

Notes: February 6 , 2021

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tovv
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Praise and Worship Songs
8. Message
9. Aaronic Blessing
10. Kiddush

Introduction: Perspective and Perception

We are entering into a point within the parsha cycle where we are introduced to the mitzvot of Adonai. We have seen His mitzvot throughout the history as documented by Torah, but never in such number nor breadth. Adonai has established a nation and as such is establishing within this week's parsha an order for the nation to follow. These are not mitzvot based on man's wisdom and understanding but rather Adonai's wisdom and knowledge.

On Simcha Torah we roll the scroll back, rejoicing in Torah as we begin the Parsha cycle again. It is a Shabbat that concludes our busiest and most profound time of the year in the fall moadim. It was during this time, for which we focus on the Promises of Adonai, with His promises leading to attaining THE GOAL – eternal life, and THE KINGDOM - our destination.

Over the years as we have simcha, rejoiced in the study of Torah, I continue to share with you additional attacks towards the very thing we rejoice in, The Word of Adonai, the foundation of our faith, demonstrated by the cornerstone of our faith – Yeshua.

In the past you have heard me share the words of Pastor Alan Stanley regarding his comment that Yeshua only gave one commandment for which Pastor Stanley wrote...

“But how many times have you seen Christians trying to post the text of the sermon on the mount in a public place? Or the all-encompassing commandment Jesus gave us?”

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” —John 13:34

The one commandment!

Not much perspective there and it ultimately lowers the bar rather than what Yeshua did by raising it.

If this perspective wasn't sufficient, we have more. In the past I had shared with you “The Danger of Mixing the Old and New Covenants” by Matt McMillen

<https://mattmcmillenministries.com/the-danger-of-mixing-the-old-and-new-covenants/>

(Also posted within these sermon notes below.)

For which I believe we should review again.

Before I pick apart some of the points being made, I want to go through two examples of relating to perspective. I have used these prior in another sermon regarding context but believe they will offer perspective

Understanding is dependent upon one's own perspective.

Perspective is a particular attitude toward or way of regarding something; a point of view.

One's perspective ultimately determines one's perception.

Perception is the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses.

I have used this example previously...

Whereby your perspective is based on your perception that you are aware of.

Example 1: (Slides 1 – 4)

St.

Yet, your perspective can change based on context, another aspect I have spoken about previously.

One can establish a perspective as to what St. means. Yet, this abbreviation is not static. It is not monolithic, but can represent more than one aspect.

In one instant, used as a suffix it can be...

Lake St. (Street)

In another instant used as a prefix it can be...

St. George (Saint)

Yet when you view it in another context, which is it?

Lake St. George

Is it Lake Street George or Lake Saint George.

Obviously it is the latter, but the point I am making is perspective can change with more information, better information, correct information.

Your understanding is based upon the context presented and thus establishing a perspective . If you don't understand the context, your understanding can vary, thus your perspective can vary. It can be different, based on your understanding of the context that informs your perspective.

Context is relative and imperative to our understanding and thus our perspective.

Whether you embrace the truth within its established context or not does not change the established context, but influences your perspective, especially when it comes to Scripture. The cultural context, the backdrop for which the Scriptures occurred is through one nation and one people. Israel and the Jewish people. Yet, its impact is felt by the entire world. Scripture transcends a single boarder and a single nation. You learn more about this in this week's Living Torah study. Ignoring this reality, ignores context and therefore will impact understanding and thus your perspective towards Adonai. It will influence your walk with Messiah and the path of His Way.

Another example I have shared in the past is “Me is for me” reminds me of a verse in Galatians, specifically the KJV:

Me is for me, if you focus solely on its literal perspective it sounds narcissistic and ego centric not to mention poor grammar. Better grammar would be "I am for me" yet that would eliminate the play on words.

When you infuse the intended context of what the writer has written and you learn that the first Me is not the pronoun but rather the abbreviation for Maine, then you have gained a whole different perspective...

Maine is for me!

Likewise in Scripture. Consider Galatians 2:19, first in the King James version

Gal 2:19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

I ask people to explain this verse to me because as it stands, it makes no sense.

How can you live for God when through Torah you are dead to Torah?

The perspective established is similar to the first pass through of Me is for me!

The Greek is: Egô gar dia nomou nomoô apethanon, literally, "For I through nomos to nomos died."

A perspective pertaining to interpretation is not known here, just the p'shat, the plain understanding.

A good general rule of interpretation is that if a word appears more than once in a passage, its meaning stays the same throughout the passage.

Here we have an exception; the phrase means, "For I through Torah to legalism died." In this verse, Sha'ul avoids the natural Greek word order in order to place two forms of the word "nomos" side by side. This signals the reader that something unusual is going on, specifically, that the sense of the first "nomos" differs from that of the second. David Stern's expanded translation brings out that the first "nomos" is the true Torah, the Torah understood properly as requiring trusting faithfulness; while the second is the perversion of the Torah into a legalistic system.

The very issues Yeshua was addressing on a regular basis, teaching the people while being critical of the religious leaders of Yudah. Stern's version reads as follows:

Gal 2:19 For it was through letting the Torah speak for itself that I died to its traditional legalistic misinterpretation, so that I might live in direct relationship with God.

Many of us will never likely ever study the Greek manuscripts, so when someone points out there is a difference in the Greek, we should pay attention. Even though the nuance is ever so slight, it is significant. In the same way the standalone Aleph Tav is significant, yet not translated from the original Hebrew, so too nuances in Greek exist as well.

So, now let's look at some of the points the author is emphasizing when he says we are not to mix the Old Covenant with the New Covenant.

The opening of this article utilizes Mark 2:22

Mar 2:22 And no one puts new wine in old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins will be ruined. Rather, new wine is for freshly prepared wineskins."

The author conveys that the old wineskin is the Old Covenant while the new wineskin is the New Covenant. Seems valid on the surface, something old, something new. Yet, does this align with Scripture?

What is the wineskin when you really think about it?

Is it the Covenants?

Does this really make sense?

What if I were to tell you the wineskin is a vessel – what is a vessel?

A container used to hold something, usually a liquid.

Is there something else that is old we can use to relate to this verse?

What about our old heart of stone?

For the promise of the New Covenant is a new heart...

Eze 36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Eze 36:27 I will put my Spirit inside you and cause you to live by my laws, respect my rulings and obey them.

I will give you a new heart (a new wine skin) and fill it with my wine (Ruach Ha Kodesh – The Holy Spirit)

What about our old nature?

Our nature prior to our transformation through our acceptance of Yeshua. Sha'ul in his letter to Jews and Gentiles living in Rome, speaks extensively about this old nature.

Rom 7:5 For when we were living according to our old nature, the passions connected with sins worked through the Torah in our various parts, with the result that we bore fruit for death.

Notice, Sha'ul is writing in past tense “when we were” Beginning with Romans 7:5, Sha'ul presents an exhaustive presentation of this old nature, concluding with Romans 8:13...

Rom 8:13 For if you live according to your old nature, you will certainly die; but if, by the Spirit, you keep putting to death the practices of the body, you will live.

Continuing to live by the old nature, leads to death. So, why would you put new wine, the Ruach Ha Kodesh in the old nature vessel when this nature leads to death. Yet, it is by the Spirit that brings forth life, from Genesis 2 onward...to where Sha'ul conveys the aspect of a new nature in his letter to the Ephesians...

Eph 4:21 If you really listened to him and were instructed about him, then you learned that since what is in Yeshua is truth,

Eph 4:22 then, so far as your former way of life is concerned, you must strip off your old nature, because your old nature is thoroughly rotted by its deceptive desires;

Eph 4:23 and you must let your spirits and minds keep being renewed,

Eph 4:24 and clothe yourselves with the new nature created to be godly, which expresses itself in the righteousness and holiness that flow from the truth.

So, right from the start, the aspect of his using Mark 2:22 to frame the beginning of his presentation, establish a perspective is in error.

Let's now look at a few of the points he is making throughout his presentation as to why we are not to mix the Old Covenant with the New Covenant...

“Almost instantly the enemy presses me to use my gift of word compilation to fire away, pointing out their hypocrisy according to the Law and “setting them straight” with the truth of the New Covenant. But I’m not falling for it. This isn’t my first go-round with a Mosaic Law-abiding citizen, or even this specific person. Plus, I used to mix in Moses’ commandments with Jesus’ too, so I know their M.O.”

I believe here he is setting the stage, while at the same time responding to at least someone specifically who does not agree with his premise.

Nor is this my first go around with those who believe Torah is not valid for today or today's believers in

Messiah. Anyone remember the number of times Torah is specifically referenced in the New Covenant writings?

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If there wasn't to be any mixing, then I believe the writers of the New Covenant didn't get the memo.

The author continues...

“For years, rather than allow the Spirit to lead me, I made the mistake of using 613 Old Testament commandments as a buffet line just like they’re doing. So I can empathize with their bondage.”

When someone makes such a comment or observation about the 613 mitzvot, their understanding is typically elementary. In some cases I even wonder if they have ever actually studied in depth Torah. I would think the context contained within the Scriptures of Torah would make it blatantly obvious that not all the mitzvot apply to everyone. Yet, I believe most look at a summary of another person's study of Torah.

I would certainly like to know how a man would apply mitzvot that apply to and can only be done by women? What about all the mitzvot that apply to the Cohen and sacrifices?

So, when someone makes such a general statement as observation, I find it hard to believe that they have truly studied Torah in depth. Yet their perspective towards Torah is based on incomplete information. This doesn't mean you can't have perspective. There is always a perspective available to embrace. The question to ask – Is this perspective based on proper context?

The author continues:

“Jesus never mixed the two Covenants, but instead, explained the paradoxes. Who are we to say He was exaggerating as He gave very difficult–no, impossible–behavior passages? Not once did He say, “Give it your best shot and God will grade you on a curve,” never. He said, “You must be absolutely perfect like God if you want to live by the Law. Here’s the standard. Don’t you dare disregard a single commandment or you’ll be least in the kingdom and in danger of hell” (see Matthew 5 & 6).”

The author references Matthew 5 & 6, yet does He really understand the context?

Yeshua is providing the blessings associated with living a righteous life according to Adonai, in a similar manner that Adonai conveyed to Israel. The blessings or B-attitudes are comparable to the blessings Adonai conveys to Israel in Deuteronomy 28 and were contingent on living in obedience...

Deu 28:1 "If you listen closely to what Adonai your God says, observing and obeying all his mitzvot which I am giving you today, Adonai your God will raise you high above all the nations on earth;

Deu 28:2 and all the following blessings will be yours in abundance - if you will do what Adonai your God says:

And even being encouraged by Adonai at just how real these blessings are...

Deu 30:15 "Look! I am presenting you today with, on the one hand, life and good; and on the other, death and evil -

Deu 30:16 in that I am ordering you today to love Adonai your God, to follow his ways, and to obey his mitzvot, regulations and rulings ; for if you do, you will live and increase your numbers; and Adonai your God will bless you in the land you are entering in order to take possession of it.

To when Yeshua encourages His audience, He in essence reiterates what Adonai conveyed to Israel, yet emphasizing what had already been established.

Mat 5:12 Rejoice, be glad, because your reward in heaven is great — they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way.

And thus making the same connection as Adonai made through Moshe in Deuteronomy 28...

Mat 5:17 "Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete.

Mat 5:18 Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud (ך) or a stroke will pass from

the Torah — not until everything that must happen has happened.

Mat 5:19 So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Mat 5:20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

And the author continues...

“Christ came to teach the full extent of the Old Covenant—the Law—not to abolish it but reveal the true standard to the self-righteous people who believed they were actually living by it (see Matthew 5:17). This is why some of the red letters can be very deadly. They were supposed to be (see 2 Corinthians 3:6). When Jesus taught Law He was setting people up for failure so that they’d lean toward faith in Him alone.”

As I understand this excerpt, Yeshua's purpose was to reveal the true standard to the “self-righteous” only.

And here we get to another erroneous perspective of Torah, “Adonai established the Law as an unrealistic goal that no one would ever attain”

So, the Jewish people were never intended to be Adonai's light to the world, but were his “stooges”

Yet, this flies in the very face of Scripture, ultimately slapping Adonai in the face.

He was setting people up for failure so that they’d lean toward faith in Him alone.

This statement also flies directly in the face of Hebrews 11. Known as the chapter of faith.

The author continues:

“Combining the two Covenants creates double-talk and confusion in the fullest. This is why Jesus wanted to be perfectly clear about living by the Law: Don’t even dip your toe in it. If you fail at one of the 613—ten of which were the Ten Commandments—you fail at all of them. Not one jot or tittle can be set aside by you. As much as it hurts our pride, we must give up on Law completely, and instead, believe in Jesus only (see Matthew 5:19, 11:28-30, John 1:12).”

Mat 11:28 "Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Mat 11:29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Mat 11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Judaism speaks of the "yoke of Heaven," the commitment any Jew must make to trust in God, and the "yoke of the Torah," the concomitant commitment an observant Jew makes to keep the generalities and details of halakhah (oral tradition / Talmud).

Yeshua speaks of his own easy yoke and light burden. These two are sometimes contrasted in a way implying that in comparison with Judaism, Christianity offers "cheap grace." or “hyper grace”.

The easy yoke consists of a total commitment to godliness through the power of the Ruach ha Kodesh that includes living by Adonai's mitzvot that apply to you.

It at once requires both no effort and maximal effort—no effort, in that the necessary moment-to-moment faith can not be worked up from within but is a gift of God (Eph 2:8-9); and maximal effort, in that there is no predeterminable level of holiness and obedience sufficient to satisfy God and therefore allows us to rest on our

laurels.

Easy Yoke = Torah, rightly divided and lived through the power of the Ruach ha Kodesh.

The author also references Yochanan 1:12...

Joh 1:12 But to as many as did receive him, to those who put their trust in his person and power, he gave the right to become children of God,

Yet does not include the next two verses, for which I believe are significant...

Joh 1:13 not because of bloodline, physical impulse or human intention, but because of God.

Joh 1:14 The Word became a human being and lived with us, and we saw his Sh'khinah, the Sh'khinah of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

What many believers, theologians and teachers tend to ignore, overlook or are just plain ignorant of is trust is not absent of Torah, but is ultimately required.

Obedience towards Adonai's mitzvot originates from the heart, especially where the New Covenant is concerned. A point the author seems to ignore...

Eze 36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Eze 36:27 I will put my Spirit inside you and cause you to live by my laws, respect my rulings and obey them.

Jer 31:33 (31:32) "For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Isra'el after those days," says Adonai: "I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Jer 31:34 (31:33) No longer will any of them teach his fellow community member or his brother, 'Know Adonai'; for a will know me, from the least of them to the greatest; because I will forgive their wickednesses and remember their sins no more."

And I won't spend too much time on a point everyone here should already know...that this New Covenant for which the author says should not be "mixed" with the Old Covenant is made with the Jewish people.

Eze 36:22 "Therefore tell the house of Isra'el that Adonai Elohim says this: 'I am not going to do this for your sake, house of Isra'el, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have been profaning among the nations where you went.

Eze 36:23 I will set apart my great name to be regarded as holy, since it has been profaned in the nations — you profaned it among them. The nations will know that I am Adonai,' says Adonai Elohim, 'when, before their eyes, I am set apart through you to be regarded as holy.

Eze 36:24 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you from all the countries, and return you to your own soil

Jer 31:31 (31:30) "Here, the days are coming," says Adonai, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Isra'el and with the house of Y'hudah.

Jer 31:32 (31:31) It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day I took them by their hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt; because they, for their part, violated my covenant, even though I, for my part, was a husband to them," says Adonai.

The author continues...

"Now, should all Christians know the words in the Bible, even the stuff not written to us? Of course. From

front to back the Bible is true. But we must keep everything in context. We must decode whether or not the Old or New Covenant is being referenced in each verse, passage, section, and book. Especially when Jesus was speaking.”

“we must keep everything in context”

His very own words convey that we are to keep everything in context.

What is the author trying to say here?

What context and whose context?

In my opinion, ignore anything that is Old Covenant and pay attention to anything that is New Covenant. In other words parse and disregard.

The author writes...

“This flies in the face of Christians who struggle with Mosaic legalism, which is an oxymoron because we were never even given the set of 613 commandments to begin with. Do a quick Google search of “What are the 613 commandments in the Law” and you’ll be bored to tears before you finish reading half of them. Remember, you must keep all of them if you want to live by them (see Deuteronomy 4:2, Galatians 3:10).”

“Mosaic legalism”

I find it both humorous and sad that Torah is understood as being legalistic.

Now, keep in mind you can make it legalistic, but Yeshua never denounced Torah or the mitzvot. Sha'ul never denounced Torah or the mitzvot.

What they did address was the perversion of Torah into legalism either by adding to the commandments through what is known as the Tradition of the Elders – the oral law, the Talmud, or by imposing requirements on people for which there was no need required, such as Gentiles needing to be circumcised when coming to accept Yeshua.

The author references Deuteronomy 4:2 but excludes verse 1...

Deu 4:1 "Now, Isra'el, listen to the laws and rulings I am teaching you, in order to follow them, so that you will live; then you will go in and take possession of the land that Adonai, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

Deu 4:2 In order to obey the mitzvot of Adonai your God which I am giving you, do not add to what I am saying, and do not subtract from it.

And references Galatians 3:10

Gal 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. (KJV)

Yet, if we go back to my original example of context in relation to Galatians 2:19, Sterns translates it in this manner...

Gal 3:10 For everyone who depends on legalistic observance of Torah commands lives under a curse, since it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not keep on doing everything written in the Scroll of the Torah."

The nuance between the versions of nomos Sha'ul uses in his letter, differentiates Torah from the oral law, a theme that is prevalent throughout Galatians.

The author continues...

“This same hazardous concoction of mixing Old and New is what got Jesus killed. The Jews could not separate the two and it ticked them off to the point of plotting against Jesus, spitting in His face, beating Him to a bloody pulp, then brutally murdering Him. That’s what Law does. It is a ministry of death and death is what you’ll get when you place someone under it (see 2 Corinthians 3:7-18).”

What killed Yeshua?

It certainly wasn't the mixing of the Old and the New.

Remember these important verses...

Rev 13:8 Everyone living on earth will worship it except those whose names are written in the Book of Life belonging to the Lamb slaughtered before the world was founded.

Joh 10:17 "This is why the Father loves me: because I lay down my life — in order to take it up again!

Joh 10:18 No one takes it away from me; on the contrary, I lay it down of my own free will. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again. This is what my Father commanded me to do.

Luk 24:45 Then he opened their minds, so that they could understand the Tanakh,

Luk 24:46 telling them, "Here is what it says: the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day;

Luk 24:47 and in his name repentance leading to forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to people from all nations, starting with Yerushalayim.

What is Torah?

Is it a ministry of death?

I closed with this last week and believe it is pertinent for today as well because it offers perspective for which the author truly needs.

Pro 3:1 My son, don't forget my teaching, keep my commands in your heart;

Pro 3:2 for they will add to you many days, years of life and peace.

Pro 3:3 Do not let grace and truth leave you — bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.

Pro 3:4 Then you will win favor and esteem in the sight of God and of people.

Pro 3:5 Trust in Adonai with all your heart; do not rely on your own understanding.

Pro 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge him; then he will level your paths.

Pro 3:7 Don't be conceited about your own wisdom; but fear Adonai, and turn from evil.

Pro 3:8 This will bring health to your body and give strength to your bones.

Pro 3:9 Honor Adonai with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your income.

Pro 3:10 Then your granaries will be filled and your vats overflow with new wine.

Pro 3:11 My son, don't despise Adonai's discipline or resent his reproof;

Pro 3:12 for Adonai corrects those he loves like a father who delights in his son.

Pro 3:13 Happy the person who finds wisdom, the person who acquires understanding;

Pro 3:14 for her profit exceeds that of silver, gaining her is better than gold,

Pro 3:15 she is more precious than pearls — nothing you want can compare with her.

Pro 3:16 Long life is in her right hand, riches and honor in her left.

Pro 3:17 Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace.

Pro 3:18 She is a tree of life to those who grasp her; whoever holds fast to her will be made happy.

Why am I doing this?

Why am I addressing many points from someone else?

First and foremost, it is to equip you with a response to an all too frequent position.

The goal attained.

Rom 10:4 For the goal at which the Torah aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts.

Rom 10:5 For Moshe writes about the righteousness grounded in the Torah that the person who does these things will attain life through them.

So, we rejoice in Torah because of what it promises, the goal that is eternal life for those who believe in the one who was first promised in Torah – Yeshua.

Let me leave you with these nuggets...

- Why is Torah referenced 176 times in the New Covenant writings?
- Why does the writer of Hebrews quote from the Tanakh 73 times?
- Why does Sha'ul quote from the Tanakh 71 times in Romans?
- How else are you to reach the goal if you not only move the goal post but actually remove the goal post?

Thus based on the context I have shared with you and thus the perspective I have come to know...

I will have my Covenants mixed please.

The Danger of Mixing the Old and New Covenants

By: Matt McMillen

“Matt, you’re just confusing people! Stick to the Bible and teach God’s Word!” a furious comment shows up under my post.

“*Maybe try decaf?*” I say in my mind but don’t type, after receiving yet again, hate-filled attacks from supposedly another Christian. **They forgot about that love one another thing Jesus commanded.**

Almost instantly the enemy presses me to use my gift of word compilation to fire away, pointing out their hypocrisy according to the Law and “setting them straight” with the truth of the New Covenant. But I’m not falling for it. **This isn’t my first go-round with a Mosaic Law-abiding citizen, or even this specific person.** Plus, I used to mix in Moses’ commandments with Jesus’ too, so I know their M.O.

For years, rather than allow the Spirit to lead me, I made the mistake of using 613 Old Testament commandments as a buffet line just like they’re doing. So I can empathize with their bondage.

Sadly, this person sits on the sideline of Facebook and waits for me to write about the differences in the Old and New Covenants. **Like a streaker, they’ll run onto the field of my post, attempting to get attention from the crowd without making any biblical sense.** Innocently, I’ll give them that.

“If it’s in the Bible, it applies to me! If it’s in red letters, we’re *all* supposed to do it!”

Such words have ruined many lives. From the angry pulpits, overbearing relatives, and friends who’ve found religion, opening up the Bible randomly and applying the words to our lives and others can cause carnage—if we aren’t separating the Covenants. **We’re missing the point of Jesus Christ’s entire life when we combine the Old Covenant with the New Covenant.**

Christ came to teach the full extent of the Old Covenant—the Law—not to abolish it but reveal the true standard to the self-righteous people who believed they were actually living by it (see Matthew 5:17). **This is why some of the red letters can be very deadly. They were supposed to be** (see 2 Corinthians 3:6). When Jesus taught Law He was setting people up for failure so that they’d lean toward faith in Him alone.

Jesus never mixed the two Covenants, but instead, explained the paradoxes. Who are we to say He was exaggerating as He gave very difficult—no, impossible—behavior passages? **Not once did He say, “Give it your best shot and God will grade you on a curve,” never.** He said, “You must be absolutely perfect like God if you want to live by the Law. Here’s the standard. Don’t you *dare* disregard a single commandment or you’ll be least in the kingdom and in danger of hell” (see Matthew 5 & 6).

Combining the two Covenants creates double-talk and confusion in the fullest. This is why Jesus wanted to be perfectly clear about living by the Law: “Don’t even dip your toe in it. If you fail at one of the 613—ten of which were the Ten Commandments—you fail at all of them. Not one jot or tittle can be set aside by you. As much as it hurts your pride, you must give up on Law completely, and instead, believe in me *only*” (see Matthew 5:19, 11:28-30, John 1:12).

The good news is, if combining the two creates bondage, separating them sets us free! (See John 8:32).

Because our world is changing so much, in regard to reaching others and how we do it, I’ve been very active with my ministry on social media for years. **Online aggression is nothing new, from both the believer and the non-believer.** Most of the time I overlook it and move on, but on occasion I’ll spend a while attempting to explain that not all of the words in the Bible were written to Christians.

Now, *should* all Christians know the words in the Bible, even the stuff not written to us? Of course. From front to back the Bible is true. **But we must keep everything in context.** We must decode whether or not the Old or New Covenant is being referenced in each verse, passage, section, and book. Especially when Jesus was

speaking.

Satan wants us to try to do stuff, and not do stuff, that God never intended for us. **The devil and his demons love turmoil and conflict, both with other people and in our minds.**

There's a dividing line in the Bible when we Christians came into play. It's not the page *before* the book of Matthew, which reads, *The New Testament*. It is the Cross. It's not the *birth* of Jesus but the *death* of Jesus because only blood can bring in a New Covenant (see Hebrews 7:22, 8:6, 9:18). **When His blood was shed He opened up the opportunity for the entire world to be saved through faith in Him** (see Colossians 1:26-27). Before this happened we non-Jews were without hope. Paul tells the Gentile Christians in Ephesus:

“remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.” (Ephesians 2:12)

Israel was not a geographical location until 1948. **This verse is about the Jewish people, not the country.** So we must face a truth that's hard to swallow, especially when we've been taught to obey the Law given to Israel: *Jesus' ministry before the Cross was for the Jews only.*

The ability to be a Christian had not yet happened for the Gentiles—all of the non-Jews on planet earth. **God had made a Covenant with Israel, not us** (see Exodus 24:8, 34:27, Galatians 4:4-5).

The title of “Christian” did not exist until after Jesus came back to life. Before His resurrection, Jew *or* Gentile were the only options. Christ came to preach to the Jews—also called Israel—because they were part of the Covenant given by God through Moses. **After the Cross—after blood was shed to bring in the New Covenant—there is neither Jew nor Gentile.** We all become one in Christ, a new creation all together! (See Hebrews 1:3, 7:22, 10:10,14,26-29, Galatians 3:28, 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Because the New Covenant had not yet been established—and because God can only work through one Covenant at a time (see Hebrews 8:6,13, 10:9,16)—unless we were part of the group of people led through the Red Sea floor, Jesus was not speaking to us *in* the gospels. **He came to minister to the Jews only before He had died.** Yes, we can look back and glean, and we should, but this is not our mail.

The authors of the gospels wrote what they did so both the Jew and the Gentile would see Christ as the Son of God and believe. But the content in all four books was for the Jewish race according to the Old Covenant.

Case in point, in Matthew 15:21-28, there's an account of a Canaanite woman begging Jesus to heal her daughter. Jesus ignores her, but she keeps asking. Why did He blow her off? **She was Canaanite, not Jewish.** The disciples urged Him to tell her to buzz off, eventually He turned and said, “I was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel.”

Who were the lost sheep of Israel? **The Jews who weren't believing in God by faith, but attempting to achieve righteousness by the Law** (see Galatians 3:11). They had replaced their relationship with Yahweh, with religion. Israel were those who Moses led out of slavery in Egypt, those who were *given* the Law, *by* Moses, at the base of Mount Sinai. The people of Canaan were not there. God did not establish His Covenant with this woman's heathen ancestors, so Jesus kept walking.

So, why would they be *lost* if they were *already* God's chosen people? It's the same reason *we* can be lost on *this* side of the Cross: **unbelief in Christ alone and self-righteousness through Mosaic legalism.**

However, there's something very special that happens in the story of the Canaanite woman, a foreshadowing of Christ allowing a non-Jew to be helped by Him through faith. While being called a *dog* because she was a Gentile, she continues to beg Jesus for help. “I'll take the crumbs from the table!”

In essence, the Canaanite lady was pleading, “I know I'm not Jewish, but I still believe in your ability to heal my child!”

Moved by her faith in Him, Christ heals her daughter.

This goes to show that God has always dealt with humanity by faith, even before the Law. The Law is thousands

of years old, God's relationship with mankind is much older. This is why the New Covenant is older than the Old Covenant. **"Do you believe me?" has always been God's litmus test for fellowship.**

But Jesus still had to deal with the racism and bigotry of the House of Israel, of His own fleshly lineage. For this reason, Christ was born under the Law to redeem the people *under the Law* (see Galatians 4:4). **You and I, we were never given the Law, so observing it is ridiculous.** We would be laughed at if we *attempted* to obey a single commandment.

Therefore, as New Covenant people who try to mix the Old in with the New—even a drop—such is a dangerous concoction. Moses plus Jesus doesn't work, and here's why:

"For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17)

Do we want Law (you can only choose this if you're Jewish)? Or do we want grace and truth (the only option for the Gentile)? We can't have both. Jesus explains:

"No one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins." (Mark 2:22)

Christian, you are new—that is, your spirit. The Covenant is new as well. This is why compatibility with God *after* the Cross is possible. **The Law is the Old Covenant. Grace and truth is the New Covenant!** New wine is the New Covenant, old wineskins is the Old!

I don't want to be misunderstood, I'm *not* saying the Law is wrong or flawed in any way. I'm saying it's perfect (see Romans 7:12). **But if righteousness could come by the Law there wouldn't be a need for anything new; the Law was a tutor until the Teacher had come** (see Galatians 2:21, 3:24, John 14:26). Because of its perfect standards and our inability to live by such—the Jews, of course, not us—humanity had to have another way. For this reason Jesus said:

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

The person who was attacking me on social media had been taught to mix the Old and the New from the time they were little. They told me so. What was happening as a result? **The wineskins bursting.** Anger, resentment, legalistic bitterness, comparison of their ability to keep *parts* of the Law to both me and others.

Then they dropped the bomb, "I'm in my 60s so I know what the truth is!"

I wanted to say, "Just because something is old doesn't mean it's true," but I kept an even keel and didn't disrespect them.

Old does not mean correct. **The early church "fathers"—heavy on quotations because we are to call no man father (see Matthew 23:9)—they branched off into divisions from the beginning.** Faith in Christ alone wasn't enough. Those who struggled with self-righteousness needed their ears tickled so they added Moses back in, as well as creating "hierarchies of holiness" and brand new church laws (see Galatians chapters 1 through 5, Revelation 2:4).

What makes something true is if it's biblical and the interpretation is correct based on context. Not if it's old. Islam is old too. Satanic worship is even older.

I gave my best shot at explaining this with gentleness and respect, they didn't care though. **They continued to belittle me while being extremely passive-aggressive in order to appear in control.** This person remained severely condescending toward me about rightly dividing God's Word into Old and New Covenant. Just the same as the devout Jewish people did toward Christ's good news, I was "twisting the Scriptures."

In nearly everything Jesus taught He was comparing the Old and New Covenants. He was comparing slavery and freedom, heavy and light burdens, work and rest, death and life, wide roads of Law and narrow gates of grace. According to the Old Covenant, you worked *really* hard, attempting to obey 613 commandments to achieve righteousness with God (see Deuteronomy 6:25). The Jews were instructed to meditate on the Law day and night (Psalm 1:2). **They were taught they'd be successful, rich, and prosperous by obeying all of**

the commandments (see Joshua 1:8). This is why wealthy and healthy people bragged on their righteousness.

According to the New, we are to simply rest in faith in *Christ's* finished work (see Matthew 11:28-30, John 15:4-5, 19:30, Hebrews 4:11, 10:12, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:14). We're taught it's easier for a camel to fit through the eye of a needle, than for someone who's become rich through Law observance to make it to heaven. This blew the disciples' minds! (See Matthew 16:26, 19:24, Luke 18:18-27). **Jesus flipped the tables of the Jews both literally and spiritually!** (See Matthew 21:12, John 5:39-40).

The most well-behaved, outwardly-righteous people on the planet had to repent! Repent of what? Unbelief in Jesus Christ! (Matthew 23:27-28, Hebrews 10:26-30). Even for the life-long, scripturally-seasoned, educated scholar, they had to change their belief! New Covenant teaching grabs a person's ego, slaps it on the back of the neck and says, **"Get outta here! You're not needed! In Christ we *have* everything!"** (See Philippians 3:1-9).

Understanding the life of Christ—that His ministry was about the difference in the Old and New Covenants—is paramount in knowing who we truly are as New Covenant believers. Let's look at a few examples from the gospels to see what I mean:

1. Martha and Mary. In Luke 10:38-42, there's a story of Jesus visiting the home of two sisters. While He was there, Mary sat at His feet *resting* and Martha was going bonkers trying to prepare stuff *for* Him—but He was already there. Jesus kindly corrected Martha and said Mary had chosen wisely. Martha is the Old Covenant, Mary is the New Covenant.

2. The Parable of the Prodigal Son. This famous account is found in Luke 15:15-32. It's heavily used by people who struggle with legalism as a story of behavior repentance in order to be accepted by God. But the Holy Spirit has revealed to me an even deeper way of seeing this parable. The son who leaves home is us Gentiles, and the son who stayed home is the Jews. When we Gentiles came home to God through faith—not by cleaning up our act—the Father embraced us without *us* saying a word. Even though the son had a speech all planned out, the Father didn't want to hear it. Instead, He hugged him with all His might and threw a party. This caused the son to remember who he was and what family he was born into. This is the New Covenant. The Jews, however, were the *older* brother in the story. Salty because the Father accepted the "bad son" with no questions asked, the older brother stayed *outside* of the party *fuming* because he was so well-behaved for so long. The older brother is the Old Covenant, and as you can see, the Old has no place in the Father's House Party. So who was the true prodigal in the end? The Old.

3. The Parable of the Talents, and the Parable of the Vineyard Workers (see Matthew 20:1-16, 25:14-30). Two different parables, two different ways of God's judgment. One judgment according to the Old Covenant, and the other judgment according to the New Covenant. What happens in the Old? The people are judged by their performance and get rewarded based on such. What happens in the New? They all get paid the same in the end, no matter what time of day they began.

Friend, Jesus taught the Old Covenant in its purest form to shut up the mouths of the sanctimonious—not to stroke their egos (see Matthew 5:17-18, Romans 3:19). **The Law is meant to do the same for people today.** He didn't come to abolish it but to unroll it all the way out and say, "Go ahead. Try. Be perfect like God is perfect—or take a hike" (see Matthew 5:48).

This flies in the face of Christians who struggle with Mosaic legalism, which is an oxymoron because we were never even *given* the set of 613 commandments to begin with. Do a quick Google search of "What are the 613 commandments in the Law" and you'll be bored to tears before you finish reading half of them. **Remember, you must keep *all* of them if you want to live by them** (see Deuteronomy 4:2, Galatians 3:10).

Yet we want to cherry-pick the Ten Commandments—or "the Nine"—because nobody keeps the real Sabbath, which was from Friday to Saturday. Then we want to denigrate the Law even *more* by sprinkling in tithing so that we can be entered into the church lotto every Sunday morning. This is *really* sad, because the only time Jesus mentions the tithe is when He was ripping into the unbelievers due to their laughable Law-following (see Matthew 23:23). **Yet we want to tell people God will bless them because they pay money? It's lunacy.**

Rebuking the devour by giving ten percent of your food to the unemployed priests—not cash—was part of the Law. Who’s Law? Israel’s. Not ours. **Oh, it’s convenient for the people teaching this fallacy, but it’s not the gospel.** Extorting believers is a sin. Why not just let your needs be known and allow people give freely because they’re excited about the message? *We give* in the same manner in which we received our salvation—by grace. We’ve *already* been blessed with every spiritual blessing! (See Ephesians 1:3). There’s not a single verse in any New Testament letter that commands a Christian to give an exact percentage of their money away. **Instead, we are to give freely, from the heart, not under pressure** (see 2 Corinthians 9:7).

Do you see the danger of mixing the two Covenants? Aggressive people. Guilt. Condemnation. Quasi-grace. Give to get. Double-talk. **“Yeah, you’re forgiven, but not really.” Pressure-filled, “Be like me!” teaching.** And *then* Christians who experience such will struggle with crippling fear and anxiety, sometimes resulting in suicidal thoughts, *“Why am I not good enough?”*

Then they’ll punish *themselves*, attempting to relieve the pain. Some don’t *kill* themselves, but they’ll cut their bodies and confidence, *“Because I deserve it,”* they’ll say.

This same hazardous concoction of mixing Old and New is what got Jesus killed. The Jews could *not* separate the two and it ticked them off to the point of plotting against Jesus, spitting in His face, beating Him to a bloody pulp, then brutally murdering Him. That’s what Law does. It is a ministry of *death* and death is what you’ll get when you place someone under it (see 2 Corinthians 3:7-18).

This is why, in our minds, the Old must be gone completely *so that* we can enjoy the New! (See Galatians 2:19, Romans 7:4). The Law hasn’t died but we’ve said, *“Uncle!”* and repented of trying to obey a single command! **We’ve turned away from Law and toward faith in Christ alone!** We’ve stopped trusting Jesus for *only* His saving blood, but now for the guidance of His Spirit too!

Jesus’ New Covenant only has *two* commandments: believe and love (see John 13:34-35, 1 John 3:23).

I can already hear a Law-lover screaming at me, *“You’re so wrong, Matt! Jesus said we are to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind! And to love our neighbor as ourself!”*

...Friend, yes, He did, but that is love *according to the Law*. **Anytime Jesus was asked a Law-based question He gave a Law-based answer.** Just look:

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:36-40)

Do you see it? So many of us allow our heads to explode when we see the word *commandment*. We immediately mix Moses’ 613 in with Jesus’ two. **If we aren’t deciphering the commandments of the Old and New Covenants, we mix them together, therefore causing a sulfurous combustion.** Jesus’ commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3). Moses’ were (Deuteronomy 4:2, James 2:10, Galatians 3:10). The Old Covenant was about stressing out while trying and *trying* to love God with everything we are! The New Covenant is about relaxing and realizing God has loved *us* with everything *He* is, through His Son (see John 3:16, Romans 5:8).

So today, my friends, know this: As a person who has believed in Christ’s forgiveness, once, you are the beneficiary to the Covenant between the Father and the Son, established by blood at the Cross. You’ve been taken *out* of the equation, set aside, and now you simply benefit from *their* unchangeable promise to one another. **It’s the same God, but a New Covenant—the Covenant He made with Abraham before Moses, which could not be completed until Christ came.** You have no role whatsoever in the New Covenant. You are a branch. You *take* nothing from God, you simply *receive* by faith. No “name it claim it” necessary! What have you received? A new, perfect spirit! Life! Christ’s life! (See Genesis 17:4, Galatians 3:16, 2:20, Hebrews 6:16-19, 7:22,25, 10:10,14, Ephesians 2:8-9, John 15:5, Colossians 3:4, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 6:6-10).

A prayer for you: *Father, today I want to express my gratitude for you opening up my eyes to the difference in the Old and New Covenants. I remember being on my knees in my bedroom, begging you to take me deeper into*

your grace. I was so burnt out on trying harder and doing more, I was burnt out on seeing people as my enemy. All along, what I was really burnt out on was mixing the Old in with the New. I needed to go deeper. You heard my prayers and began to open up my eyes to what Jesus had truly done FOR me and TO me, so that He can live THROUGH me. Out with the Old, in with the New, He began transforming my mind! I know your timing is perfect, but I'm so grateful the period of my life in which you picked for me to go deeper into the New Covenant finally came. Please keep strengthening me as I attempt to teach the differences in the Covenants. Use my fingertips and mouth to do this properly. Give me wisdom, please. Help me to express you with gentleness and respect. Right now, I lift up all who are reading this, directly to you. I know many of them are bamboozled, as was I, when the revelation of the Old and New came to light. There's a lot to take in and their minds may be spinning. Give them a sense of peace today in knowing they have all the knowledge they'll ever need, in their hearts. It's your Spirit. Over time, you will reveal more and more! They'll go from glory to glory in understanding who you've truly recreated them to be, according to the New Covenant! We are your children! In Jesus' name I pray, amen.