

COVENANTS AND COVENANT STRUCTURE IN THE BIBLE

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I. Introduction – God, People, and the Bible

The Bible is a relational book about the relationship between God, people, and the Bible itself. Essentially, therefore, a theology of ministry needs to be based in the biblical theology of how God intends to take people from where they are in life and form them into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ (Genesis 1:26-28; cf. Colossians 3:1-**10**).

A. Creation/Corruption theology – Although the world was created to be a place of “rest” (i.e., peace and purpose) for us, it is now a “mess” and so are we. We have lost our “rest,” and this loss manifests itself in the way we handle life. (Genesis 1-11)

1. God rested/ceased on the seventh day from his work of *creation*,
Genesis 2:1-3
-signals that all was very good (Gen 1:31) and finished (Gen 2:1-2)
2. But the fall into sin in Genesis 3 brought corruption into the creation
-they would or could put it this way:
Genesis 5:28-29
“When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. He named him *Noah* (= ”rest”) and said, ‘He will *comfort* (Heb. *naham*) us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed.’”

B. Redemption/Restoration theology – Even though we are in this disastrous situation and continue to make it worse because of the many ways we reject God and His design for us and our world, still, He has stayed involved and there is a redemptive “rest” to be found amid the “mess.” (Genesis 12-Rev 22)

1. Note Yeshua’s invitation to “rest”:
Matthew 11:28-30, “²⁸ ‘Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.’”
2. See the parallels between Genesis 1-4 (creation and all of heaven and earth) and Revelation 21-22 (new creation of heaven and earth)
-there is an envelope around the Bible
 - a. “I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away” – Rev 21:1

- b. “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Rev 21:4)
- c. “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp” (Rev 21:22-23)
- d. “On each side of the river stood the tree of life” (Rev. 22:2; cf. v.14)

C. Ministry theology – In ministry the goal is to work that “rest” down into the hearts and lives of people so that they love God and love people well in spite of the “mess” which we are and in which we live. (Salvation and Sanctification)

1. Meet people where they are

Romans 7

- a. vv. 7-13, the law actually motivates sin because of our flesh
- b. vv. 14-25, we are enslaved to it and all tangled up in it
 - v. 24, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?”

Transition: v. 25a, “Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

2. Take people where they need to go (from where they are)

Romans 8

- a. God has set us free by his grace: “through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (v. 2)
- b. So that we “walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (v. 4) – the “spirit of adoption” (vv. 15-17)
- c. We do this because “our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (v. 18)
- d. The hymn of adoption in our human spirit, vv. 31-39

Since people are corrupt it is hard to get them to love well so, therefore, they rebel against God and do damage to others. Since the world is corrupt, people are not guaranteed a good response even if they love others well so, therefore, they are damaged by others (we are in pain; see, e.g., Rom. 8:22-25 “the whole creation groans and suffers . . .” and “we ourselves groan within ourselves”) and need deliverance from the hand of God (we need salvation; see, e.g., Rom 8:26-39).

NOTE: The biblical foundation for understanding all of this is found in Genesis 1-11.

II. Redemptive History and Covenant Structure in the Bible

God had an original design that became corrupt through the sin of mankind and its consequences. Nevertheless, He remains committed to His creation and particularly to those whom He created in His image and likeness. For that reason, He has a redemptive design that has been developed through history and continues to move toward its consummation. Therefore, we can “rest” in His grace.

A. The Noahic Covenant(s)

-the first occurrences of the term “covenant” in the Bible are found here:

1. Genesis 6:17-19, “¹⁷ I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.
¹⁸ But I will establish my **covenant** (*b^erit*) with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁹ You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you.”

A covenant with Noah to preserve him, his family, and the animals through the flood

2. Genesis 9:8-11, “⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ⁹ ‘I now establish my **covenant** with you and with your descendants after you ¹⁰ and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. ¹¹ I establish my **covenant** with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.’”

A covenant with Noah and all the living creatures for life after the flood

B. Covenant and Relationship -- One of the most important biblical “metaphors” for understanding God's redemptive relationship with us is the concept of “covenant.”

DEFINITION: A covenant is a means of expressing and/or a method of establishing and defining a relationship.

Some basic points about Covenants in the Bible are:

1. The most common terminology for making a covenant in the Old Testament is “to cut (*karat*) a covenant (*berit*)” -- see, for example, Gen. 15:18. This idiom means “to establish (or determine) the obligations (or stipulations)” of a relationship between two persons or groups of persons.

2. We will concentrate here on the biblical covenants that structure the relationship between God and man (**vertical**). But it was also very common to use the same customs and terminology in establishing relational obligations between men (**horizontal**):

Gen. 26:28, 30-31 “(28) And they (Abimelech and his friends) said, . . . ‘Let there now be an oath between us, even between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you.’ . . . (30-31) Then he made them a feast and they ate and drank. And in the morning they arose early and exchanged oaths; . . .”

See also:

Gen. 21:27-28, 31-32

Gen. 31:44, 51-54

NOTE: the two most important ritual customs associated with making a covenant were:

- a. Swearing an oath -- see esp. Gen. 15:7-18 (Abrahamic Covenant; compare Jer. 34:17-22) and Ex. 24:3, 7 (Mosaic Covenant; compare Ex. 19:7-8, Dt. 29:14, 21).
-focus on **relational commitment**

- b. Eating a meal together -- see esp. Ex. 24:11 (Mosaic Covenant; compares with Lk. 22:19-20 and 1 Cor. 11:23-26, the Lord's Supper for the New Covenant).
-focus on **relational involvement**

3. In regard to the covenants between God and man:

- a. It is often argued that certain of the major covenants were **conditional** or administrative (placing "obligations" on man, usually the Mosaic and New Covenants; esp. the Mosaic) while others were **unconditional** or promissory (**not** placing "obligations" on man, usually the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants). There are several problems with this approach.
- b. Instead of that, I believe and will attempt to demonstrate here that promises assure the **enduring nature of a covenant relationship** no matter what may happen, while the obligations focus on the importance of faithfulness to God in order to **experience the Lord's blessings** within a covenant relationship (as opposed to the Lord's chastisement, the curses).

B. Covenant and Redemption

1. The **Abrahamic** Covenant -- Gen. 15 (esp. vv. 7-18); see also Gen. 12:1-3, 13:14-18, 17:1-21, 22:15-19, 26:23-25 (restatement to Isaac), 28:10-17 and 35:9-12 (restatements to Jacob, compare 46:1-4), etc.
 This is a personal and family covenant which forms the historical foundation (or "umbrella") for God's redemption of mankind (Gen. 12:3). The Mosaic, Davidic, and New Covenants move that plan further along in history.
 - a. The promises of the covenant – seed, land, and blessing:
 - 1) Gen. 15:1-21 focuses on two main aspects of the covenant (compare the land and great nation of 12:1-2):
 - a) Gen. 15:1-6 concentrates on the "seed" (see esp. vv. 2 and 5)
 - b) Gen. 15:7-21 concentrates on the "land" (see esp. vv. 7-8, 18-21)
 - 2) Gen. 12:3 focuses on the implications that God's covenant with Abraham has for all the nations (compare "families" in 12:3 with 10:32, etc.)
 - b. The obligations of the covenant – faithfulness and circumcision:
 - 1) Gen. 17:1 "Walk before Me, and be blameless" (compare 12:1-2 "go forth . . . and be a blessing . . .").
 - 2) Gen. 17:9-14 Circumcision – the obligatory sign of the covenant (compare the signs for the Noahic Covenant [9:13, 17, the rainbow] and the Mosaic Covenant [Ex. 31:13, 17, the sabbath]).
2. The **Mosaic** Covenant – Ex. 19-24, Ex. 25:1-Lev. 26:46, Dt. 1-31 (see esp. 29:1), etc.
 This is a national level. It functions "under the umbrella" of the Abrahamic Covenant (Ex. 2:24, 6:4-5, Lev. 26:42, Dt. 4:37, 7:7-8, see the chart p. 5 below). The "law" calls for "Abrahamic faith" and, at the same time, provides a constitution for the theocratic nation that has grown out of the Abrahamic family.
 - a. Promises – Ex. 19:5b-6, Lev. 26:40-45, Dt. 30:1-10 (cf. Jer. 32:36-44 and Ezek. 37).
 - b. Obligations – Ex. 19:5a, 8, 24:3, 7, Lev. 26:46, 27:34, Dt. 28:1 and 15, 29:10ff, 30:15-20, and all the commandments, statutes, and judgments in Ex. 20-23 etc. and esp. Dt. 4-11.

3. The **Davidic** Covenant – 2 Sam. 7, 1 Chr. 17:1-27, Psa. 89, 132, etc.

This is a dynastic level covenant. It functions "under the umbrella" of both the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants (see, for example, Dt. 17:18-20). The king is required to live and rule under the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant and is expected to be an Abrahamic believer. This covenant provided a perpetual ruling dynasty for the nation that grew out of the Abrahamic family.

a. Promise – 2 Sam. 7:12-16, 1 Chr. 17:11-14 (note the distinction), Psa. 89:3-4, 28-29.

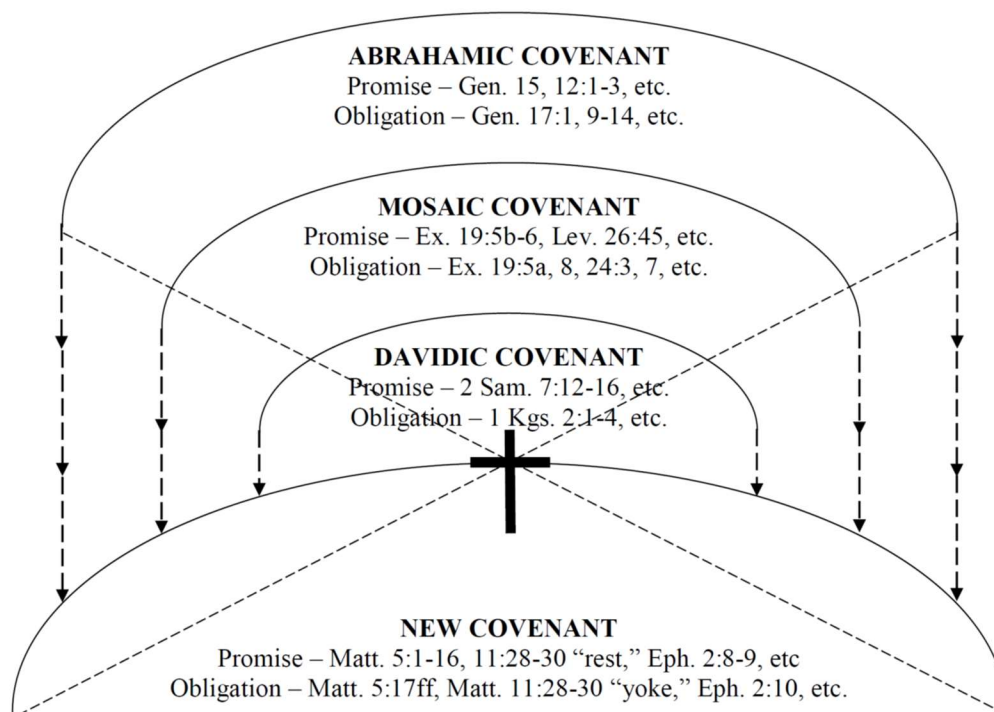
b. Obligation – 1 Kgs. 2:1-4, 9:3-9, Psa. 89:30-37, 132:11-12.

4. The **New** Covenant

a. **Predicted** in Jer. 31:31-37, 32:36-44 (cf. 33:14-26 in MT [not in LXX] on Davidic and priestly covenants) and Ezek. 11:14-21 (esp. vv. 19-20), 36:22-38 (cf. 34:20-31), etc.

b. **Initiated** and **ratified** in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (Lk. 22:19-20 and 1 Cor. 11:23-26)

III. The redemptive covenant program of God – God's program of redemption climaxes with the New Covenant, where all of the Old Testament covenants find their fulfillment.



NOTE: Both “promise” (yielding peace) and “obligation” (yielding purpose) are built into the very organic nature of God's redemptive program. One makes no sense and will not work without the other. Our “rest” depends upon the combination of the two.

IV. Old Testament (“Covenant”) Promise and New Testament (“Covenant”) Fulfillment (under the New Covenant umbrella)

The New Covenant has been enacted by Christ through His death on the cross (see Lk. 22:19-20, 1 Cor. 11:23-26, 2 Cor. 3, Heb. 8:6-13). However, there is also another level of fulfillment yet coming when the “natural branches” (i.e., ethnic Israel) will be “grafted” back in to the kingdom program of God in the New Covenant (Rom. 11:17-32; cf. the remnant of ethnic Israel in the church today in 11:5 and the wall between them and gentiles broken down in Eph. 2:11ff).

A. The **Abrahamic Covenant** is fulfilled in the New Covenant

1. Christ is the ultimate “seed” of Abraham (Gal. 3:16)
2. All who are members of the New Covenant are also necessarily “children of Abraham” (compare John 8:31-59, Rom. 4:9-16, Gal. 3:7, 29, etc.) – they have “Abrahamic faith.”
3. The motif of “circumcision” (Gen. 17:9-14) is also used in regard to this current fulfillment, that is, in terms of “circumcision of the heart” (Rom. 2:27-29; cf. Lev. 26:41, Dt. 10:16, 30:6, Jer. 4:3-4, 6:10, 9:25, and Ezek. 44:7).

B. The **Mosaic Covenant** is fulfilled in the New Covenant

1. Yeshua called for and lived out the fulfillment of the law (Matt. 5:17ff, Rom. 10:4 [telos “end” or “goal”?], etc.). To have the law “written on the heart” (Jer. 31:33) is to “live it from the heart” (Matt. 5-7, 22:34-40, 23:23, Rom. 13:8-10, 2 Cor. 3:1-11, etc.).

NOTE: this includes all aspects of the law, even the so-called “civil law”(e.g., 1 Cor 9:7-14 the "ox" and the "preacher") and “ceremonial law” (see, e.g., Rom 12:1 our person, 15:16 our service, Heb 13:15-16 our worship and communal fellowship; cf. more on this below in the discussion of the OT law and the Christian life)

2. Through the sacrifice of Himself Jesus fulfilled all the requirements for our atonement and, therefore, our acceptance by grace before God. In fact, much of our understanding of the significance of Jesus' death on the cross is dependent upon how well we understand the Old Testament sacrificial system. The New Testament writers often assumed this as a foundation.

See, for example:

- a. Christ as our peace offering died as the New Covenant ratification sacrifice – cf. Ex. 24:5 and 11 with Lk. 22:19-20 and 1 Cor. 11:23-25, etc.
- b. Christ as our passover lamb (Ex. 12:1-15) died as the lamb of God (cf. John 1:29 and 36??), whose blood was shed (cf. 1 Pet. 1:17-21), to create an unleavened community (cf. 1 Cor. 5:6-8 and Mishnah Pesachim 1-3).
- c. Christ as our sin offering (Lev. 4:1-5:13, esp. 4:27-31 [50 times in Leviticus]; cf. Rom. 8:3 NIV “to be a sin offering” and 2 Cor. 5:21) made atonement on our behalf (cf. all the redemption/ransom terminology in Rom. 3:25, Matt. 20:17-19, 28, Rom. 3:25, Eph. 1:7, etc.), and brought forgiveness to those who trust in Him (cf. 1 John 1:9, etc.).

C. The **Davidic Covenant** is fulfilled in the New Covenant

1. Jesus the Christ (i.e., Messiah) is the ultimate Davidic King, and the church is His kingdom.
 - a. Christ is our Davidic King (Matt. 2:2, 3:2, 4:17, 23, 6:10, 11:25-27 [all kingly authority has been given to Him, cf. 28:18], 21:1-11, Acts 1:6, 3:17-26)
 - b. He promulgated a law appropriate to His kingdom (Matt 5:3, the “law” of this kingdom in Matt. 5-7)
 - c. The church is His kingdom today (Acts 15:12-19, Rom. 11:5-32, 14:17, Col. 1:13, etc.).
3. At the appropriate time He will bring His kingship to full and obvious manifestation on the earth.

Richard E. Averbeck, *The Old Testament Law for the Life of the Church: Reading the Torah in the Light of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022), 27-78.

THE EXODUS AND THE LAW
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INTRODUCTION

1. The Apostle Paul based his teaching of salvation by grace on Genesis 15:6, “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness” (NIV)

For example:

Rom 4:2-3, “² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³ What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Gal 3:5-6, “does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? ⁶ So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

- a. Like Abraham, we are saved by faith not by the works of the law
-The law was not even written in Abraham’s day, so how could we be saved by the works of the law?
 - b. Similarly, Gen 15:6 has Abraham justified by faith already before the institution of circumcision in Gen 17
-so, salvation does not come through circumcision either
2. The pattern is the same as Ephesians 2:8-10
“⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.
¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

NOTE: Salvation is by grace **alone** through faith **alone** in Jesus Christ **alone!!!**

3. THE GOSPEL PATTERN

- a. God starts with grace
- b. God’s grace sets his people free to serve him
- c. God’s grace endures even when his people fail to serve him

I. God starts with grace

A. Exodus 1-2 and tells us about Israel's slavery in Egypt

Exodus 2:23b-25

²³ . . . The Israelites **groaned** in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴ **God heard their groaning** and he **remembered his covenant** with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵ So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.” (NIV)

NOTE: There would be no exodus without the Abrahamic covenant, and there would be no Mosaic covenant and law without the exodus.

B. The deliverance from slavery frames, shapes, and permeates the Mosaic covenant and the law embedded within it

1. The narrative for the making of the Mosaic covenant in Exodus 19-24 begins with the deliverance from Egypt:

In Exodus 19:3-4 the Lord said to Moses:

“Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: ‘***You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians***, and *how* I bore you on eagles’ wings, and brought you to Myself.’”

2. Similarly, in the last chapter of covenant regulations in the Torah (Deut 26), the same connection is made.

In the instructions for the first fruit ceremony they were to proclaim the deliverance from slavery in Egypt:

Deuteronomy 26:7-8

“**we cried to the LORD**, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our **oppression**; and **the LORD brought us out of Egypt** with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror and with signs and wonders”

C. The “Ten Commandments” also contribute to this way of thinking

Exod 20:1-3, “And God spoke all these words:

² “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

³ “You shall have no other gods before me.”

NOTE: in the Torah they are referred to as the “ten words”:

For example, Exodus 34:28 (see also Dt. 4:13 and 10:4):

“And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments [lit. ‘the ten words’]”

1. The various enumerations:
**Most Protestants and
the Greek Orthodox Church**
(Josephus)

1- Foreign gods, 20:2-3

NOTE: The **Jewish** view is that 20:2 ("I am the Lord . . .") is the first commandments and 20:3-6 (no idolatry) is the second (i.e., between the Protestant and Catholic views)

2- Images, 20:4-6

3- Name of God, 20:7

4- Sabbath, 20:8-11 (but note contrast with Deut 5:12-15)

5- Honor parents, 20:12

6- Do not murder, 20:13

7- Do not commit adultery, 20:14

8- Do not steal, 20:15

9- No false witnessing, 20:16

10- Do not covet, 20:17

**Lutherans
and Roman Catholics**

(Augustine)

1- Foreign gods and images, 20:2-6

2- Name of God, 20:7

3- Sabbath, 20:8-11

4- Honor parents, 20:12

5- Do not murder, 20:13

6- Do not commit adultery, 20:14

7- Do not steal, 20:15

8- No false witnessing, 20:16

9- Do not covet neighbor's house, 20:17a

10- Do not covet neighbor's property or wife, 20:17b

2. The double accentuation of the ten commandments (see the text inserted here from BHS) is also part of this discussion.

20 וַיִּדְבֹּר אֱלֹהִים^a אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לֵאמֹר: ׀ 20
אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּנֵי עַבְדִּים: ²
לֹא יִהְיֶה־לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים^a עַל־פָּנַי^{ba} 4 לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה־לְךָ פֶסֶל⁴ ׀³
וְכָל־תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם ׀ מִמַּעַל וְאֲשֶׁר בָּאֶרֶץ מִתַּחַת וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם ׀
מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ^a 5 לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם ׀ וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה⁵
אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא^a פֶּקֶד עֵינַי אֶבֶת עַל־בָּנִים עַל־שְׂלֹשִׁים וְעַל־רִבְעִים
לְשָׁנָי: ⁶ 6 וְעָשִׂתָּ חֶסֶד לְאֶלְפִים לְאֶחָבִי וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי: ׀ 7 לֹא
תִשָּׂא אֶת־שֵׁם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוֹא כִּי לֹא יִנְקֹה יְהוָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יִשָּׂא
אֶת־שְׁמוֹ^a לְשׁוֹא: ׀ 9

3. In all three traditions, the Ten Words begin with v. 2, taking the Lord's deliverance from exodus to be the starting point of the law.

a. The **Jewish tradition** highlights it and emphasizes its importance as the basic ethos of the law.

b. There would be no Mosaic covenant without the exodus, and no law either. This continues on into and through the law and the rest of the OT.

II. God's grace sets his people free to serve HIM

A. The first section of case law regulations in the Book of the Covenant is the debt slave regulations in Exodus 21:2-11:

"If you buy a *Hebrew slave*, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment" (v. 2).

1. Basically, if a person or family fell into debt (or destitution) in ancient Israel, one of the ways they could pay off the debt was to go to work for the lender for six years.
-they would go out free of debt in the seventh year.
2. Sometimes one person in the family would go into debt slavery to pay off the debt for the whole family.
3. This kind of debt "slavery" was a common practice in the ancient Near Eastern world.
 - a. problem with "slavery" when we read it in the Bible:
-When we use the word "slave" or "slavery" today in America what leaps to mind is the practice of going to Africa and either stealing or trading for black people to bring across the Atlantic Ocean to work on the plantations in the southern part of eastern North America.
 - b. The passage we are dealing with today has *absolutely nothing* to do with that kind of slavery!
-in fact, this was not done anywhere in the ANE world
 - c. This is a temporary kind of slavery that functioned in ancient Israel as a kind of "welfare" or "bankruptcy" system
 - d. According to the OT, no ancient Israelite could press another Hebrew into involuntary permanent slavery.
4. No other collection of laws in the Bible or in the ancient Near East begins with a set of slave regulations.
 - a. So why does the Book of the Covenant begin this way?
 - b. The answer is that the Lord had just delivered Israel out of slavery in Egypt so they must not re-enslave one another in the land of Israel.
 - c. Here again the basic ethos of the law stands out right at the beginning of the law collections.

- B. The same focus on debt slave manumission also appears at the end of the law as it was given at Sinai in Leviticus 25,
 -just before the final blessings and curses of the covenant in Leviticus 26.

1. Lev 25:39-40

³⁹“If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves. ⁴⁰They are to be treated as hired workers or temporary residents among you . . .”

2. The section ends with Leviticus 25:55, where the Lord proclaims that no one can make his people into slaves:

v. 55, “For the sons of Israel are **My** servants; they are **My** servants whom **I** brought out from the land of Egypt. **I** am the LORD your God” (v. 55).

- a. The repetition of “my” and “I” emphasizes the fact that the Israelites belong to the Lord as his slaves/servants, not to anyone else.
- b. God, and God alone, is the one who brought them out from slavery in Egypt, so he is their Lord. They belong to him!
- c. The debt slave regulations in Deuteronomy likewise emphasize this point, “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore, I command you this today” (Deut 15:15).

The law as given at Sinai and recorded in the Torah, therefore, begins and ends with debt slave regulations

III. God’s grace endures even when his people fail to serve him

- A. According to Leviticus 25, they were to give the land a Sabbath every seven years
- B. Leviticus 26 anticipates that Israel will rebel against God and will take them into exile because, among other things, they have not given the land its Sabbaths
- C. The end of Leviticus 26 tells us, however, that even if he takes them into exile, he will remain faithful to them as his people by his grace
 -he will chastise them, but he will not abandon them

v. 40, “But if (while they are in exile) they will confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors—their unfaithfulness and their hostility toward me, ⁴¹ which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies—then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin,”

v. 42, “I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land.”

v. 43, “For the land will be deserted by them and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them. They will pay for their sins because they rejected my laws and abhorred my decrees.”

v. 44, “Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, **breaking my covenant** with them. I am the LORD their God.⁴⁵ But for their sake I will **remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt** in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the LORD.”

CONCLUSION

1. Our God is not a fickle God
2. Once he commits, he stays committed!
3. By his GRACE he delivered Israel out slavery in Egypt
-God starts with GRACE
4. By his GRACE he has delivered us out of slavery to sin – the world the flesh and the devil.
5. He has **set us free** from sin by his GRACE, and **his grace endures** even through our struggles and failures

Salvation is by GRACE **alone** through faith **alone** in Jesus Christ **alone**!!!

Richard E. Averbeck, “The Egyptian Sojourn and Deliverance from Slavery in the Framing and Shaping of the Mosaic Law,” in *“Did I Not Bring Israel Out of Egypt?” Biblical, Archaeological, and Egyptological Perspectives on the Exodus Narratives*, Bulletin of Biblical Research Monograph Series, ed. James Hoffmeier, Alan Millard, and Gary Rendsburg, (Institute of Biblical Research, 2016), 143-175.

YESHUA AND THE ONGOING GOODNESS OF THE LAW

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Introduction

1. Acts 15:5, “Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, ‘The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.’”
[Richard E. Averbeck, *The Old Testament Law for the Life of the Church: Reading the Torah in the Light of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022).]
2. Moral, Civil, and Ceremonial Law?
3. Understanding the OT Law for understanding the NT about the Law

I. Three Main Theses

A. The Goodness of the Law

1. On the one hand, we need to get this straight: “So then, the law ***is*** holy, and the commandment ***is*** holy, righteous and good. . . . We know that the law ***is*** spiritual . . .” (Rom 7:12, 14a). **present tense!!!**
2. The OT law was then and still today is not only “good” (Rom 7:12-14) but also ***useful*** for the Christian: “. . . from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, . . . All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for ***teaching, rebuking, correcting and training*** in righteousness, so that the man of God may be ***thoroughly equipped for every good work***.” (2 Tim 3:15-17).
3. It applies directly to the life of the Christian today in a New Covenant “written on the heart” sense, so that we live it from ***a transformed “heart”*** (or “spirit”) and, therefore, manifest it in the way we live life (Jer 31:31-34, Rom 8:4, 6, 2 Cor 3:3, 6-8).

B. The Limitations of the Law: that is, the weakness of the Law as opposed to the strength and power of the Spirit

1. On the other hand, we also need to reckon fully with the fact that “For what the law was ***powerless*** to do in that it was ***weakened*** by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man” (Rom 8:3 NIV; cf. Heb 7:18-19).
2. Although the law was and still is “good,” it was and still is also ***“weak”*** (Rom 8:3, Heb 7:18) in that it has never had the power in itself to change a human heart to motivate godly living.
3. That requires the continuing practice of faith through the power of the work of the Holy Spirit in the human spirit (Ezek 36:26-27, Gal 3:1-7, Rom 8:16; also vv. 10 and 15? cf. 1 Cor 2:10-13, etc.). See more on this below.

C. The unity of the Law

1. Finally, we need to work out the implications of the fact that it is the whole ***unified*** OT Mosaic law that is to be (metaphorically) “written on the heart” of the New Covenant believer, not just one aspect of it or another, or some combination thereof.
2. The so-called “moral” versus “civil” versus “ceremonial” system of dividing the law is unnecessary and misleading not only in the OT but also in applying it to the Christian life.
 - a. The question is not what applies and what does not apply,
 - b. But **how the whole law** applies to the church and the believer!
3. The ***whole*** law applies to the Christian. As the Lord says it: “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts” (Jer 31:33; cf. also Ezek 36:25-27 with 2 Cor 3:3, 6, 14-16).
 NOTE: the New Covenant does not leave the OT Mosaic Covenant Law behind!!! It is written on the heart of the New Covenant believer.
 Luke 22:20, Yeshua said: “This cup is the **new** covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

4. On the “ceremonial” (tabernacle/temple ritual) regulations, for example, see Ephesians 2-3
 - a. The believing community is now the “temple” of the Holy Spirit
 - b. See also:
 Romans 12:1, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.”

Hebrews 13:15-16, “¹⁵ Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. ¹⁶ And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

1 Peter 1:22, “²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.”

1 Peter 2:4-5, “⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house ^c to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

POINT: the NT writers used Levitical terminology **for teaching the Christian Life** – how we should **think** and how we should **act**!!!

5. **However**, because of the shift from Mosaic Covenant in the OT to the New Covenant in the NT, some of the regulations cannot continue on into the church in the same way. For example:
- a. The purpose of some of the regulations in the Law was to separate the Jews from their Gentile neighbors, lest the Jews become corrupted by the Gentiles
 Leviticus 20:23a, 25-26,
 “²³ *You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you.* . . . ²⁵ “You must therefore make a distinction between *clean and unclean animals* and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground—those that I have set apart as unclean for you. ²⁶ You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and *I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.*”
 Cf. Leviticus 11 for the regulations for clean and unclean animals
 - b. There is no separation between Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ
 - c. Therefore, the OT regulations **cannot** be used to separate between Jew and Gentile in Christ
 Acts 10:13-16a, 44-48; 11:2 – Peter’s dream and the Gospel as it goes to the Gentiles: “¹³ Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”
¹⁴ “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” ¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” ¹⁶ This happened three times, . . .

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished . . . ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.”

 11:2, “So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him ³ and said, “You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

- NOTE:
1. See Galatians 2:11-14, where Paul confronted Peter about this!
 2. God is still concerned about holiness, 1 Pet 1:15 with v. 22
 3. Even in Moses’s day some of the laws changed when the situation and circumstances of the covenant people changed.

Compare, e.g., Lev 17:1-7 (slaughter animals only at the tabernacle) with Deut 12:13-15 (slaughter animals anywhere, but do not eat the blood)

6. There is no place in the Bible where the OT Law is divided between the moral, civil, and ceremonial regulations. However, there are several different units of law in the Torah:
 - a. The Ten Commandments – Exod 20:1-17 (cf. Deut 5:6-21 40 years later)
 - b. The Book of the Covenant – Exod 21-23 (cf. Exod 24:7, “Then he [Moses] took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people”)
 - c. The tabernacle sacrificial regulations, Lev 1-16
 - d. The Holiness Regulations – Lev 17-27 and some in Numbers
-note, e.g., Lev 19:1-2, “The LORD said to Moses, ²“Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘*Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.*’”
 - e. The Deuteronomic Regulations forty year later in Moab, not at Sinai (see a-d above for the regulations given at Sinai) – Deut 12-26

II. Yeshua and the Ongoing Goodness of the Law

- A. Yeshua did not “abolish” the OT Law (and Prophets), v. 17a
v. 17a, “Do not think that I have come to **abolish** the Law or the Prophets”
-this verb occurs in Matthew's Gospel also only in Matt. 24:2, 26:61, and 27:40).
- B. Yeshua did come to “fulfill” the OT Law (and Prophets), v. 17b
v. 17b, “I have not come to abolish them but to **fulfill** them,” meaning to live up to the requirements of the law and teach others to do so
- C. Absolutely no part of the OT Law has “passed away” even today,
v. 18, “until heaven and earth disappear, **not the smallest letter**, not the **least stroke of a pen**, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”
***NOTE: The Law** as understood, lived, and *taught by Jesus* (see vv. 21-48) **remains valid even today**, since heaven and earth have not disappeared and not everything is yet accomplished.
- D. One's status in the “kingdom of heaven” depends on **whether** one “annuls” the law or “keeps” the law and so teaches others accordingly (v. 19)

III. Yeshua and the Pervasive Goodness of the Law

- A. The Two Great Commandments – Matt. 22:34-40 – When Jesus was called upon to prioritize the laws of the OT he did it with the two “love” commandments: love God and love your neighbor (Matt 22:34-40; cf. Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18, 34).

1. He concluded his answer in this way, "***All the Law and the Prophets*** hang on these two commandments" (Matt 22:40). *Thus, the goodness of the law summarized in the two great commandments pervades every part of the law.*
2. Compare this with the "golden rule": Matt 7:12, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for **this sums up the Law and the Prophets.**"

B. The More Important Matters of the Law -- Matt 23:23-24

"(23) Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. (24) You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel."

1. There is a close parallel between Jesus' three points of emphasis here, "justice, mercy and faithfulness,"
and Micah 6:8: ". . . what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."
2. This suggests that Yeshua is simply following in the good OT prophetic tradition of rebuke for following the law only superficially and not devoting one's heart to God's glory and the good of his people.
3. The Micah 6 parallel and Matt 5:23-26 confirm that the well-known "prophetic critique of the cult" (see, e.g., 1 Sam 15:22-23, Isa 1:10-17, Jer 7:21-26, Hos 6:6, Amos 5:21-26, Micah 6:6-8 [the context of the passage referred to above]), did not negate the holiness and goodness of the cult but, instead, required that people worship God with a pure heart and a good life, which was the goal of the law in the first place (1 Tim 1:5).

C. The "Law of Christ" (Gal 6:2 and 1 Cor 9:21; cf. James 2:8) is the way Yeshua mediates all these OT regulations to those who trust in Him

THE WEAKNESS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW AND THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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We know that, like Jesus, the Apostle Paul considered the law to be a good thing. As he put it, the law always was good, and it still is good (Rom 7:12-14) and profitable for the Christian (2 Tim 3:16-17). We must *never* compromise on this principle. Paul also taught that the OT law is weak. It has its limitations. Both are true at the same time: it is good and it is weak. This is important for understanding how the law comes through into the church in the NT.

As background for this discussion, it will help to consider the relationship between the sacrifices in the OT and the sacrifice of Christ in the NT, especially Jesus as a “sin offering”: Romans 8:3

NIV “For what the law was powerless to do because it was *weakened* by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh *to be a sin offering*” (margin ‘for sin’)

ESV “For God has done what the law, *weakened* by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *for sin*” (margin ‘as a sin offering’)

NOTE: the terms for “sin” and “sin offering” are the same in OT Hebrew and also in NT Greek: Lev 5:3, “if it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then he shall offer for the *sin* (Hebrew *ḥaṭṭā’t*) that he has committed a bull from the herd without blemish to the LORD for a *sin offering* (Hebrew *ḥaṭṭā’t*).” (ESV)

I. The Tabernacle Presence of God, Exodus 25-40

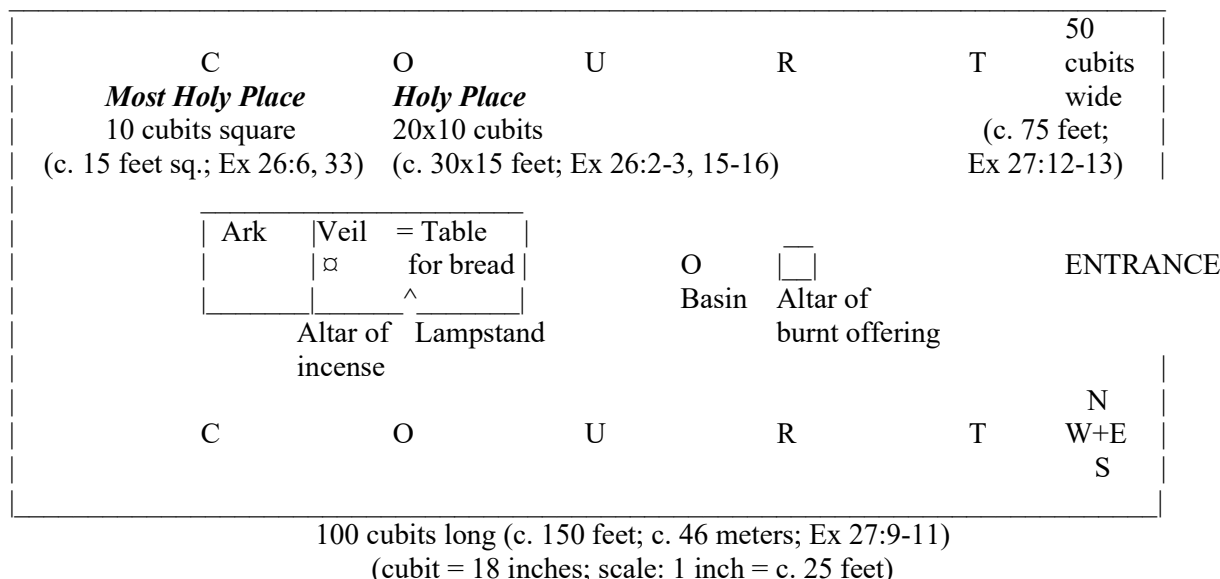
A. The purpose for building the tabernacle was to provide a place for the Lord to “dwell among them” even after they left Sinai (Ex 25:8; cf. also Ex 29:45-46).

-it is all about *the “presence” of God*

1. It began with the burning bush through which the Lord appeared to Moses at “the mountain of God,” Sinai (i.e., the mountain that God made his special dwelling place, Ex 3:1-2; cf. Ex 4:27; 18:5; 19:2; 24:13).
2. From the time of the exodus from Egypt and the crossing of the Reed Sea, until they arrived at Sinai, “The LORD was traveling before them *by day in a pillar of cloud* to lead them on the way and *by night in a pillar of fire* to give them light so they could travel day and night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night departed from before the people” (Ex 13:21-22; cf. Ex 14:19-20, 24; Neh 9:12; and note also the similarity to Gen 15:17).
3. The same glory cloud filled the tabernacle on the day they erected it – “³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Exod 40:34-35)

THE TABERNACLE

(Ex 25-31; 35-40)



B. Within the holy place was:

1. “The altar of incense” (e.g., Ex 30:27)
2. “The table of [the bread of] the presence” (e.g., Ex 25:30; Num 4:7)
3. The “lampstand” (e.g., Ex 25:31).

POINT: If a tent has incense burning in it, there is bread on the table, and the lamps are lit, this means “somebody is home”
-somebody lives there – in this case, God

C. In other words, the tabernacle was built to be a moveable “Sinai” – “I will put my dwelling place [‘tabernacle’] in your midst and my soul will not abhor you. I will *walk in your midst*—I will be your God and you will be my people” (Lev 26:11-12).

D. In the Old Testament, the presence of God was a visible physical presence seen in the glory cloud that filled the tabernacle and later the temple.

1. Therefore, they needed purify the tabernacle and the people physically.
2. This was the purpose of the purification washings with water and ***the sin offering*** – see below.

E. In the New Testament, the church is the temple of the Holy Spirit, so the church needs to be purified and sanctified by a better sacrifice

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST for our sin as a “sin offering”
-this is the point of Romans 8:3

II. The Five Major Offerings in the Tabernacle, Leviticus 1-7

The whole point of the offerings and sacrifices in Leviticus was to ***“practice” the presence of God*** in the tabernacle.

- A. The Burnt Offering animal was consumed completely on the burnt offering altar, Leviticus 1
 - 1. This offering was basically a gift they offered to God as “a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.” Lev 1:9
 - 2. The whole animal (except the hide) was burnt up, including the blood which was splashed all around on the altar
- B. The Grain Offering was mostly offered as a bread offering to supplement the meat of burnt or peace offerings, Leviticus 2
 - see also some of the details in Numbers 15
- C. The Peace Offering was a way to celebrate the good fellowship between God and his people, Leviticus 3
 - 1. The worshippers would eat the meat as a banquet dedicated to the Lord
 - 2. However, they burned up the special fat parts of the animal on the altar as “a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD,” Lev 3:5, 11, 16
 - like the whole burnt offering animal, see Lev 1:9 above
 - 3. And they splashed the blood all around on the altar, like the burnt offering – they never ate the blood, e.g., Lev 3:2
- D. The Guilt Offering made atonement for the **desecration** of the holy things of the Lord, Leviticus 5:14-6:7
 - 1. Lev 5:15, “When a person commits a violation and sins unintentionally in regard to any of the LORD's holy things, he is to bring to the LORD as a **penalty** a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value in silver, according to the sanctuary shekel. It is a **guilt offering**.”
 - 2. For example, first born animals were devoted to the Lord. What if you ate a first-born animal rather than offering it to the Lord?
 - 3. And they poured out all the blood on the altar, like the burnt offering and the peace offering blood, Lev 7:2
- E. **The Sin Offering**, Leviticus 4:1-5:13
 - 1. The blood manipulation is different – some of the blood was **rubbed on the horns of the altar** as an act of **purification and consecration** of the altar and the tabernacle.
 - a. Compare Lev 4:6-7 and 17-28, the incense altar for the priest and the whole congregation
 - b. with Lev 4:25, 30, 34, 5:9, the burnt offering altar for the common people

NOTE: this is the only offering where some of the blood was (“sprinkled” on the veil and) “rubbed” on the horn of the altar and the rest poured out at the base of the burnt offering altar.

2. The burning of the fat on the burnt offering altar for the common people “as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. In this way the priest will make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven.” Lev 4:31
3. This is the kind of offering referred to in Romans 8:3 – Christ became “a sin offering” for us.
4. **Hebrews 9-10** unpacks this for us, contrasting Jesus as a sin offering with the sin offerings of the OT:

Heb 9:11-12, “¹¹ . . . when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, ^v he went through the greater and **more perfect tabernacle** that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. ¹² He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all **by his own blood**, thus obtaining eternal redemption.”

9:13-14, “¹³ **The blood of goats and bulls** and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are **outwardly clean**. (lit. ‘for the cleansing of **the flesh**’) ¹⁴ How much more, then, will **the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, **cleanse our consciences** from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”

9:21-22, “²¹ . . . **he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies**. ²² In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

9:23-24, “²³ It was necessary, then, for **the copies of the heavenly things** to be purified with these sacrifices, but **the heavenly things themselves** with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ **did not enter a sanctuary** made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he **entered heaven itself**, now to appear for us in God’s presence.”

9:25-26, “²⁵ Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared **once for all** at the culmination of the ages **to do away with sin** by the sacrifice of himself.”

10:1-4, “**The law** is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw

near to worship. ² Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. ³ But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. ⁴ ***It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.***”

For more details on the OT tabernacle and sacrificial system, and its relationship to the sacrifice of Yeshua, see Richard E. Averbeck, *The Old Testament Law for the Life of the Church: Reading the Torah in the Light of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022), 177-222 and the literature cited there.

III. The Weakness of the OT Law and the Power of the Holy Spirit

A. The OT Law never had the power in itself:

1. to change a human heart (i.e., overcome the “flesh,” Rom 8:3ff),
2. provide eternal hope (i.e., it makes nothing “perfect,” Heb 7:12, 15-22, 22-25),
3. or motivate godly living (i.e., on the contrary, in those who are still controlled by the sinful nature, it arouses “*sinful* passions,” Rom 7:5-6 with vv. 7-11).

NOTE: The Key passage for all of this is Romans 6-8

B. Three images:

1. Romans 6 baptism and slavery
 - we have been baptized into his death and are now raised to life
 - we have been slaves to sin, but now have been set free to serve God
2. Romans 7 marriage
 - we have been married to the law, but are now set from because we have died to the Law

C. The goodness and the weakness of the Law

1. Like its goodness, the weakness of the Law applies to the whole law, including the “moral” law
 - he uses the 10th commandment as his example to work from:

Romans 7:7-8, “⁷ What shall we say, then? **Is the law sinful? Certainly not!** Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘**You shall not covet.**’ ⁸ But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead.”

2. He goes on to say in vv. 12-14, “¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. . . ¹⁴ We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.”

NOTE: Our fallen sinful human nature is the real problem:
-see the back-and-forth struggle in 7:15-23

3. There has been an ongoing debate about the general background of the argument of Rom 7:15-24:
“¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. . .”
a. Unsaved? b. Saved?
c. Third option – the generic nature of the law

- D. It is only through faith in Jesus Christ that “the law of the Spirit of life” can “set me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom 8:2).

Rom 8:1, “Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus” – ILLUSTRATION: “cutting the Gordian knot”

SEE the discussion of the OT offerings above!

- E. We are captivated by our own depravity and the OT law, ***as good as it is***, cannot deliver us from that (8:3). This is what Paul means by the weakness of the law.
- F. Only the work of the Holy Spirit in our human spirit can deliver us from this captivity to our sinfulness:

Romans 8:4, Yeshua died as a sin offering for us “in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but **according to the Spirit.**”

Romans 8:6-7, “⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.”

Romans 8:14-16, “¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (NRSV)

CONCLUSION: the Spirit of adoption, Romans 8:31-39

“³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”