

Last Will and Testament

When we come to the realization that we need to set up a will, what do we understand the purpose of doing such really is? Obviously, we want to make sure our last wishes are carried out so we appoint an executor and co-executor that we trust will follow through with our final demands. But, does anyone named in such a will have a right to whatever we've decided to leave them as long as we're still alive? Certainly not.

Heb 9:16 For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. 17 For a will takes effect **only** at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.

Now let's apply that same concept to the Old and New Testaments, the Old and New 'Wills'. The First Covenant (*or will*) that God established, was with Israel alone and it included the death of certain animals for it to be in effect.

Heb 9:18 Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.

So are we to still continue the practice of shedding the blood of animals as they did under the Old Covenant? Obviously not. But there are many, many people in Christendom who still believe we are under all, most of or at least some of the Old Covenant that God made with Israel. It can be seen in different secular editorials where O.T. passages are twisted to defame the religion of the Bible as just another hate filled, murder promoting religious conviction used to justify belief in the God it endorses. Thus they put it on an equal plain with the Quran, Book of Mormon or other uninspired, man-made documents. But with a humble mind and a closer examination of the Biblical text we can see an entirely different message that should convict the sceptic otherwise. That is, if they truly are searching for the truth which is why we...

Tit 1:9 ... must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that [we] may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

The "Old Testament" law of Moses wasn't given to the then world population in general. It was only given to Israel. For instance, man wasn't permitted to eat the flesh of animals until Noah left the ark. God told Noah...

Gen 9:3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And **as I** gave you the green plants, **I** give you everything.

But nothing was said to Noah about not consuming any of the "unclean" beasts. That was for Israel to consider later when the Israelites were chosen by God, separating them for the purpose of bringing His Son into the world. As God spoke to Moses...

Lev 11:2 Speak to the **people of Israel**, saying, These are the living things that you **may** eat among all the animals that are on the earth.

Part of the unique identity that separated Israel, what foods they were to eat, how they were to breed their cattle, plant their crops, down to the very materials in the garments they were to wear, circumcision and a host of other Levitical laws, was what distinguished them from all the surrounding nations.

Lev 19:19 You (*Israel*) shall keep *My* statutes. You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind. You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor shall you wear a garment of cloth made of two kinds of material.

But once Jesus came, died, resurrected and returned to the Father, the Old Covenant with all these restrictions became null and void except “for our instruction” (*Rom 15:4*).

It has to be understood that the law of Moses, including the ten commandments and Levitical laws, were only meant for Israel; then. Those outside the nation of Israel, the Gentiles, were not given such laws but when they “by nature [*did*] what the law [*required*]” they were “a law unto themselves” (*Rom 2:14*). They were, in that way, blessed by God. God’s ‘moral’ principles, don’t kill, don’t steal, don’t lie, etc., have always been in effect since the very beginning and they’ve applied to every nation of all His creation.

Psa 47:7 For *God* is the *King* of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm! 8 *God* reigns over the nations; *God* sits on *His* holy throne. 9 The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the *God* of *Abraham*. For the shields of the earth belong to *God*; *He* is highly exalted!

The law was only meant to exist for the purpose of defining sin but was never for the purpose of saving man since...

Heb 10:4 ... it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

That part of the law which has **always** been in existence contains the defining moral obligations that are for all peoples of all times. But because of man’s human nature, that part of him that chooses to be morally flawed, he has rebelled against God and His statutes and thus suffered death because of it. Was the law then to be considered evil?

Rom 7:13 Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin (*the law’s purpose was to define sin*), and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.

Under the “New Covenant” Jesus gave a “*new (Gk.2537- fresh)*” law (*Jn 13:34*). His commandment to “*love one another: just as I have loved you*” would cover the ten commandments and then some. If I love my neighbor I’m not going to steal from him, take his wife, lie about him, murder him or do anything that would harm him. But the Old Law had its limitations.

Heb 10:1 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

A shadow of anything is not the same as the thing it represents. Likewise the Old Testament Law. It was a shadow of those good things that came after Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice for sin. And since the Old Covenant with the Jews was nailed to Jesus' cross (*Col 2:14*) the chosen of God are now "spiritual" Israel.

Rom 2:28 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.

And once in Christ, spiritual Israel consists of both Jew and Gentile Christians.

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. **28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

At that point, spiritual Israel (*a.k.a., the church*) as God's present chosen race, are to sincerely "contend for the faith" (*Jude 3*) which contains certain laws concerning our moral behavior. Any who would defer to the Old Covenant concerning subjects such as tattooing, forbidden foods etc. are not seeking truthful answers. Concerning foods for instance, Paul put to rest this question in *1 Tim 4:3-4* concluding that "everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving". So, Jesus did not "come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; [He didn't] come to abolish them but to fulfill them." (*Mat 5:17*)

Gal 4:4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law (*i.e., the Jews*), so that we might receive adoption as sons. **6** And because you (*Gentiles*) are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" **7** So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

As in most laws, a will can be replaced with a more up-to-date version if the one making the original wished to do so. Once the replacement exists, the original becomes out dated and so it is with the word of God.

Heb 8:13 In speaking of a new covenant, He makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

The New Covenant, after the Old was nailed to Christ's cross, came with "power when the Holy Spirit [came] upon [the apostles]" (*Act 1:8; 2:4*) on the feast day of Pentecost around 33 AD. At that point the former will and testament no longer carried the weight of the new. Once again, as in man's laws (*based on God's laws*) so it is with the New

Testament, or Covenant, God has made with His creation. In either will a death had to occur in order for it to be “established” (*Heb 9:16*). Under the Old it was the shedding of the blood of animals that established that will. Under the New it was the shedding of “the precious blood of **Christ**, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (*1 Pet 1:19*) “once for all” (*Rom 6:10*). So what law then are we under? Well, we all get to choose!

Law of Life or of Death

Since man has been gifted with free agency (*i.e., he has the right to choose his destiny based on decisions he makes concerning that*) he can decide between two existing laws as to which he will follow. The one “that leads to eternal life” (*Jud 21*) or the other that leads to “eternal destruction, away from the presence of the **Lord**” (*1 Thes 1:9*). The one is where freedom is attained through a spiritual life of servitude while the other is where bondage exists from a carnal life of self-interest. The one results in life whereas the consequence of the other is condemnation. Our choice is a gift from God.

Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are **in Christ Jesus**. **2** For the **law of the Spirit of life** has set you free **in Christ Jesus** from the **law of sin and death**. **3** 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, **He** condemned sin in the flesh, **4** in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the **Spirit**.

Old Transitioning to the New

Under the Old Testament an Israelite was automatically born into a relationship with God. A Gentile had to become a proselyte by being circumcised under the Mosaic Law before he could enter such a covenant. It later became a contention by some Jewish Christians on the subject of Gentiles needing to be circumcised in order to be saved (*Act 15:1*). In Israel’s history, there seemed to be no other condition in the law as difficult to be received as was the act of circumcision. Concerning Gentiles being circumcised in order to fulfill the law and be saved, Peter’s inspired words ended that debate.

Act 15:10 Now, therefore, why are you putting **God** to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the (*Gentile*) disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

Then the “apostles and the elders with the whole church” (*v. 22*) sent certain men to accompany Paul and Barnabas to deliver the message to the newly converted Gentile Christians concerning this.

Act 15:28 For it has seemed good to the **Holy Spirit** and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: **29** that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.

Act 15:31 And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.

The act of circumcision existed before the law but in the law, it became a requirement of those adhering to the Old Covenant. The promise to Abraham, that he would be a father of all who were faithful, preceded the Law of Moses though.

Rom 4:13 For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

Gal 3:17 This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. 18 For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

- If a promise exists before a will is drawn up and becomes associated with that will it can be concluded that the promise isn't made void once the will has been established by the death of the one writing it. How could the promise of Abraham then be related to the Mosaic Law? What part did the O.T. Law have with the New that made it so important? Paul stated in Rom 7:7 that "if it had not been for the law, [he] would not have known sin".

Gal 3:24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith (*"The scheme of salvation by faith."*- Barnes) has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith (*Gk.4102- reliance upon Christ for salvation*). 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

- We can't rely on our own feelings or in what others say or teach, in order to be saved. Our reliance has to be on Christ if we want to spend an eternity with Him where He went "to prepare a place for [us]" (*Jn 14:2*). But we need to first become part of His kingdom on earth, the church, where...

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- The law was what tutored the Jew and all those who lived by "what the law [required]" (*Rom 2:14*). And even though there was "a change in the law" (*Heb 7:12*) it was all part of the plan God instituted in eternity and revealed covertly to the serpent in *Gen 3:15*. Once that law became obsolete...

Gal 3:29 ... if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

But the relationship Israel had with God in the O.T. wasn't automatically transferred into the New. A "re-birth" process needed to take place as part of one's entering...

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

"Jesus here draws the distinction between fleshly birth and spiritual birth. He did this to prepare Nicodemus to understand that it is the spirit and not the flesh which undergoes the change called the new birth. Regeneration is no slight, superficial change, but a radical one, and one which we cannot work for ourselves."
McGarvey

Peter, once he "[received] power when the Holy Spirit [came] upon [him]" (Act 1:8), would preach the first sermon in the kingdom of God, the church, on earth "when the day of Pentecost arrived" (Act 2:1). In it he goaded the collective consciences of those Jews who came to understand that they had approved of the crucifixion of the Messiah they had waited for to free them of their bondage. As Paul would later write, it was "to the Jew first" (Rom 1:16) that God would give the prospect of obtaining salvation. Those Jews who heard Peter's sermon on Pentecost...

Act 2:41 ... who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

And that "about three thousand souls" became part of the overall remnant of the Jewish Christian population.

Rom 11:5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, **chosen by grace**.

"The doctrine of the remnant can be found in both Testaments. Noah and his family survived the flood, Lot and his daughters were spared at Sodom, some of the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity and a few accept Christ today (Mat 7:13-14 ["the narrow gate"])" (Allen, p. 95)."

"In [Rom] 9:15 it was observed that only God establishes the conditions for grace and salvation." "...that free justification and grace are only in Christ." "Anyone who is part of the remnant complies with these conditions."

Brad Price

But the Gentiles would ask, if Paul was preaching to them since the Jews rejected Christ, did they now become the chosen over the Jews? There was a purpose for the Jews in not accepting Jesus as the Christ and such was known in the mind of God in eternity.

Rom 11:11 So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous.

Rom 11:14 ...and thus save some of them. 15 For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?

Paul then admonished the Gentile Christians at Rome saying...

Rom 11:18 do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. 19 Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 20 That is true. They were broken off **because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith**. So do not become proud, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.

*"The branches that were broken off in verse 17 were Jews who lived under the Old Testament system and did not embrace the New Testament."**

Rom 11:24 For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

"The significance of olive trees is found in the Old Testament. Under the Old Covenant God's people were sometimes compared to an olive tree (see Jer 11:16 and Hos 14:6) as these were one of the most valued and useful trees in all Palestine."

"Hostile armies could invade the land and destroy trees and other items in a matter of days. If these trees grew to maturity, it meant the people were at peace and war was a distant memory. The existence of these trees represented peace."

"As a general rule wild olive trees are little more than a shrub. They have small leaves, a prickly stem, and produce little to no oil. Grafting a good olive tree with a wild olive tree is senseless. Yet, this was what God did. He took the Gentiles, a people who were despised and scorned, and grafted them into a beautiful tree. He did what men would normally never do."

Brad Price

Why?

Eph 5:26 that He might sanctify her (*the church consisting of both Jew and Gentile*), having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

So...

Rom 11:25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a **partial** hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And in this way **all Israel will be saved**, as it is

written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; 27 "and this will be My covenant with them when I take away their sins."

- all Israel- In reference to the good olive tree, and those (*who continue to be*) grafted into it (*both Jew and Gentile converts*), Paul is considering "spiritual" Israel, the true people of God, in making this statement.

*"Paul has already shown (11:22) that not all of Israel (Israel in the sense of Abraham's descendants) will be saved. In fact, many of these people were "broken off" (verse 20). Since there are only two bodies known as Israel, and we have omitted one of them, Paul described spiritual Israel (the church)."**

Gal 6:16 And as for all who walk by **this rule**, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the **Israel of God**.

"The Jews and Gentiles who obey Christ will be saved."

Brad Price

The True Vine

Joh 15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser. **2** Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

"As the vinedresser will remove all branches that are dead or that bear no fruit, so will God take from his church all professed Christians who give no evidence by their lives that they are truly united to the Lord Jesus." Albert Barnes

So... Have you been grafted into the True Vine? Have you listened to the message of the gospel, do you believe it, have you repented of your sin and confessed that you believe Jesus is the Son of God? If you've done all that you have another step to go to be grafted into "The root of Jesse .., even He Who [arose] to rule the Gentiles; in [Whom] the Gentiles hope." You need to have your sins washed away in scriptural baptism because...

Mar 16:16 **Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved,..**

Or... Maybe you've been grafted into the vine and need a good pruning. Christians can be also removed altogether from the Root by the Vinedresser if they aren't professing Christ from a life of Godliness.

It is as simple as that...

Charli Yana
May 17, 2015

www.searchfortruth.church