

The Old and New Testaments

Bible Authority-II

Introduction

1. In 2 Tim. 2:15 Paul exhorted Timothy saying, “*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*”
 - a. This exhortation rings forth to all men:
 - b. Eph. 5:17; 2 Pet. 3:18
2. One key to “rightly dividing” or “handling accurately” the Bible is to understand the difference between the Old and the New Testaments.
3. Before we can begin to establish Bible authority for what we do, we must come to understand the standard we must use for that authority: the Old Testament, the New Testament, or both?

Discussion

I. The Two Testaments

- A. “Testament” is another word for “Covenant”
 1. In the days of Moses, God made a covenant with the people of Israel (Deut. 5:2-4).
 - a. The sign of that covenant was circumcision.
 - b. It consisted of a law which governed God’s people.
 - c. It involved sacrifices and keeping feast days.
 2. When that covenant was established, Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible as the law for those under that covenant.
 3. The rest of the Old Testament books are mainly records of God’s dealings with Israel under the first covenant as He developed His plan for man’s salvation.
 4. The Old Testament stops at the time of Christ because when He died on the cross, Jesus established a new covenant—the New Testament (Matt. 26:28).
 - a. People enter this new covenant when they obey the gospel by faith.
 - b. The covenant consists of a law which God’s people are to follow today.
 - c. It involves serving the Lord Jesus Christ as His church.
- B. Rom. 15:4: “*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*”
 1. What was written before is the Old Testament—the things written before Christ.
 2. The purpose for the O.T. is for our learning— from it we learn how to have patience, take comfort in the promises of God, and to have hope.
 3. The O.T. was written for us to learn from, but we must understand how to use it properly.

II. Which Law Are We To Follow?

- A. The nature of covenants only allows one at a time.
 1. We must not forget that the two testaments are in fact covenants.

2. As covenants, each consists of a law that must be adhered to by those who agree to its terms. The law is what dictates the conditions of the covenant—like a contract.
 3. We cannot obey the Old Testament and the New Testament at the same time, for we can only have one master (Luke 16:13).
- B. When Christ died on the cross, the law changed (Heb. 7:12).
1. Under the O.T., only the Levites could be priests—only they could offer sacrifices to God.
 2. But their sacrifices could never forgive the sins of the people (Heb. 10:11).
 3. When Jesus died on the cross, He became a new kind of priest.
 4. No longer would the Levites offer animal sacrifices. Instead, when Jesus offered Himself, He took away sins once for all (Heb. 10:12-14).
 5. When Jesus shed His blood, He created a new covenant.
 - a. Under the old covenant, sins could never be taken away (Heb. 10:3-4).
 - b. But under the New Testament, because Jesus shed His blood, God takes our sins away and remembers them no more (Heb. 8:8, 12).
 6. If we want salvation in Christ, we must understand something about the old covenant.
- C. When the law changed, the old was done away with in order to make way for the new.
1. Heb. 7:18-19: The old could not bring salvation; therefore it was replaced with a new.
 2. Heb 8:8, 13: The first has been made obsolete.
 3. Col. 2:14: It was done away with when Christ nailed it to the cross.
- D. If we seek authority from a law that is dead, we too become dead.
1. Gal. 5:4: If we seek to be justified by the law (first covenant), we become separated from Christ and can no longer enjoy salvation through Him.
 2. The purpose of the entire book of Hebrews is to teach us to follow Christ rather than the old law.
 3. If we want salvation through the new covenant, we must follow the New Testament as our only law. But this does not mean that the Old Testament is no longer of any use.

III. How To Use The Two Testaments

- A. The Old Testament is for gaining wisdom: Rom. 15:4
1. 2 Tim. 3:15: It is able to make us wise for salvation, but it does not offer salvation.
 2. Knowing the O.T. helps us to better understand what Christ accomplished on the cross.
 3. It teaches us the true meaning of faith and obedience (Heb. 11).
- B. The New Testament is for gaining salvation—it consists of the law we must follow today.

1. The authority of the old law was taken away, for we are now under the law of the Spirit of life in Christ (Rom. 8:2).
 2. When we obey the gospel, we enter into a covenant with God—the New Covenant.
 - a. God promises to take away our sins by the blood of Jesus Christ
 - b. We make a commitment to obey Christ as our King and to flee from sin.
 3. Just as Israel received the old law with their covenant, the New Testament is our law for living in Christ.
 4. We must remember this when establishing Bible authority today.
- C. We must learn from the O.T., but if we try to make it our law, we give up salvation in Christ!
1. Some have tried to justify their actions in the church by saying, “They did it in the Old Testament.”
 2. This is the very thing we must avoid—this is what it means to be justified by the old law.
 3. We must gain wisdom from the O.T., but we must only do that which we find in the N.T.

Conclusion

1. The New Testament reveals “*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ.*”
 - a. When we submit to this law we are able to have life through Christ.
 - b. Only when we enter into a covenant relationship with Him can we have that life.
2. If you believe that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, if you are willing to repent of your sins and confess Him as you Lord and Savior, then you can obey the gospel and have your sins washed away.
3. “*And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord*” (Acts 22:16).

January, 2007

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