

Eight “Links” between the Old and New Testaments

Introduction

Some Christian churches subscribe to the doctrine that the Old and New Testaments are completely separate – i.e., that there is *no relationship whatsoever*, between the two testaments. So, according to this belief, the information that Jesus and the apostles gave us does not appear **anywhere** in the Old Testament. In other words, the statements made by Jesus and the apostles were completely “brand new” – with no corresponding statements in the Old Testament.

That doctrine, in turn, has influenced many Christians to basically “ignore” the Old Testament. After all, if the concepts expressed by Jesus and the apostles only exist in the New Testament, then there is no sense in trying to find any correlating information in the Old Testament.

Of course, it is always necessary to *verify* Church doctrines with Scripture. In other words, any given doctrine needs to be examined, to determine if it is consistent with what is written in Scripture. If a doctrine is *not* consistent with Scripture, then of course that doctrine is not correct.

With that in mind, the sections below contain eight famous statements made by Jesus and the apostles, in the New Testament. Those sections then determine if there is any “corresponding” information about those statements, in the Old Testament. If there is corresponding information, then of course that will demonstrate that the “completely separate testaments” doctrine is not correct.

1. Love your neighbor as yourself

One of the most famous statements of Jesus is his admonition to “love your neighbor as yourself”. Here is one of the passages that contains that statement:

Matthew 22:37-39 (ESV):

³⁷And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**

From my experience, many, *many* Christians believe that no one had ever heard of that commandment, before Jesus stated it. In other words, many Christians believe that Jesus essentially “made up” that commandment.

However, as it turns out, the commandment is **already** stated – verbatim – in the Old Testament:

Leviticus 19:18 (ESV):

¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.**

So, Jesus certainly did not make up that commandment. On the contrary – he was directly *quoting* the Old Testament!

2. Circumcision of the heart

The apostle Paul also made quite a few important statements, of course. One of his most famous statements deals with the concept of “circumcision of the heart”. Basically, in that passage Paul is contrasting physical circumcision with “spiritual circumcision” – i.e., the concept of a person having a “pure heart”, so that he **wants** to follow God. Here is that passage:

Romans 2:28-29 (ESV):

²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical.

²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and **circumcision is a matter of the heart**, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

Many Christians believe that this concept of “circumcision of the heart” only exists in the New Testament. Basically, some Christians believe that the New Testament is a “spiritual replacement” for the Old Testament – and they use the passage above as evidence for that belief.

However, it turns out that the concept of “circumcision of the heart” was also stated in the Old Testament:

Deuteronomy 10:14-16 (ESV):

¹⁴ Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. ¹⁵ Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. ¹⁶ **Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart**, and be no longer stubborn.

So, Paul was not providing any new information – instead, he was **reiterating** a concept that had *already* been given in the Old Testament!

3. The poor will always be with you

Another well-known account from the Gospels is the account of the woman who poured nard (an expensive perfume) on Jesus, a few days before Passover. Some people objected to this; because they reasoned that the perfume could have been sold, with the proceeds given to the poor. Jesus then responded as follows:

Mark 14:6-8 (ESV):

⁶ But Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷ For **you always have the poor with you**, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial.

So, is Jesus giving us a “brand new” revelation, about the poor always being with us? As it turns out, the Old Testament also states *that very same thing*:

Deuteronomy 15:10-11 (NIV):

¹⁰ Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. ¹¹ **There will always**

be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land.

4. God hates divorce

Jesus also made some very “forceful” statements about divorce. Here is one example of such a statement:

Matthew 19:9 (ESV):

⁹ And I say to you: **whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.**

Many Christians are under the impression that divorce is only a problem in the New Testament – i.e., they believe that God was completely “OK” with divorce in the Old Testament. Scripture contradicts that belief, however:

Malachi 2:15-16 (NASB):

¹⁵ ...Take heed then to your spirit, and **let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth.** ¹⁶“**For I hate divorce,**” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with wrong,” says the LORD of hosts. “So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.”

5. God blesses peacemakers

The concept of Christians being “peacemakers” is also mentioned many times in the Gospels. One of Jesus’ titles is the “prince of peace”; and he exhorts his followers to be peacemakers. Here is an example of this, from the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5:9 (ESV):

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Once again, many Christians believe that this concept of “God desiring peacemakers” is only found in the New Testament. In other words, many Christians believe that in the Old Testament, God did not care about whether a given person was a peacemaker, or if that person waged war.

However, take a look at the following example, from the Old Testament:

1 Chronicles 22:7-8 (ESV):

⁷David said to Solomon, “My son, I had it in my heart to build a house to the name of the LORD my God. ⁸But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘**You have shed much blood and have waged great wars. You shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood before me on the earth.**

As shown, God did not permit David to build the Temple, precisely because David had waged so many **wars**. Instead, God permitted Solomon to build the Temple; because Solomon was a man of peace. So, even in the Old Testament, there are still examples of men of peace being blessed.

6. Looking with lustful intent

Another item that Jesus mentioned during the Sermon on the Mount had to do with adultery. Basically, Jesus stated that not only was actually *committing* adultery wrong, but even just *looking* at a woman with lustful intent was wrong. Here is that passage:

Matthew 5:27-28 (ESV):

²⁷ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸**But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**

Quite a few Christians believe that this information was **completely** “brand new” to the New Testament – i.e., that there was no reference to “looking with lustful intent” in the Old Testament.

However, take a look at this passage from the very oldest book in the Old Testament – the book of Job:

Job 31:1,9-11 (NIV):

¹ **“I made a covenant with my eyes
not to look lustfully at a girl.**

⁹ **“If my heart has been enticed by a woman,**
or if I have lurked at my neighbor’s door,

¹⁰ then may my wife grind another man’s grain,
and may other men sleep with her.

¹¹ **For that would have been shameful,
a sin to be judged.**

As we can see, Job explicitly stated that even just looking lustfully at a woman is a sin – i.e., he stated the *exact same thing* as Jesus did. Also note that Job made the above statements about 2,000 years before Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount.

7. Salvation for ALL nations

One of the very important items that is contained in the book of Acts is the account of Peter’s interaction with the gentile Cornelius. Basically, Peter received a vision from God, which told him to go visit Cornelius, and spread the Gospel message to him and his household. Peter initially resisted this call, because up until that time the apostles were only spreading the Gospel to other Jews.

Here is what happened after Peter went to Cornelius’ house; and preached the Gospel to his household:

Acts 10:44-48 (ESV):

⁴⁴ While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ **And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.** ⁴⁶ For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

⁴⁸ **And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.** Then they asked him to remain for some days.

As listed above, the Holy Spirit was poured out onto Cornelius, and his family and friends – even though they were gentiles. This demonstrated that God was *also* calling gentiles to salvation through Jesus – i.e., that one did not have to be a Jew to be saved.

Paul also references this concept, numerous times. For example, in the passage below Paul explicitly states that gentiles also have the opportunity to be saved through Christ – just as Jews do:

Ephesians 2:11-13 (ESV):

¹¹ Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

Many Christians believe that this concept of “salvation for gentiles” only exists in the New Testament. In other words, the belief is that there are no passages in the Old Testament, which state that gentiles will ever be able to be saved.

However, it turns out that there are many prophecies in the Old Testament, which discuss salvation for gentiles. For example, consider the following two passages:

Micah 4:1-2 (ESV):

It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and it shall be lifted up above the hills;
and peoples shall flow to it,
² **and many nations shall come, and say:**
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Isaiah 56:6-7 (ESV):

⁶ **“And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord,**
to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord,
and to be his servants,
everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it,
and holds fast my covenant—
⁷ **these I will bring to my holy mountain,**
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.”

As shown above, the idea of “salvation for ALL nations” had *already* been prophesied – hundreds of years before Jesus was born!

8. The New Covenant

Finally, one of the most-discussed concepts from the New Testament is the “new covenant”. Basically, Jesus “inaugurated” a new covenant between God and humans, through his blood. There are only a few passages which *explicitly* mention this new covenant, though. Here are two of them:

Luke 22:19-20 (ESV):

¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “**This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.**”

Hebrews 12:22-24 (ESV):

²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ and to **Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant**, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

From my experience, most Christians are under the impression that the new covenant is only mentioned in the New Testament. This is **not** the case, however – the new covenant was *originally* mentioned in the Old Testament:

Jeremiah 31:31–34 (ESV):

³¹ “**Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,** ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. ³³ **For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.** And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ **And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord.** For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

As we can see, the new covenant was first mentioned in the Old Testament. The above passage *also* mentions the concept of “writing the law on people’s hearts” – i.e., it also refers to the concept of “circumcision of the heart”.

Finally, notice that the above passage states that when the new covenant is fully established, there will not be **any need** for people to teach their neighbors about God – because everyone will know God at that time.

Conclusion

It has been estimated that between 90 and 95% of the information in the New Testament is directly or indirectly related to information in the Old Testament. The eight sections above certainly provide some clear examples of the close relationship between the two testaments. In fact, those sections demonstrate that Jesus and the apostles were **not** giving us “brand new” information – instead, they were reiterating and elaborating on information that already existed in the Old Testament!

As a result, this information should demonstrate the concept that the Bible is a single, unified whole. In other words, this article will hopefully provide evidence of the strong “links” between the Old and New Testaments.

The primary reason why this is important is because some Christian churches have a tendency to “chop up” the Bible into many smaller, separate “pieces” (or “dispensations”) – and then to claim that those pieces have almost *nothing to do* with each other. The information presented here should provide assistance in resisting that tendency.