

## One Bible, Two Covenants, and Seven Continents

IN THE BEGINNING everyone knew who the real God was and what the real Law (His law) was: Adam had no question that Jehovah-God was the only God, and Adam did not doubt how Jehovah-God required him to act (Genesis 2-3); Cain also spoke directly with Jehovah-God, and he also understood exactly how Jehovah-God wanted him to live (Genesis 4). But things changed.

BY THE TIME THE TOWER OF BABEL WAS BUILT, mankind had come to believe in multiple “gods” —Joshua, who lived hundreds of years later, referred to this: “From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River...and served other gods” (Joshua 24:2 NASB; his reference includes Terah and Abraham, who are introduced in Genesis 11, which is where we read of the tower of Babel).

Note well, one’s perspective of Jehovah-God is inseparable from one’s perspective of His law, so to reject Him is to reject His law (and vice versa). Consequently, when men “replaced” God with their own gods, they also replaced His standard of morality with their own standards of morality —as was written in our last flier (write or call if you don’t have it): the ancient Egyptians had their Ma’at, later the Sumerians had their Code of Ur-Nammu while the Hindus had their Rigveda and the Celts had their [unwritten] laws, then the Babylonians had their Code of Hammurabi, and after that the Greeks had Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle telling them how to live. (Obviously, most of these appeared long after the tower of Babel, but they illustrate that when men “replace” God they produce their own moral code, and this has happened countless times). Of course, God could not let this stand.

WHEN GOD DELIVERED ISRAEL FROM EGYPT, He countered this confusion and chaos. First, He demonstrated to the world that He was the real God... the only God (Exodus 5:2; 7:5; 8:19; 9:16; 18:11; Joshua 2:11; 9:9, et al.). Second, contained within the law that He gave to Israel — the “Law of Moses”— was the standard of morality He expected not only from Israelites but from all mankind, consider two passages: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18) and “[obeying God’s laws] is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people,’ ...what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law...?” (Deuteronomy 4:6-8).

To be clear, God did not intend to bind non-Israelites to the ceremonies stipulated in the law He gave to Israel; rather, if Israel obeyed their law they would be a beacon of morality, a “light” in the dark, dark world (Romans 2:17-24) — consider what the Queen of Sheba observed to Solomon, “Blessed be the Lord your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness.” She saw it. God’s plan worked — However, this does bring us to something else God accomplished through the law He gave to Israel; namely, embalmed within this law were “pictures” and predictions of the One who would save men from having rebelled against Him (eg.: Genesis 3:15; 49:8-10; 2 Samuel 7:8-17; Isaiah 53; Micah 5:2; Hebrews 9-10).

With this last thought in mind, what do you

(continued on back...)

think would happen to the law God gave Israel once the pictures and predictions in it were fulfilled, that is, once the prophesied Savior came? You guessed it!

WHEN JESUS CAME, lived, died, and was resurrected, thereby fulfilling the old law, **God abolished the old law and replaced it with a new law – the New Testament.** The author of Hebrews referred to this, “When the Priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also” (Hebrews 7:12). The apostle Paul wrote about this many times, for example, “Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Galatians 3:24-25) and “...He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (Colossians 2:14). Even prophets who lived under the old law wrote about its coming obsolescence, for example, “Behold, days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah...” (Jeremiah 31:31, which the author of Hebrews quoted in chapter eight as proof that the old law was in fact repealed). We could go on, but the short of it is this: Out with the old and in with the new.

#### ABOUT THIS NEW LAW:

- 1) Though it was *enacted* upon Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, it wasn’t actually *implemented* until the day of Pentecost, as evidenced in Acts 2:36-41

(if the old law were still in effect, Peter would have instructed them to offer sacrifices at the temple to be atoned).

- 2) We —both as individuals and as local congregations— derive our permission, our authority, from it, not from the old law. (Eg. Galatians 3:10-14.)
- 3) Though its ceremonial laws are radically different from those of the old law, its standard of morality is not (because God is love [1 John. 4:16] and God does not change [James 1:17]).
- 4) Another difference between the two laws is ***the entirety of the New Testament, including its standard of morality and its ceremonies, is for all people*** - Asian, European, African, Australian, and American. (Eg. Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 17:30-31.)

ABOUT THAT OLD LAW: While we are not under its authority, Jehovah-God gives us at least four good reasons to study it diligently:

- 1) It tells about Jesus: Luke 24:44.
- 2) It causes hope: Romans 15:4.
- 3) It provides warnings: 1 Corinthians 10:11.
- 4) It equips for service: 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

If you would like to discuss this or any thing else about Jehovah-God and His law, we would love to hear from you!

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### ***The Indian River Church of Christ***

We meet in the Shopping Center at 2 South Main Street in Philadelphia NY.

We assemble Sunday mornings at 10 for Bible study and at 11 for worship.

We also assemble Thursday evenings at 7:15 for Bible study.

Our website is [www.indianriverchurchofchrist.com](http://www.indianriverchurchofchrist.com).

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