eternal, and *thou becamest Mine*.

“Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.

“I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badger’s skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.

“I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck.

“And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.

“Thus thou was decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou was exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom...

“But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot...and pouredst out thy fornications on everyone that passed by; his it was.

“And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckest thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so.

“Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them,

“And tookest thy brodered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set Mine oil and Mine incense before them... Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto Me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter?” (Ezekiel 16:1-20).

This analogy portrays God as the rescuer, the protector and provider, and finally the “husband” of Israel, the little abandoned baby girl.

Yet, after all His faithfulness and love; after saving her life, tenderly dressing her, providing for her youth; watching her grow up into a beautiful young lady; after *marrying* her, God saw her take of *His* jewels and clothing, and, unlike other harlots, who are *paid* for their service, *BUY* the favors of strange men!

Read this entire chapter! It is an indictment against God’s people who depend upon *human allies*; upon tangled, evil geopolitical commitments to other races, other religions, for survival, instead of depending upon God.

Finally, after showing all the horrible national suffering He would bring upon them for their unfaithfulness, God said: “...I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath, in *breaking the covenant*.

“Then shalt thou remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant.

“And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou



shalt know that I am the Eternal:

“That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord Eternal” (Ezekiel 16:59-63).

God shows that the agreement [the covenant] between God and Israel to keep His perfect laws was like a *marriage* agreement.

“I became an husband” unto them, He said.

When Israel went after false gods, broke His Sabbaths, rejected His kind, merciful, loving RULE in their lives, it was as if a young wife had deliberately played the harlot; committed adultery with many different men!

What was wrong with the covenant? Was it **FLAWED** in some way?

Notice, when Jesus Christ is introduced as the Mediator and Minister of the New Covenant, Paul wrote: “But now hath He [Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the Mediator of a **BETTER** covenant, which was established upon **BETTER** promises.

“For if that first covenant had been *faultless*, then should no place have been sought for the second” (Hebrews 8:6,7).

So the Old Covenant was established upon promises which were *inferior* to the promises of the New Covenant. The Old Covenant contained some **FAULT** or other. What *was* that fault?

God says, “For **FINDING FAULT WITH THEM**, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a *new* covenant with the House of Israel and with the house of Judah” (Hebrews 8:8).

So the flaw was *not* the law, or any part of it. It was not even the *covenant* which was flawed—but the *people*! Theirs was the fault. They rebelled, broke their word! God’s law is *perfect*; His covenant was beautiful. *They* were the problem!

David wrote: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

“But his delight is in the *law of the Lord*; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.

“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psalm 1:1-3).

God inspired David to say, “The law of the Eternal is **PERFECT**, converting the soul... The statutes of the Lord are *right*, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes... the judgments of the Lord are *true* and *righteous* altogether” (Psalm 19:7-9).

He also wrote, “My tongue shall speak of Thy word, for *all Thy commandments are righteousness*” (Psalm 119:172).

Paul said, “...the law is *holy*, and the commandment *holy*, and just, and good,” and wrote, “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man... with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin” (Romans 7:12,22,25). He had said earlier, “I consent unto the law, that it is *good*.”

Was there something harsh, cruel, unreasonable—something so intricately technical and difficult that it represented a *flaw* in the law?

Absolutely **NOT**!

The covenant was an agreement between the people and God **ABOUT** the law; the people agreeing to *keep* it, and receive the *blessings* from doing so. The *flaw* was the hardhearted refusal of the people to **LIVE UP TO THEIR PART OF THE AGREEMENT!**

“Finding fault with **THEM**,” God said He would propose a *New Covenant!*

### Physical Promises For a Physical Lifetime

The Old Covenant was based upon purely physical promises. God promised material, physical blessings for a human lifetime, not spiritual salvation. The terms of the covenant were simple: "Obey My laws to the letter, and you will be blessed beyond your wildest imaginations. Disobey, and you will receive only cursings." Listen to the wondrous words of God concerning these physical, material blessings:

"If ye walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

"And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make [you] afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.

"And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.

"And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

"For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish My covenant with you.

"And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new.

"And I will set My tabernacle among you: and My soul shall not abhor you.

"And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be My people" (Leviticus 26:3-12).

Can any promises be more beautiful, more bounteous? Can your mind even imagine fields so fruitful, weather so benign, that farmers are sowing seed for the next harvest

right behind those reaping the last?

Yet, each of these promises was concerned with a physical lifetime of fleshly human beings in a physical nation. They had nothing to do with entry into the Kingdom of God. They were based upon the whole *law*, however, the foundation of which was the Ten Commandments.

### The Flaw In the Covenant

We have seen there was a "fault" in the Old Covenant. What was it?

God said: "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place should have been sought for the second.

"For FINDING FAULT WITH *THEM*, He saith, Behold, the days come saith the Lord, when I will make a *new covenant* with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; *because they continued not in My covenant*, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord" (Hebrews 8:8,9).

So there was no "flaw" present, either in the perfect, righteous LAW of God, or in the agreement between God and the people. The flaw, or fault, was with the PEOPLE! They were hard-hearted and stiff-necked. They were rebellious toward God. They went back on their word; failed to *keep* their part of the agreement!

God had said, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be *well* with them, and with their children forever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29).

But they were carnal minded, rebellious, stiff-necked. God says, "Because the carnal mind [the natural, physical mind of man] is *enmity* against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7).

It was simply not in their carnal, human *nature* to obey

God, to keep the laws He had given them for their great *good*.

Therefore, God proposed, "I will make a *new covenant* with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah...for this is the covenant that I will make...saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people...for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:10-12).

Then this *New Covenant* not only does NOT do away with God's laws, but makes them become a *part* of the very minds and hearts of those who repent, accept Christ as Savior, and receive God's Holy Spirit!

### A Spiritual Law—Eternal Promises

Why is the New Covenant better? First, because God Almighty has now made it *possible* for the God-defying, arrogant, stiff-necked carnal mind to be *changed* from carnal to spiritual; has made it possible for those who accept God's terms and conditions to OBEY God's laws through Christ, in the spirit!

Did Jesus Christ "do away" with the law?

Millions think He did. Thousands upon thousands of sermons have been preached saying He did. But what did Jesus say?

"THINK NOT," said Jesus, "that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17). Here, Christ spoke of two of the three major divisions of the Old Testament Scriptures. "The Law" refers to the first five books of the Bible, called "the Torah." "The Prophets" refers to all the prophetic books, from Isaiah to Malachi.

The requirement of the law is obedience. Christ lived

perfectly, keeping His Father's commandments, setting us an example that we should live as He lived (I Peter 2:21). When you obey the laws of the land, pay your lawful taxes, avoid robbery, rape, and murder, your obedience to the law does not *do away* with the law. You are *fulfilling the requirements* of the law, but you are not nullifying it. Yet, some preachers seem to believe that because Christ "fulfilled" the law, *you and I no longer have to obey it!*

In other words, they *twist* what Jesus said to mean "Think not that I am come to destroy the law—I merely came to do away with it!" This is more than merely stupid—it is *blatantly dishonest!*

You have seen, with your own eyes, that anyone who claims Christ *abolished* the law is either completely ignorant of God's Word, or deliberately lying!

When Christ said we are not to think He came to destroy the law, He went on to say, "For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle [the dotting of an "i," or the crossing of a "t"] shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17,18).

Paraphrased into modern English, that means "not one punctuation mark, or the smallest word of the law will pass away until *everybody, everywhere, is keeping it!*"

The *New Covenant* is based upon spiritual promises. Now, God requires that His people keep His law in the spiritual intent; keep it perfectly, in the "heart," or "inward parts," not merely in the letter.

Christ came to "magnify the law, and make it honorable" (Isaiah 42:21). Read through His expounding of God's law in the famous "Sermon on the Mount," in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. One example: "You have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'; but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already *in his heart*"

(Matthew 5:27,28).

Which is the most *binding*, the letter of the law which said the *act* was sin, or the *spiritual intent* of the law, which said *lusting* for the act is a sin?

Obviously, God's law was lifted to a *spiritual plane* by Jesus Christ; made to apply to the "inward parts" of the human heart and mind, just as God promised.

As the Member of the Godhead called "I AM" proposed the *letter* of the law as part of the Old Covenant to physical Israel, so Christ, that *same Person* of the Godhead (John 1, Hebrews 1) proposes the *spirit* of the law as part of the *New Covenant*.

When a person *repents*, he is to repent of *sin*. Sin is the breaking of God's law (I John 3:4). Then, He is commanded to *be baptized* (Acts 2:38) as a symbol of the death of the "old man of sin"; a symbol of the payment of the *penalty for sin*, which is death (Romans 6:23).

But since Christ *paid* that penalty for each person, the newly-converted one need only undergo a *physical type* of death in the rite of baptism. (Write for your free copy of *Why Should You Repent?* and *Is Water Baptism Required for Salvation?* for a thorough understanding.)

Then, after God's servants lay hands on the repentant sinner, asking God to beget him as His own child by giving the newly-baptized person God's Holy Spirit, God grants His Spirit, which makes it *possible* for His children to *obey* Him!

He had said, "O that there were such an heart in them" that they might keep His righteous laws, and reap the wondrous benefits from doing so. Now, there *is* such an heart in them, because God has *granted* it through His Spirit!