

Commonly Asked Questions About New Covenant Theology

By Steve Lehrer

In-Depth Studies has been online since 1995. Since that time we have had a forum for those visiting our site to ask us questions pertaining to theology called “theology online.” Over the years we have answered hundreds of theological questions. Here we would like to highlight some of the more frequently asked questions concerning new covenant theology (NCT) and our answers.

Question: Covenant theologians often make the assertion that in presenting the gospel we need to preach the law because it is the law that drives us to Christ. How does new covenant theology (NCT) respond to this?

NCT is in general agreement with covenant theology (CT) concerning the statement that law must be explained and applied in order to present the gospel. The major issue we agree upon is that the condemning aspect of law must be explained to even understand the gospel. But we do have two areas of disagreement in the way CT applies the general statement that law must be “preached” in order to present the gospel. *First*, and of primary importance, is the question of *which law* should be explained and applied to the unbelieving heart. CT believes that the Ten Commandments should be applied, and we disagree with this. *Second*, the proof-text that most covenant theologians use for the idea that the law must be preached in order to drive people to Christ is Galatians 3:24. We believe this is a misreading of that text. I’ll briefly expand on both our fundamental agreement and our secondary disagreements.

A. The Main Area of Agreement *The Gospel Cannot Be Understood Without Law*

The Gospel is the “good news” about Jesus Christ being the savior of His people. That immediately makes us ask the question, “What does He save His people from?” The answer is, “Jesus saves us from the wrath of God by taking the wrath that we deserve upon Himself.” The question must then be raised, “Why does God believe that we deserve wrath?” The answer is “Because people have sinned against Him.” This forces us back a step further to ask, “What is sin?” The answer is, “Sin is defined in Scripture very clearly as breaking God’s law” (1 John 3:4). Therefore, the good news is that through Jesus Christ we have a way to be saved from God’s wrath, which we deserve because we broke His law. Therefore, for anyone to truly understand the Gospel he must come to understand God’s law and its relationship to him. We link arms in solid agreement about the Gospel with our brothers who hold to CT.

B. Disagreement #1 *Which Law?*

Which law should be presented to people today in order to show them that they have disobeyed God and need a savior? CT would say that what should be presented is the “moral law,” which they identify as the Ten Commandments. NCT believes that the only law that is binding or authoritative on all people who are alive today is the Law of Christ, which are the commands of Christ and His representatives that are found in the teaching

passages of the New Testament and summarized by Christ in Matthew 22:34-40.¹ NCT understands the Scriptures to teach that the Old Covenant, the core of which is the Mosaic Law, is null and void and no part of it is still in effect (Hebrews 8:13). Thus, rather than showing an unbeliever his sin by pointing him to the Ten Commandments, it would be more biblical to point him to Ephesians 4:25-32 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 for a list of some specific sinful things or 1 Corinthians 10:31 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 for commandments that are more broad and general. But there are hundreds of texts in the NT in which God gives us commands about how we must live and those texts make up what Paul calls the Law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21).

C. Disagreement #2 *Understanding Galatians 3:24*

A second area of disagreement is the use of Galatians 3:24 by covenant theologians to defend the use of the Ten Commandments to drive people to Christ. Here is the verse in question: “So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.” An example of this CT practice is found in the recent work of contemporary covenant theologian Robert Reymond:

This use of the law (Mosaic Law) for Christian ethics has come to be referred to as the ‘third use of the law,’ the other two uses being, first, its moral standards which are to serve as the rule of all true civil righteousness, and **second, its ‘tutorial’ work of convicting sinners, through the agency of the Holy Spirit of their sins and thus driving them to Christ that they may be justified by faith** (Galatians 3:24, *emphasis mine*).²

Reymond is using Galatians 3:24 to defend his position that we should apply the Mosaic Law to the hearts of unbelievers today in the New Covenant Era. The problem with Reymond’s use of this text is that *Galatians 3:24* is not a text about individual experience in which the Mosaic Law is used in the life of an unbeliever to cause him to see his need of a savior. Rather, it is a text that is referring to two historical time periods.

Let’s examine the verse in its context. The argument in the book of Galatians in its most basic form is that salvation is by faith alone, in Christ alone. If you add anything to that formula you are preaching or believing another Gospel, and you are still under God’s wrath. Now in chapter 3, Paul begins a salvation historical argument in which he juxtaposes promise and law. In Galatians 3:22-25 we find the continuation of an historical argument. Paul has been arguing that the law or the Mosaic Covenant, which is based on earning your acceptance with God by obedience to his law (Galatians 3:10), cannot nullify or make void the Abrahamic unconditional promise of blessing. The reason why it cannot nullify the promise is because the promise came before the law. This is important because it prepares us for Paul’s argument later in the passage about the time periods of “law” and “faith.” The Mosaic Law was used in the lives of the unbelieving Israelites³ to stir up their desire to sin and to increase it (Galatians 3:19, Romans 5:20, and Romans 7:5). That was the primary function of that law (2 Corinthians 3:4-18).

Paul continues his argument in the book of Galatians:

But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law (22-25).

When did faith come? According to this passage, faith did not come during the period of law. Faith came and was “revealed” after the period of the law and we know that this is referring to the time of Christ and His work on the cross. Law was put in charge 430 years after the Abrahamic promise. It stayed in charge and held people prisoner until faith was revealed. Paul puts this more plainly in Romans 3:21 and 22 where he writes: “But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.” The opening words “but now” tip us off to the fact that Paul is telling us about something that is new, at least in some limited way. Jesus Christ and his work on the cross, which is called the new covenant in Hebrews 10:8-14, inaugurated the age of faith. Clearly, according to these verses, there was a time of law that preceded that (and the context demands that this period was the old covenant era). Galatians 3:17 tells us that the law came 430 years after the promise. That is referring to the covenant that was given to Moses and the Israelites 430 years after God made His covenant with Abraham. Paul is telling the Galatians that to place themselves back under the Mosaic Law is to misunderstand the Scriptures and to go backward in redemptive history. Instead of doing such a foolish thing they should understand that the Mosaic Law had a purpose, which was to increase sin (Galatians 3:21, Romans 5:20) and not to save. It was that law covenant that “led” historically to the time of Christ, which is the time of faith.⁴

Therefore, it is wrong to use this text as a proof-text for using the Mosaic Law to lead individual people to Christ. The text that we would use to support the statement that it is necessary to teach about the condemning aspects of the law that you are under (which is the law of Christ for all those living between the ascension and the second coming) in order to drive the unbeliever to Christ is Romans 6:23a “For the wages of sin is death.”

Question: What is the purpose of the Old Testament in the spiritual life of the elect now? What relevance does the Old Testament have?

The Old Testament has an extremely relevant place in the spiritual life of the elect. The question is not whether it has a purpose or place in our spiritual lives today, but rather *how* is it to be used to the glory of God in the life of His people? We really have only two choices before us. We can choose to try to directly apply every verse of the Old Testament or we can apply the teachings of the Old Testament through the lens of the New Testament. If we try the former then we are stuck with passages like Leviticus 2:1-10:

When someone brings a grain offering to the LORD , his offering is to be of fine flour. He is to pour oil on it, put incense on it and take it to Aaron’s sons the priests. The priest shall take a handful of the fine flour

and oil, together with all the incense, and burn this as a memorial portion on the altar, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the offerings made to the LORD by fire. If you bring a grain offering baked in an oven, it is to consist of fine flour: cakes made without yeast and mixed with oil, or wafers made without yeast and spread with oil. If your grain offering is prepared on a griddle, it is to be made of fine flour mixed with oil, and without yeast. Crumble it and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. If your grain offering is cooked in a pan, it is to be made of fine flour and oil. Bring the grain offering made of these things to the LORD; present it to the priest, who shall take it to the altar. He shall take out the memorial portion from the grain offering and burn it on the altar as an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the offerings made to the LORD by fire.

How should we apply this passage to our lives today? This is part of “all Scripture” which is “God breathed” to which Paul was referring in 2 Timothy 3. Shall we teach, rebuke, and correct Christians concerning the proper preparation of grain offerings? That would be wrong given our understanding of Christ and His work that is revealed in the New Testament, particularly in the book of Hebrews. Christ is our one all-sufficient sacrifice. Paul, then, must mean something else than the idea that every verse in the Old Testament is *directly* applicable to the believer in the New Covenant era.

I believe reading the Old Testament Scriptures through the lens of the New Covenant Scriptures⁵ is the key. As we look at the book of Hebrews regarding the law of the Old Covenant, and specifically as it relates to sacrifices, we find that it functions as a “shadow” of Christ’s ultimate sacrifice (Hebrews 10:1). So the purpose of this text for the believer today is to see the holiness of God and the fact that he demands a perfect sacrifice. But we see this only in “picture form” in Leviticus, which points to the reality that is found in Christ. The particular details of grain offerings given in Leviticus 2 are not directly applicable, but the meaning that the text as a whole holds in fulfillment is profound and must be applied to our lives everyday. Of course this process requires much study and theological reflection. But I believe it is invaluable not only to the maturity of believers, but also to the growth of our appreciation of God’s work in orchestrating all of history, and particularly the history of Israel, for his elect people living in the new covenant era (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Question: Is NCT “replacement theology”?

If someone wants to call NCT a nasty name he will typically crinkle his nose and say, “you believe in *replacement theology*.” By this comment he is referring to the belief that the church, made up of Jews and Gentiles, “replaces” Israel as God’s chosen people. I do not like the term “replacement” because of the way it is used and because of certain misunderstandings that can result from the term. Instead I would rather use the term “fulfillment theology.” Israel was simply a picture of the true people of God, which the church fulfills. An analogy that illustrates the relationship between the Israelites and the

church that I have found helpful is of frozen dinners. When I go to the store to buy a frozen dinner, I look at the picture on the box and it tells me what is inside. Often, just by looking at the picture on the box, my mouth will begin to water. But when I bring it home, if I were to take the box and sink my fork and knife into the picture of the food and begin to eat, I would choke on the first bite! The picture was only meant to point me toward the real meal and was never meant to be the meal itself. The food inside does not replace the picture but rather is the reality to which the picture is supposed to lead me. In the same way, Israel was called God's chosen and redeemed people, but they were not chosen for spiritual salvation or redemption from God's wrath. They were always an unbelieving people as a whole⁶ (with a tiny remnant of believers always present). So in one sense there never was a true people of God to "replace," there was rather an expectation of a true people of God that builds to a crescendo throughout the Old Testament and is finally satisfied in the New Testament. This true people of God actually love Him and are made up of Jews and Gentiles.

In Ephesians 2:11-22 Paul calls this group of people "one new man":

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:11-13).

At this point in the passage it might seem that with the coming of Christ, the Gentiles are brought into the fold and added to Israel. But we will find out as we read on in this passage that this is not the case. The Israelites had an advantage in that they had the Scriptures, which contained the promise of a Messiah (Romans 3:1,2). Unless a Gentile somehow bumped up against Israel, he had no chance of hearing about the one true God and the way of salvation. But although the Israelites had an amazing advantage, they were still under God's wrath. They were no more God's true people than were the Gentiles. This is clearly spelled out for us in the verses that follow:

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near (Ephesians 2:14-17).

Notice that it is the work of Christ that makes "one new man out of the two." Both Jews and Gentiles are brought together into one people of God. Also, notice that the Jews needed to be reconciled to God just like the Gentiles! Verse 16a shows that Jews and Gentiles were both in an identical relationship to God, which is under His wrath: "and in this one body to reconcile **both of them** to God through the cross." So if you have a

theology that says that Israel was the true people of God and the Gentiles were simply added, you must grapple with this verse and the following verse: “He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.” This verse tells us that Paul is not thinking that Israel was the people of God in the sense that they were reconciled to God and that the work of Christ simply brought the Gentiles onto equal footing. The reconciliation of both Jews and Gentiles to God is contemporaneous! Christ came and gave the opportunity to be reconciled to God (preached peace) to Gentiles (you who were far away) and to Jews (those who were near).

Finally, notice that this passage teaches that God’s people, His household, is built on the foundation of the apostles and NT prophets⁷ with Christ serving as the cornerstone:

For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit (Ephesians 2:18-22).

This does *not* say that Gentiles were later invited to be a part of the house that was built upon the foundation of Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament! It is not as if the Gentiles are made a people of God alongside the Jewish people of God as classical dispensationalism espouses. Nor is it that the Gentiles are now added to the true people of God as covenant theology espouses. Instead, through the cross Jesus Christ has reconciled both (elect) Jews and Gentiles to Himself and to one another to make “one new man,” which is the believing people of God, the church.

In summary, NCT is not replacement theology believing that God has replaced the first true people of God with people of God number two. But NCT is replacement theology in the sense that the focus of God’s attention is no longer on a particular nation (Israel), but rather God’s preoccupation with the nation has been “replaced” by His saving love being showered on the true people of God, which is made up of Jews and Gentiles.

Question: Does NCT hold to a covenant of redemption in eternity made between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

We do not believe that it is wise to refer to God’s plan to save a people in eternity past as a “covenant.” But we do believe that our one God who is three co-equal and co-eternal persons did make a certain plan that He would save a people from their sins. But if this plan is not called a covenant by the authors of Scripture, we must think twice about describing it by that name ourselves. The reason using the word “covenant” to describe events in Scripture that are not called covenants should be rejected is because of the importance of the word “covenant” in Scripture and the place of prominence the concept has in our theological systems. The danger of calling something a covenant that Scripture does not refer to as a covenant increases the likelihood of making something a

cornerstone of our theology that in fact is not an emphasis in Scripture. This of course would lead to an unbalanced and unbiblical theological system.

We want to be very clear. We are not saying that you always have to use biblical terms to describe biblical concepts (even when those concepts are foundational to our theological systems). The Bible never uses the term ‘person’ when referring to the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, Christians are justified in this application because the concept of the personhood of the Holy Spirit is clear in Scripture. We find that we are forced to acknowledge the personhood of the Holy Spirit from the clear teaching of Scripture. The evidence in Scripture does not allow us to believe that the Holy Spirit is simply an impersonal force. Some of these evidences are actions of the Holy Spirit that are driven by purpose and intelligence as well as the fact that the authors of Scripture referred to the Spirit by using personal pronouns like “him” and “his.”

So the concept of the “personhood” of the Holy Spirit is an important doctrine although the term is never used to describe Him in Scripture. Thus, I think it can be a valid practice to understand a person or event in Scripture by using a term that Scripture does not in fact use to describe that person or event. So, the fundamental problem is *not* in assigning the word “covenant” to events in Scripture that Scripture itself does not call covenants, but rather the problem is the place you give those events in your theological system precisely *because* you designate them “covenants.” I think this happens very naturally because the term “covenant” in Scripture, unlike the term “person,” is a high profile and extremely important term. Almost invariably covenant theologians use the concept of covenant, whether it is the covenant of redemption or the covenant of grace, to illustrate the continuity of Scripture and God’s work in salvation. But Scripture uses the term, almost without exception, to illustrate discontinuity.⁸

In conclusion, while NCT does believe that the Bible teaches that our Trinitarian God has always had a sure plan to redeem His chosen people from their sins, we think that using the word covenant to describe that plan is a bad idea.

Question: God’s law is a reflection of God’s righteousness and holiness. God does not change. But NCT says that God’s law changes. How can this be?

A lot of people have asked me this question and I want to say from the outset that it is a logical question. The postulates and the conclusion that is drawn from them seem to be not only logical, but also based on clear biblical truths. Here is the argument in the form of a syllogism:

- (1) God’s law is based on his righteousness and holiness, which are aspects of His character.
- (2) God is immutable. His character does not change.
- (3) Therefore, God’s law cannot change.

This argument looks good, but the problem is that Scripture says in crystal clear terms that God’s law changes: “If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of

Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a **change of the law**” (Hebrews 7:11-12).

Now usually at this point in my answer the questioner will say to me, “That text is only referring to the laws governing priesthood. Look at the context and you will find that it is addressing the fact that the law stipulating that a priest must be from the tribe of Levi would rule out the possibility of our Lord (who was of the tribe of Judah) from becoming a priest. Therefore that law had to change. But I was referring to moral laws that reflect God’s character.” I heartily agree that that is the context of the verse. But the problem is that the questioner has begun to pick and choose which laws reflect God’s righteousness and holiness. Wasn’t God’s law that only Levites could become priests based on His holy character? Wouldn’t it have been immoral for a Benjamite or a Judahite to walk into the tabernacle or the temple and begin to perform sacrifices on behalf of the people? The person arguing that God’s law cannot change based on the argument above really means “God’s moral law” cannot change and by that he means the Ten Commandments. The practice of dividing law into moral and non-moral categories is difficult if not impossible to support biblically. Consider Leviticus 19:19: “Keep my decrees. Do not mate different kinds of animals. Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material”, and the following quotation by Mike Adams:

Was an Old Covenant Jew morally obligated to observe these statutes? Yes. Was he or she sinning if they planted mixed vegetables in their garden, wore polyester, or bred a mare with a donkey in order to produce a mule? Again, the answer is yes. Is one obligated today to observe these statutes? No. We are not sinning if we plant carrots next to our tomatoes, wear something other than 100% cotton, or breed a horse and donkey. Under the Old Covenant, these things are sin. Under the New, they are not.⁹

Do you see the problem with dividing God’s law up into moral, civil and ceremonial categories? *All* of God’s law is moral and based on the holy and righteous character of God.

Let’s consider one more example of God’s law changing by looking at Jesus’ teaching on divorce:

Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

“Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?”

Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell

you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.”

Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. (Matthew 19:3-11).

Jesus tells us that the Mosaic Law gave greater license for divorce than before that time (Adam to Moses) or after that time (Pentecost to the second coming of Christ).¹⁰ The reason he gives is that the Israelites were hard-hearted (which is another way of saying “unbelieving”).

Now we need to check out the Old Testament text to which Jesus was referring:

If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the Lord . Do not bring sin upon the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance (Deuteronomy 24:1-4).

These verses are part of the Mosaic Law that was given by God. That is the context. When Jesus attributed these words to Moses in Matthew 19 he was not saying that they were not God’s law. He was simply referring to Moses as the mediator of God’s covenant in which that particular law was given so that his audience might have a point of reference.

This text tells us that if a man found something wrong with his wife he could divorce her as long as he gave her a certificate of divorce. There is controversy over what the phrase “something indecent” means. We do know that it can’t mean something equivalent to adultery because unlawful sexual relations were punished by death. Not only would divorce not have been necessary but also remarriage for the offender would not have been an issue since she would be dead (Leviticus 18, 20:10). Also, Jesus is very clear that the regulation in Deuteronomy 24 is not as strict as what He laid down in Matthew 19. Deuteronomy 24 must be allowing divorce for something other than adultery. If a man decided to divorce his wife, he then had to give her a certificate of divorce. After doing that, the husband was free to marry another. But there was one prohibition that then applied to him. If the recently divorced wife got married to another and then divorced from that man, the first husband could not remarry her.

Now let’s compare and contrast the law that Jesus gives in Matthew 19¹¹ to that which God gives through Moses in Deuteronomy 24:

Mosaic Law	Law of Christ
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It was given to hard-hearted (unbelieving) people.	It is only given to believing people.
Divorce was permitted for some “indecency” less than adultery.	Divorce only is permitted in the case of unrepentant adultery.
Remarriage is permitted in all circumstances except to one’s former spouse after she has been remarried and divorced again.	Remarriage is forbidden in all circumstances except those divorces that are caused by adultery. Any marriage that is with someone who has had an unbiblical divorce is in an unlawful or adulterous relationship.

Was Deuteronomy 24 part of God’s law? Yes. Was that law based on God’s character in that it was holy and righteous? Yes. Does Jesus Christ tell us that God’s law on divorce and remarriage has changed? Yes. Has God’s character changed? No.

Now we can look back at the syllogism and modify it so that it fits with Scripture. I have placed changes to it in bold:

- (1) **All of** God’s law is based on his righteousness and holiness, which are aspects of His character.
- (2) God is immutable. His character does not change.
- (3) **But God’s law in fact can change even though His character does not change.**

This inquiry has taught us the important lesson that we must let Scripture rather than philosophical arguments define our theology.

Author

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Endnotes:

¹ This text is actually the core of all law in any era. In the Old Covenant era a believer expressed his love for God and neighbor according to the specific laws of the Mosaic Covenant. The way believers in the new covenant era express their love for God and neighbor is somewhat different than the Old Covenant believer and is defined by the teaching passages in the New Testament.

² Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998) p. 771. Emphasis mine.

³ Most of the Israelites were unbelievers. You may read my paper clarifying and defending this position at: www.newcovenant.ws/steve/nation_of_israel.html

⁴ It is called the time of faith because from the ascension to the second coming is when God is going to save the bulk of His elect. Before that time only a tiny remnant of people were saved (Romans 9:27).

⁵ I say New Covenant rather than New Testament Scriptures because the Gospels are a swing period in which Christ is under the Old Covenant, which was still in effect (Galatians 4:4) while simultaneously announcing the New Covenant. Therefore, the New Covenant Scriptures that serve as our sieve are the teaching passages in the epistles. They are not “more inspired” but they serve as the authoritative guide for

the life of the believer today. This guidance includes authority over interpreting and applying truths found in the Old Testament Scriptures to our lives today.

⁶ In our next issue that comes out in late June we will be discussing Israel in more detail. For now I refer again you to my article on this subject at: www.newcovenant.ws/steve/nation_of_israel.html

⁷ For an excellent discussion of the identification of these prophets as NT prophets see Peter T. O'Brien's *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary series, W.B. Eerdmans Publishing: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999, 214-218.

⁸ Tom Wells and Fred Zaspel, *New Covenant Theology: Description, Definition, Defense*, New Covenant Media: Fredrick, Maryland, 2002, pp. 281-283.

⁹ See Mike Adam's paper *Rethinking Our Use of 'Moral Law'* at: www.newcovenant.ws/doctor/Moral_Law.html

¹⁰ This is the most straightforward reading of the text. Jay Adams in *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1980, pp. 60-69, disagrees with the above understanding.

¹¹ This comparison in Matthew 19 only addresses the issue of a biblical divorce due to unrepentant adultery. But Scripture also clearly allows for a biblical divorce in the case of desertion (1 Corinthians 7).