

New Testament Perspective on the Old and New Covenants

PRESENTATION by Steve Kurtright

Introduction:

This presentation utilizes the following four premises for understanding the relationship of the Christian to the old covenant:

- 1) *The Ten Commandments comprise the covenant made between God and Israel at Sinai.* That covenant was mediated by Moses.
- 2) *The old covenant is not our covenant.* Therefore, we can hardly begin by assuming the old covenant should automatically be binding on us. We have to assume that none of the old covenant is binding upon us unless it is renewed in the new covenant. Unless some part of the old covenant is restated or reinforced by the new covenant, it is no longer binding.
- 3) *Some stipulations of the old covenant have clearly not been renewed in the new covenant.* For example, those laws which specify penalties for various old covenant violations for which one might be punished, i.e. death by stoning for picking up sticks or kindling a fire on the Sabbath, etc. As well as those ritual laws outlining the details of Israel's worship including ceremonial sacrifices.
- 4) *Only that which is explicitly renewed from the old covenant can be considered part of the new covenant.* No other aspects of the old covenant are binding on believers.

Historically, for many, the interpretative lens has been the old covenant. This presentation represents a change in that approach. Rather than interpreting the new covenant through the lens of the old, it will be examining old covenant references through the interpretative lens of the new covenant. The interpretative lens greatly determines the conclusion of the subject (2 Corinthians 3:14-16).

I. New Testament Confirmation of Distinction Between the Old and New Covenants

The old covenant is described by the New Testament in a variety of ways. The old covenant is described in part as the Law, a shadow, obsolete, the tables of the covenant, tablets of stone, and the ministry of death and condemnation. Whereas, the new covenant is identified as the better covenant and the ministry of the Spirit and righteousness.

The New Testament Identifies Two Distinct Covenants

Because God loves his people and wants to be in relationship with us, he has made various covenants with his people throughout Biblical history -- all prefiguring and leading to his final and complete covenant that he has made through Jesus.

The original covenant made with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is called the Edenic Covenant (Genesis 3:15).

As time passed God made a covenant with Noah (Genesis 6:18) which extended to the whole earth (Genesis 9:9-16).

Adding to the covenants made with Adam and Noah, God made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants. That covenant consisted of a number of promises (Genesis 12:1-3). God called this covenant an *everlasting* covenant (Genesis 17:7).

The next covenant is often referred to as the Mosaic Covenant. It was a covenant made solely with Israel. This covenant was one of stipulations and conditions. Blessings were promised for obedience, including possession of the land of Canaan, protection from enemies and national prosperity. Curses were promised for disobedience, including captivity which happened repeatedly throughout Israel's history (Deuteronomy 28).

Later we come to the Davidic Covenant -- the high point being the promise pointing forward to the coming of Messiah (2 Samuel 7:12).

Each of these covenants in one form or another pointed to the full and final covenant fulfillment in Christ who ratified a new covenant through his shed blood on the cross.

While there is an overarching *everlasting* covenant of promise extending from the time of Abraham, the subject of this presentation is the primary contrast between old and new covenants addressed in the New Testament.

The **old covenant** (or Mosaic Covenant), a specific covenant, given at a specific time for a specific people represented a temporary era extending from Sinai **UNTIL** the death of Jesus (Galatians 3:16-18) -- the mediator of the *new covenant* and the fulfillment of the old covenant. While grace and promise have a limited presence in the old covenant, they are the *foundation* of the new covenant. These two covenants are distinct from each other. The new covenant being the better of the two.

We will examine **two** Biblical texts dealing with the distinction of the old and new covenants -- **2 Corinthians 3 and Galatians 4**.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:3-18

Context: What is the historical context of these verses? There are at least two differing ideas. One idea suggests this chapter refers to the building of a stone altar by Joshua on which he wrote, "a copy of the law of Moses. . ." (Joshua 8:30-32). The instruction to do this was given by Moses prior to their entering into Canaan (Deuteronomy 27:2-8).

This understanding suggests that Paul separates the Ten Commandments from the old covenant and therefore creates two codes -- the Ten Commandment law and the Law of Moses, referred to as the old covenant -- therefore, 2 Corinthians 3 does not address the Ten Commandments, but rather it addresses only elements of the Law of Moses.

This idea overlooks significant clues as to pinpointing the historical context described in 2 Corinthians 3.

Verses 7 and 13. The main character of this account is *Moses*, not Joshua. In this account *Moses'* face is shining (albeit it was fading) to the point the sons of Israel could not look at him. So these sons of Israel would not see the fading glory, *Moses* veiled his face. Again, these details are obviously missing from the Joshua account -- so what is the context of Paul's description?

EXODUS 34:27- 35. The context is Moses' returning from Mt Sinai after the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments were replaced.

Interesting note: The fading glory mentioned in 2 Corinthians 3:7 has often been misunderstood. Some suggest Moses veiled his face because he wanted to protect the Israelites from its brightness. However, the opposite is true. Moses veiled his face because the glory of the old covenant faded away. That is what he didn't want the sons of Israel to see.

The contrast in 2 Corinthians 3 deals with the old covenant in total, represented by the core of the covenant, the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:38).

Explanation:

The element of *obedience* to the old covenant is missing from Paul -- rather, he offers a **contrast** between the old and new covenants. The new covenant is "of the Spirit," whereas the old covenant is "of the letter." The letter "kills" -- the Spirit gives "life."

The obvious meaning to the term "letter" comes in **verse 7**. Here he uses the term in the plural to refer to "letters" engraved onto the stone tablets of the law (v.3,7). Because the letter kills (v.6), he describes that which was carved in stone as "the ministry of death" (v.7). This letter simply means the old covenant. Verse 7 makes that clear.

Since he claims in v.6 that the "letter" kills and then describes that which was engraved on stone as the "ministry of death," the letter in v.6 is refers to the old covenant. (*NOTE: a figure of speech, in which reference is made to something in its entirety by mentioning only one of its parts.*) Again, "the letter" is nothing more nor less than the old covenant.

What does Paul mean when he says the old covenant kills? In vs.6-9 when describing the activity of the old covenant, he uses terms linked with death (v.6,7) and with judgement (v.9). Paul believes the old covenant deals out death to those who live within its power by **condemning** them.

The remedy for this death and condemnation is the establishment of a new covenant under the power of the life-giving Spirit. This is the new covenant of which Paul claims to be a competent minister (v.6).

Verses 7-11 continue to compare the new with the old. Here he brings Moses into the argument, conceding that the old covenant had a measure of glory, although it was surpassed by the glory of the new covenant.

His argument is carefully constructed. Notice how vv.7,9,11 begin with the word **IF**, completed with some variation of the phrase "*how much more.*" Each comparison shows that the new era of the Spirit is more glorious than the era of the old covenant. This is the point in his discourse where Paul draws the attention of his readers to Exodus 34:29,30.

If the old covenant, the ministry of death and condemnation, was introduced with such glory that Moses veiled his face, then the glory of the new covenant must be extraordinary. He concludes this section by observing the old covenant was a fading glory (temporarily glorious).

SUMMARY CONTRAST: (2 Corinthians 3:7-18)

<i>Old Covenant</i>	<i>New Covenant</i>
written with ink(book of the law)	written with the Spirit
on tablets of stone (Ten commandments)	on the heart
of the letter	of the Spirit
letter kills	Spirit gives life
*ministry of death	ministry of Spirit
came with glory	abounds in glory
*ministry of condemnation	ministry of righteousness
glory fades	glory surpasses it
now has no glory	glory remains
veil remains unlifted	veil taken away

*KJV uses the term "**ministration**" which has been understood as the **one administering the law** -- or Moses. Therefore, what is replaced is the ADMINISTRATION of the covenant and not the covenant itself.

However, the term translated ministration is **DIAKONIA** meaning **ministry or the work of service** -- here referring to the old covenant itself and not the one overseeing it. According to Paul the ministry of the covenant (its work or purpose) was to condemn.

NOTE/READ Vs. 7,9 closely.

Verses 12-18 then deal with the practical matter of the reading of the old covenant. **READ VERSES 14-16.**

People with the veil over their faces are those who read the old covenant through the lens of the old covenant. Paul is saying, to understand the old covenant correctly we must interpret it through the lens of the new covenant -- the veil is lifted only in Christ, "...*whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*" (v.16) Paul's meaning is that the veil is not lifted from the reading of the old covenant because only in Christ is it seen to be old.

In other words, those outside Christ cannot perceive that the old covenant is passing away. For them the old covenant remains valid, and they continue to stand under its condemnation. To drive this point home, he virtually repeats v.14 in v.15, "but to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart."

The new covenant which is better and a more complete revelation of truth, must be allowed to interpret the old covenant in a Christ-centered manner. This is an important interpretative principal. We should not accept any old covenant practices on basis of the old covenant statements themselves. Rather, we must examine the content of the old covenant from the new covenant perspective. The solution to veiled hearts is found in v.16, "*But whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*"

2 Corinthians 3 is clear:

- 1) Paul regarded the era of the old covenant's domination as fading away (vv.7,11,13,14). The old covenant as it functioned in the time of Moses and as it was understood in the synagogue turned out to be a ministry of death and condemnation (v.6,7,9). An old covenant (v.14) whose end had come (v.13).
- 2) The fading away of the old covenant did not mean that Scripture itself, or what we call the OT had passed away. Paul's use of the O.T. is evidence of that.

GALATIANS 4:21-31

Galatians is not only an argument that faith rather than the old covenant justifies, but also an argument that justification by faith has **ethical** and **moral** consequences. Paul's attempt to persuade the Galatians not to accept the old covenant is multifaceted:

- 1) He pronounces a curse on those who follow "another gospel" (1:8,9; 5:4).
- 2) He questions the motives of those who preach submission to the old covenant. (6:12,13)
- 3) He instructs that the life of the believer outside the old covenant is as morally upright as the life of those who subject themselves to the demands of the Law (5:13-6:10).
- 4) He warns of becoming enslaved by the old covenant originating at Sinai (4:21-31) - the subject of our review at this time.

Paul provides a counter-interpretation of the biblical account of Isaac's birth -- a passage his opponents used to argue that the Galatians must accept circumcision (the entrance sign of the old covenant).

READ TEXT - Galatians 4:21-31 (expound)

Summarize - refer to chart, page 4 of outline

Paul is saying that the old covenant espoused by his opponents are placing individuals into slavery because of the demand that they submit to an outmoded covenant. Paul's ministry is modeled after the free woman and results in redemption from bondage (freedom).

II. The Content of the New Covenant

Jesus, The Basis of the New Covenant

The new covenant has its moral foundation in the righteousness of Christ. **READ 1 Corinthians 11:25 and Luke 22:20**

These words signify that the blood, representing the death of Jesus is the basis of the new covenant. As a result, the motivation for our holy living, the basis for our morality, is no longer the old covenant but the teachings of Jesus. New covenant morality is a response to the living Christ rather than an obligation to specific laws.

To illustrate, consider **1 Corinthians 6:18-20**. READ

Rather than refer to old covenant law, Paul chose to use the better moral foundation -- Christ. While he admonishes his audience to stay away from immorality, his reason for pure living is not based on the laws of Sinai, but upon the believer's relationship with Christ:

- 1) the body is the temple of the H.S.
- 2) you are not your own
- 3) you are bought with a price

In the new covenant, the focus of morality is no longer Sinai. The new covenant has a better focus. Romans 10:1-11 (READ/EXPOUND)

Reaching back to 9:31, which pictured Israel pursuing "a law of righteousness" but not reaching it, Paul now summarizes this imagery by saying the goal to which the Law pointed was Christ (v.4).

He paraphrases Leviticus 18:5 in v.5 -- however, as history revealed (Leviticus 26:14-39), Israel did not keep the law. The law itself has shown that Israel will not obtain eternal life by keeping the commandments of covenant.

verses 6-8 allude to a quote from Deuteronomy 30:11-14 -- its context, hope. Moses had just warned Israel not to disobey the covenant given at Sinai -- if they did so Moses said, "all the curses written in this book will descend" (Deuteronomy 29:20). Exile is foretold and Moses extends the hope that God will circumcise their hearts so they will love him with their whole heart and soul and live. He then says what Paul has quoted and lays full responsibility for keeping the commandments of the covenant on Israel since they are not hard to keep -- nor too difficult to understand, because they are near. Paul sees a parallel between Law and gospel. Paul believed salvation through the gospel had become a reality for believers in a way the Law never was for Israel. **READ V.9,10**

The Gospel was near. Righteousness does not come through the old covenant, but through Christ.

A number of texts are cited on the outline regarding Jesus, the basis of the new covenant, however we will deal with only a few key texts.

MATTHEW 5:21-48 (read vv.17-20)

The meaning of this text depends on the meaning of two key words: **Law** and **fulfill**. Does Law refer to the Ten Commandments only? Does fulfill mean to do and keep on doing?

Consider the following explanation of this verse: "Jesus teaches that the ten commandments are to continue and will not come to an end -- for not even the smallest letter or stroke is to be removed from this law. To disobey the Ten Commandments is to go against the will of God."

LAW

There are six additional references to Law in the gospel of Matthew (7:12; 11:13; 12:5; 22:36-39; 22:40; 23:23).

All references to the Law are to the broader understanding of the word -- *as referring to the Pentateuch, the 5 books of Moses - the Torah (instruction) (which contained not ten, but 613 commandments)* and not to a legal code in particular. While the Ten Commandments are the core of the old covenant (LAW), they are not referenced specifically by Jesus in Matthew 5.

FULFILL

Fulfill, not in the sense of participation, but in the sense of something Jesus would do in connection with his work as Messiah - a bringing to light the true meaning of Torah.

READ v. 18 ... UNTIL

To illustrate the point Jesus was making consider:

Luke 24:44 (read) ... fulfill Law, Prophets, Psalms

John 5:39,45-47 (read) ... testify of me

John 19:28-30 (read) ... accomplished

Matthew 17:1-8 ... transfiguration*

**Only other time God spoke out of a cloud on a mountain was Sinai.*

The Law with its instruction continued to be the focus for the covenant community (the people of God **UNTIL** Jesus accomplished all that was written in it about him. According to John 19 this happened at Jesus' death.

Jesus' teachings become the basis for morality.

Six times in Matthew 5:21-48 Jesus says, "You have heard..." (followed by a quote from the old covenant) and then He says, "**BUT I SAY TO YOU ...**."

In every instance the morality outlined by Christ SUPERSEDES the old covenant instruction - including the Ten Commandments. **VS. 21-26 (READ)**

It is clear that Jesus' teaching supersedes the old covenant: *The progression moves from not murdering, to not being angry, to not calling one empty headed, to making friends with those who are angry with you, to making friends of those who sue you, to loving your enemies and praying for those who persecute you.*

Further illustration: Rich Young Ruler - *Matthew 19:17-21* (note v.21)

The New Covenant contains the commandments of Jesus:

As was pointed out in the study of the old covenant, the Ten Commandments were the words of the covenant. We also saw that the covenant's ongoing sign was the weekly Sabbath. What is the new covenant law or commandment?

John 13:34,35 ... new commandment/love one another

This commandment is repeated a number of times:

John 14:15,21
 John 15:10-12,14,17
 1 John 3:23
 1 John 4:21

Let's take a closer look at John 15:10 (read).

Questions: Jesus kept what commandments? His Father's.

What were those commandments? READ **John 10:17,18**

"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one has taken it away from me, but I lay it down on my own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again, THIS COMMANDMENT I RECEIVED FROM MY FATHER."

Application: Notice how Paul clearly shows that the law of love encompasses the principals of the old covenant by referencing the Ten Commandments in his discourse on Christian living - **READ Romans 13:8-10**

The New Covenant's foundation is the Spirit.

The foundation of morality in the New Covenant is the Spirit -- not Law.

READ Galatians 5:1-5; 14-17; 18-25

Jesus, the Better Covenant

HOW Jesus is better is found on pg. 2 of the outline. READ opening paragraph

The new covenant is not just a new and improved version of the old covenant. The New Testament writers are clear. The old covenant is obsolete, it has faded away, it is old. Jesus is the better covenant.

In recording the reaction of Simeon to seeing the infant Jesus, Luke leaves us an example of how the Old Testament is interpreted through the lens of the New Testament. Upon seeing the infant, Simeon exclaims in part, "*For my eyes have seen Thy salvation...a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*" (Luke 2:30-32)

*The quote in v. 32 is an interpretation of **ISAIAH 42:6***

"I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I WILL APPOINT YOU AS A COVENANT to the people, As a light to the nations."

Clearly Luke represents these words to refer to Jesus as the covenant.

This theme is continued throughout the NT - examples:

John 1:14-17 ... law through Moses/grace and truth REALIZED through Jesus

Galatians 3:10-14; 15-19; 21-25 ... law added 430 years after

vv.10-14 ... Paul's argument is threefold. **First**, all are under the law's curse because no one has kept the law (Deut. 27:26). **Second**, in light of this curse, justification comes only by faith in God's provision for redemption and **third**, this redemption is provided through Christ's death on the cross.

vv.15-18 ... Paul states that believing Gentiles themselves are Abraham's heirs and therefore recipients of God's promises. Noting that God made the promises to Abraham and his **seed**, and since the term **seed is singular** in Scripture, he observes, it must refer

to an **individual**, and that **individual** *must be Christ* (v.16).

From that observation he establishes that the Law is temporary and for a specific purpose. He argues that since the old covenant at Sinai came after the promise to Abraham, it could not nullify the promise (v.17).

v.19 ... Paul recognized his argument raises the natural question, "Why then the Law?" He answers by saying that the old covenant was given in order to **reveal** sin and so prepare the way for the gospel.

He begins by asserting that the Law was "added because of"/on account of transgressions. Understood in light of other passages, i.e. Romans 3:20,21; 5:20; 7:8-11, Paul was stating that the LAW was not a REMEDY for sin, but revealed sin. How does one escape the penalty and condemnation the Law pronounces on those who sin?

vv.21-25 ... unable to impart life resulting in righteousness, the Law kept people "in custody" (UNDER) the law as prisoners UNTIL faith resulting in belief. Therefore, Paul concludes, the law served in a disciplinarian role to bring us to Christ.

vv. 24 is translated *schoolmaster* (KJV) and *tutor* in NASB. It is from the Greek, PEDAGOGUE. The pedagogue in the Greco-Roman society was a slave charged with guarding the children of the wealthy from the time they left the arms of their mother until late adolescence. His role was to guard, discipline, and, to a limited extent, teach the child during a specific period of time.

Again, the temporary nature of the law is illustrated since the pedagogue's responsibility ended when his charges became adults. This corresponds to his statements about the temporary nature of the law - UNTIL Christ (v.19).

Another illustration of Jesus, the Better Covenant is his representation as the new and greater Moses. SEE handout, pg. 2

Still under the heading of the content of the new covenant, consider the entrance and remembrance signs. Handout, pg. 2

Entrance sign = baptism Colossians 2:11,12

Continuing/remembrance sign = Lord's Supper 1 Corinthians 11:25

III. Miscellaneous Texts Addressing the Role of Law in the New Testament

Clearly the old covenant found its fulfillment in Christ -- how do we then approach those texts used to infer continued observance? The outline provides a representation of those texts. Some we have considered already - now consider:

- 1) **Romans 7:7** "...Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sine except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, You shall not covet.

This verse references the core of the old covenant, the Ten Commandments. Because it makes positive reference to the Ten it is quoted as proof that we are to observe them.

Romans is not a theological statement about the Law. Instead the book represents Paul's response to the Jewish tradition from which the church in Rome came. In dealing with the tenants of Judaism while at the same time persuading people of the truth of the gospel, the Law, Israel's sign of election as God's people is addressed from time to time.

It is important to ask HOW Paul addresses the Law throughout Romans. The book reveals two reasons:

- a) He wants to demonstrate that everyone, whether Jew or Gentile sinned and;
- b) Because of this, Jews cannot claim an advantage over Gentiles in the day of judgement OR have confidence that their works done in obedience to the Law will help them on that day.

Paul maintains the law is connected with sin and death. Although holy, righteous, good (7:12), spiritual (7:14) and from God (7:22,25), the Law brings sin to light and increases sin in those who live within its authority (3:20; 5:20; 6:14). God responded with the atoning death of Jesus, the ultimate atoning sacrifice instituted a new covenant - a **better** covenant. He refers to this **new** covenant as "*the law of faith*" (3:27) and the "*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*" (8:2).

Placing the above verse in this overall context brings out the meaning in the context of the book:

Romans 7:7 ... continue reading w/ **v.8-11,13**

- 2) **1 Timothy 1:8-10** "But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for

those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching.

Paul warns Timothy of certain people within the church who are using the Law improperly (v.7). He does not comment on their understanding of the law, but rather makes some observations of his own about the Law, "and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching" (v.10b).

This is Paul's summary - it reveals the purpose of the passage. He does not develop a theology of the Law, but he ASSOCIATES THE FALSE TEACHERS WITH THE LIST OF WICKED PEOPLE whose evil deeds anybody of law hopes to restrain. *The false teachers' obsession with the Law is in one way appropriate, since the Law was meant to deal with people like them.*

He refers to the Law only because the false teachers are using it as a source of their teaching. His purpose is to point out that the **false teaching** is fundamentally as wicked as the most wicked violations of the old covenant.

- 3) **James 2:10,11** "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery', also said, 'Do not commit murder. Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law."

This statement of two of the Ten Commandments is used to associate the Ten Commandments with the "law of liberty" (v.12) and to espouse the necessity of observing all Ten Commandments.

James 2 deals with the sin of showing partiality (v.4-13). The reason favoritism is sin is that prejudice is inconsistent with torah/law (v.8,9). The reference to the two Commandments are in this context.

Verse 8 uses the term "*royal law*" and is clearly identified as "*you shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" To do otherwise is sin (v.9). The word law refers back to the "royal law" of v. 8. The word "*royal*" comes from the Greek word, **basilikos**, meaning *belonging to a king*. It is called the royal law because it is the supreme law to which all others are subordinate. It is the summary of all the Law (Matthew 22:36-40).

Verses 9-12 references the law of liberty (v.12) which is first mentioned in James 1:25. James reminds his Jewish audience that they were cursed/judged by the very covenant that defined them as God's people. He then quotes from the core of the old covenant, the Ten Commandments **as an object lesson** to illustrate his point that the act of favoritism is far from being insignificant.

Showing partiality was to be a royal law breaker just as surely as if one under the law were to break one of the Ten therefore, violating the entire old covenant (v.10). Never does James suggest that believers will be judged by how well they keep the Ten Commandments, but rather on whether or not they love their neighbor through the impartial treatment of rich and poor alike (vv.8,9).

- 4) **Hebrews 8:10** "...I will put my Laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts."

This statement is used to infer that the ONLY difference between old and new covenants is WHERE the Law is written. Old covenant written on stone/new covenant written upon heart -- same LAW, now just written upon the heart.

Hebrews is using the covenant language of Jeremiah 31 to contrast the new covenant with the old. The readers were second-generation Jewish Christians who, under pressure from persecution were in the process of deciding to forsake their new found faith in Christ and go back to the old covenant way of life and worship. That decision would be paramount to violating the new covenant in Jesus' blood (10:28,29).

The covenant of which Jeremiah spoke is taken up by the writer and reinterpreted in the context of the Christ-event (10:8-18). Just as Jeremiah gave hope through the promise of a new covenant for the community of Israel in Exile, Hebrews gives hope to those considering abandoning their faith in Jesus.

However, the covenants are different. The new covenant in Christ's blood is for the entire human race (Romans 5) and is not limited to the house of Israel and Judah as is the covenant promise of Jeremiah 31:31 (8:8,10).

Notice the point the writer of Hebrews makes with the Jeremiah 31 quote, "When he said, A new covenant, He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear" (v.13). He reinterprets the words of Jeremiah.

His discourse continues, Hebrews 9:1-4. READ Included in what is now obsolete as a result of the new covenant are regulations of divine worship (v.1) including the tabernacle and its furnishings (vv.2-4). These furnishings included the ark of the covenant which contained among other things "the tablets of the covenant." These regulations of divine worship and tabernacle system including the furnishings and all they contain are obsolete, old, and ready to disappear.

Conclusion:

The testimony of the New Testament is that the old covenant mediated through Moses at Sinai has been superseded by Jesus Christ. Jesus is the new covenant (Isaiah 42:6), its testator (Hebrews 9:24-48), and mediator (Hebrews 8:6).