

Old and New Covenant Experiences

Old Covenant Experience

- Sin's counterpart of God's four provisions of the new covenant experience—*the gospel externalized* (Isa 29:13; Mt 15:8-9; 7:21-23; 25:1-12; Isa 26:18; 52:5; Rom 2:23-24; Lk 18:9-14):
 - ✓“The Lord says: ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.’”
 - ✓“Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, . . .’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” “Later the others came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’”
 - ✓“You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? As it is written: ‘God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.’” “We have not brought salvation to the earth; we have not given birth to the people of the world.”
 - ✓“Some . . . were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else. . . . ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men.’ . . . But the tax collector . . . beat his breast and said, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner. . . . This man, rather than *the other*, went home justified before God.’”
- An experience with God and His law that God never intended—“they did not remain faithful to my covenant.” (Heb 8:9)
- An experience possessed by many in both the Old and New Testament/covenant historical eras. (Rom 9:31-32; 10:2-3,16; Heb 4:1-2)
- Sinful from birth—“there is no one who does good,” even “our righteous acts are like filthy rags.” (Ps 51:5; Rom 3:12; Isa 64:6)

New Covenant Experience

- The four provisions of a new covenant experience—*the gospel internalized* (Jer 31:32-33; Heb 8:10-12; 2 Cor 2:14):
 - ✓“I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.” (*Sanctification*)
 - ✓“I will be their God and they will be my people.” (*Reconciliation*)
 - ✓“No longer will a man teach his neighbor or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord, because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.’” “God . . . through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.” (*Mission*)
 - ✓“I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (*Justification*)
- The experience with God and His law God intended—“if you . . . keep my covenant, then . . . you will be . . . a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Ex 19:5-6; 1 Pt 2:5,9)
- An experience possessed by many in both the Old and New Testament/covenant historical periods. (Heb 11)
- Initiated at conversion—“whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.” (2 Cor 3:16)

Old Covenant Experience

- Simultaneously both “dead in . . . transgressions and sins, . . . gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature,” and “as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.” As helpless to change this condition on our own as a leopard is to change his spots or an Ethiopian his skin. (Eph 2:1,3; Phil 3:6; Jer 13:23)
- Characterized by outward compliance to the law’s requirements for the purpose of gaining entrance into God’s covenant and eternal salvation—“a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear,” “rely on the law,” “brag about the law,” “merely outward and physical,” “by the written code,” pursuing righteousness “not by faith but as if it were buy works,” “sought to establish their own [righteousness],” “did not submit to God’s righteousness,” “written . . . on tablets of stone” not “on tablets of human hearts,” “covenant . . . of the letter,” “the letter [that] kills,” “the ministry that brought death,” “the ministry that condemns men,” “rely on observing the law,” “want to be under the law,” “trying to be justified by the law,” “as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.” (Acts 15:10; Rom 2:17,23,28-29; 9:31-32; 10:3; 2 Cor 3:3,6-7,9; Gal 3:10; 4:21; 5:4; Phil 3:6)
- Those with this experience are “slaves to sin,” slaves “to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness,” “free from the control of righteousness,” “a prisoner of the law of sin,” “a slave to the law of sin,” “does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so,” controlled by the sinful nature,” “cannot please God,” “burdened . . . by a yoke of slavery.” (Rom 6:6,16-22; 7:23,25; 8:7-8; Gal 5:1)
- Relating to God’s law through the influence of sin/Satan/sinful nature which misapplies God’s holy law, transforming it into “a law of sin and death.” (Rom 8:2)
- This experience “leads to death” “result[s] in death,” and is a “body of death.” (Rom 6:16,21; 7:24)
- The gospel rejected. (Isa 52:7; 53:1; Rom 10:16; Heb 4:1-2)

New Covenant Experience

- “Born again,” “born of water and the Spirit.” “. . . because of his mercy [God] saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.” (Jn 3:3-5; Titus 3:4-7)
- Characterized by an inner transformation by the Holy Spirit writing God’s law in the heart of a born again, converted believer, resulting in a loving “obedience that comes from faith”—“I desire to do your will. . . your law is within my heart,” “circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit,” “you wholeheartedly obeyed,” “the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in [those] who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit,” “obtained . . . a righteousness that is by faith,” “covenant . . . of the Spirit,” “the ministry of the Spirit,” “the ministry that brings righteousness,” “justified by faith in Christ,” “by grace you have been saved, though faith. . . it is the gift of God,” “not having a righteousness of my own . . . but that which is through faith in Christ.” (Rom 1:5; Ps 40:8; Heb 8:10; Rom 2:29; 6:17; 8:4; 9:30; 2 Cor 3:6,8-9; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8; Phil 3:9)
- Those with this experience are “freed from sin,” “slaves . . . to obedience,” “set free from sin,” “slaves to righteousness,” “slaves to God,” “in [their] inner being [they] delight in God’s law,” “slave[s] to God’s law,” “controlled . . . by the Spirit,” “the Spirit of God lives in you,” “by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body,” “led by the Spirit,” “Christ has set us free.” (Rom 6:7,16-19,22; 7:22,25; 8:9-14; Gal 5:1)
- Relating to God’s law through the influence of the Holy Spirit who perfectly applies God’s holy law so that it functions as God intended as “the law of the Spirit of life.” (Rom 8:2)
- This experience “leads to righteousness,” “leads to holiness,” and “the result is eternal life.” (Rom 6:16,19,22)
- The gospel accepted. (Isa 52:7ff.; Rom 10:6-16; Heb 4:2; 11)