

# Introduction

The heart of the New Covenant is God's Law written with and in and around love. It is a reflection of His character, and includes mercy, justice, truth, instruction, love and life. Love in particular is the main ingredient of all of His Words.

The new covenant is in the Old Testament. The terms of the covenant are that God gives believers a new heart of flesh (Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26) and writes His law on it. If you don't believe me, read it yourself.

“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, 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. 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. 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.”  
(Jeremiah 31:31–34, ESV)

This new heart is a symbol of love. Love is an action word marked by humility and a desire to do what God says. A heart of flesh is soft and responsive to its Creator and sustainer. It is the opposite of a heart of stone, which is marked by pride and resistance to God's commands, statutes, laws, and instruction. A heart of flesh is alive, and a heart of stone is dead. A heart of flesh rejoices in every word coming from God. A heart of stone needs to be chiseled with a hammer to get even the smallest response from it.

Every word from His mouth is life giving. Even those words that have punishment in them are designed to encourage life. Death is what happens when we turn away from His words of life. He is the source of life, His every word is life, so when we ignore His word, or His Law, we separate ourselves from life.

My family, kids and grandkids, are Christians and love God so we include the Law in our living and discipleship. By ‘Law’ we mean the whole of the Word. That's why we call ourselves whole Bible Christians. For a long time we were fairly standard ‘church’ Christians. But around 1996 we discovered the whole Bible way of living. We managed to remove the veil of church<sup>1</sup> anti-law teachings and grabbed hold of everything God has for His children. We observe God's holidays (for a complete list see Leviticus 23) and Sabbath. We don't eat what He said not to eat, and so on. At the time we started we didn't make our kids follow. They just chose it for themselves because they saw the truth of the Word.

---

<sup>1</sup> In this book, little ‘c’ means the visible church, the people who claim to follow Jesus the Christ.

Needless to say, we've taken a lot of flak from standard church Christians. We've had to leave churches, and been denied permission to attend others. This is because The Law has gotten a mixed reputation through the centuries. It shouldn't have; God just wants us to do what He says. He wants us to live in His love. Adam and Eve didn't want to live under God's rule. People in general really don't want to. So people tend to re-explain His Words to suit them, cherry picking what they will do and what they won't. We think 'The Law' is some scary set of rules forcing us to do things that aren't reasonable or relevant anymore. Humans have a tendency to pursue self-rule, and we're not very fond of being told to do something else.

So the Law has been split up into sections and parts are assigned for an older time. Or we assign some to one set of people (the Jews) and other parts to us (the church). Some of us teach 'moral' laws which most of the church tries to teach and live. Then there are 'ceremonial' and 'civil' laws that we don't. Some conditions have changed (like a new and better High Priest) so we just get rid of large sections of the Law wholesale. Spiritualizing is also popular, meaning the Laws aren't literally meant to be obeyed – as long as we *think* we're obeying that's enough.

Maybe these ideas wouldn't be a problem if the church was looking good. But now there are churches that not only accept homosexual 'Christians,' they ordain them as priests and pastors. God's concern for the poor, orphans, and widows has turned into church-sponsored socialism. Sex outside of marriage is no big deal in a lot of congregations.

People who teach and practice this non-biblical stuff use the same rules for rejecting the so-called 'moral' laws as the church does for the ceremonial and civil (note: those designations are not biblical in the first place). We've taught the finer points of cherry-picking the Law, only to have our methods amplified and returned to us in spades. The excuses used to dismiss some of the Laws end up being used to dismiss the rest too. Sitting in judgment on the Word only serves to give permission to judge all of it. We explain away the self-determined 'shadows,' but that's just the top of the slippery slope to complete moral disintegration.

Every thought I have was given to me by someone else. I don't claim any unique knowledge. It's right there in the Bible already recorded. I'm just clearing away some of the underbrush so you can get to what you need. I'm trying to say some of the things that people, with their automatic defense of the status quo, won't say. Many of the subjects I just touch on could have their own books, or even a shelf of books. I can't cover all of it in one. If I tried, you'd need a wheelbarrow to cart the book around. Even if it was electronic.

I've been around because of a broken childhood and a search for truth as an adult. I've seen a lot of what I call church 'country clubs' first hand. I'm also a child of our culture's moral freefall. By the time I was 13 my natural mom (I call her the egg donor; natural dad is the 'seed donor') was married seven times. In between I was placed in foster homes five times, and went to 20 grammar schools. At 14, by the grace of God, I was adopted. Through these experiences I yearned for what was stable, true, and unchangeable.

My childhood was a product of liberal, self-centered, worldly philosophies of men. The egg donor liked to say she wanted to "live and let live." This actually means, "Feel free to do what you want, because I want to do what I want." She was very affectionate and softly touchy-feely. So soft she had no spine to stand up for what was right. But hey, at least I wasn't killed in the womb, pimped out, or drugged out.

I got baptized as a Catholic at six years old (first foster home). I spent time in California and Hawaii's Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Assembly of God churches. After marriage I was baptized a second time and spent a few years in three different Calvary Chapels. After the second Calvary, I interviewed for a youth pastor position in my wife's former Disciples

of Christ church, and was briefly an unpaid youth leader in a Wesleyan. The third Calvary<sup>2</sup> was in Colorado. There was also an Evangelical Free church, and I was an elder in a Bible church.

I've been to Messianic synagogues and visited some off-beat groups such as the Worldwide Church of God and Seventh Day Adventists. I studied systematic theology books from the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, and populist books from people such as Chuck Smith (founder of Calvary Chapel). I even had a Mormon girlfriend in high school. I actually listened to Jehovah's Witnesses, got my own copy and read the book of Mormon, browsed the Hindu Bhagavad Gita, talked with Hare Krishnas, and even checked out the book 'Siddhartha' when I was younger. That's what happened when you grew up with the Beatles!

I've seen many different practices, and been immersed in different teachings and government systems. The result is that I'm not a shill for any particular denomination or theological system. I stayed with God, but it wasn't because of the church. The churches I've been in have been a lot like my natural mom – lots of touchy feely emotion, a few good actions here and there, but overall just not doing what you would expect from the Body. When it comes down to loving or leaving, all too many clubs choose the latter. Meaning that I was the one that had to leave.

There are quite a few godly people scattered throughout the church's history. Some of these I met myself. Three sets of foster parents went to church (one pair Catholic, one Assembly of God, and one Baptist). I remember the lady who gave us a thanksgiving meal from her church when we had no food in the house (how did she know?). There was Fred the Baptist youth pastor who tracked me down after I left the youth group and told me not to do things I would regret (I should've listened better). A Mormon couple across the street gave us food and clothes when I was laid off of a job one time. There were excellent teachers like John Lockhart, a Baptist pastor, and Dave Holmquist, a Wesleyan pastor (don't blame these guys for this book though). There was one time when my family actually got a check *from* a church we attended. Weird, huh?

Maybe you think I'm just a trouble maker and hard to please. Or that I'm just a wanderer because of my childhood. But it could be that God was moving me around to give me a thorough and balanced perspective. He gave me a lot of experience that most people don't get. I guess that's something for you to figure out for yourself. I've got a 32 year marriage, two kids and four grandkids. My family knows God and follows His ways. I've achieved stability in my life, but, alas, I could not get the same thing in church. All my traveling could mean I'm just really nuts. Or, it *could* mean that I've done so much wandering in the desert I know the difference between empty, dead sand and a life-giving oasis. I hope you'll learn from my wandering too.

In all of that traveling and studying, searching for truth, I have yet to see a church that gives first place to God's Word in both word *and deed*. I've rarely even heard of one. The bright spots usually shine because of the effort of a few stellar people. Even at that, none that I know of accepts the Bible as absolute truth (on the whole). There are lots of social programs and charitable giving, good loving people, and some very good activities. But precious little absolute, unfiltered, objective living truth from the Word of God.

Bouncing around, I searched and searched for the fruit of the Spirit. I was told I needed it and didn't have it, and I was told lots of different ways to get it. I desperately wanted it, but couldn't seem to make much headway. The Assembly churches tell me that getting "baptized in the Spirit," is the way, and the evidence would be "speaking in tongues." But much of that not

---

<sup>2</sup> Why so many Calvary Chapels, you wonder? At one time I thought they had the best shot at going the right way. Their ideas of following the Spirit and reading the Word are good. Alas, like every other group they hardened into a bureaucracy (see chapter 3) and are now more concerned with what Chuck Smith says than what the Spirit says.

only didn't work for the people I met, it appeared false compared to the Word.<sup>3</sup> Baptists and Methodists are into Bible study, but cloud the issue with all sorts of man-made rules that don't produce much fruit. I did learn I wasn't supposed to drink or dance, though. And if I listened to rock music I was going straight to hell. Uh oh.

Presbyterians and Lutherans have a little more objective truth, and a little more of the whole Bible, but spiritualize many parts of the Word out of my reach. Catholics not only spiritualize (when they let you read the Word at all for yourself) but also tell me that liturgy and praying to people besides God is the way to go. I hear all sorts of strange ideas from non-denominational churches too, like "allow Jesus to be the person inside of you that He wants you to be." Or "don't try to do, just be." Yeah.....huh? Too much pagan philosophy in there if you ask me.

There are those in any group that seem to get at least some of the Spirit some of the time, in spite of the system they find themselves in. Generally, though, they couldn't, or can't, tell me how to get it myself. I still don't have all of the fruit perfectly, but I've found the simple steps to get it, right there in plain sight.

Much of the space in this book is taken up by parts of Scriptures all printed out (over 700 verses), instead of just citing chapter and verse. This is because we need more of the Word and less of men's opinions. His Word is much more meaningful than mine. So you'll need to do a lot of self-study to confirm (or deny) that what I write is true. Do yourself a favor and read the context of the reference, so you can get a more accurate understanding of where God is going.

I could've written in a more scholarly style, with detailed analysis of Scripture and language and so on. Instead, I'm trying to paint the big picture with a broad idea brush, like the graphic on a puzzle box or paint by number kit. I'm also trying to show that we can easily get the picture from the Word alone. We don't have to be alphabet-toting theologians to get what He says. The more you read and do, the more He will fill in the picture. His word is clear, and He means exactly what He says.

I don't discuss other theologies much, but I do give you the tools to counter the unbiblical ones. I've studied them; I just think it's better to stick with the Bible by itself when writing my own book. Explain what's true, and the false won't get any traction. Bank tellers learn to spot counterfeit money by handling the real thing, not by studying the counterfeit. So I just present what I believe the Bible says rather than spend a lot of time with other doctrine (and in many cases, dogma).

One way to hide things in plain sight is to split truths that should be kept together. God is split into two gods, the Word is split in sections of old and new or outdated and updated, and the denominations are split over sometimes good but mostly dumb reasons. So one of the things I'm trying to do here is put all those splits back together, sort of. The second, third, and fourth chapters of this book have Ephesians 4:4-6 (one God, one Lord, one Body, and one faith) as their starting point.

Chapter 2 is about God and Jesus as one and the same. You may realize that there are people who think Jesus is just a nice teacher or prophet, but recoil at the idea that He is God. Bummer. The Bible says He is God, so I will too. Chapter 3 speaks of the one Body of the Christ, and emphasizes unity though there are groups that claim to be the best or only way to God. Chapter 4 concerns the single faith of the Body, which in this case is the Bible. Chapter 5 looks at the new covenant and what it really means. The last four chapters explain biblical answers to unbiblical claims about the Word, what the New Testament says about my position,

---

<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that gifts of the Spirit are false, just that much of the practice is false.

blessings, and application.

Some things I say in this book might sound like unfair blanket statements. Until you realize that all who claim church membership or have a Christian nametag are not all in the Body of the Christ. Around the year 325 A.D. the Roman emperor Constantine made his version of Christianity the official religion of the empire. Everyone had to convert. Or else. This conversion was often nothing more than slapping Christian labels on pagan practices and being anti-Jewish. The slapping was literal in some cases because he chiseled off idol's names and re-chiseled on 'saints' names. He tried to switch the real Sabbath<sup>4</sup> to Sunday, and 'Christianized' pagan feasts that have come to be known as Christmas and Easter. If you wanted to get the empire off your back and do some business, you had to at least look like a Christian on the surface while attending church services.

Constantine's pragmatism reared its ugly head again in the revivals of the 1800's. Preachers and evangelists of this time thought they should reduce the biblical message to 'whatever gets them in the door.' So they watered down the Bible to make it more palatable, and comfortable. Perhaps we could even say 'ear tickling.' This is where raised hands and going forward came from, which some famous evangelists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century raised to an art form. The result is that we have a large population of church-goers that are conditioned to expect this and perpetuate it, as if it really means salvation. The enemy's tares of "seeker friendly, spiritual but not religious" teachings were sown under the cover of seeming to advance the Kingdom. But when we sacrifice truth on the altar of expediency, we fill our buildings and not our hearts.

You may recognize that Constantine's version of "church" still exists today. Not everyone who goes to a Christian club is a Christian. When I mention the church (little 'c') in this book, I'm including everyone who wears the name, even though most don't truly play on God's side in the game.

There might be some strong statements that seem in-your-face or blunt to you, or you might detect some irritation here and there. It gets exasperating dealing with the bureaucracies of the churches. It's not so bad if people want to have a club; there has to be some club rules here and there. But I know firsthand what it feels like for religious leaders to slam doors.

"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in." (Matthew 23:13, ESV)

If I see a difference between the Bible and what the bureaucracies are doing, and ask a question, instead of a biblical response I hear "sit down and shut up or leave." Maybe not quite so blunt as that sometimes, but I get the drift. I know they're trying to preserve the sanctity of their club, but that assumes the clubs are biblical. On top of that, when they can't answer my questions, they want to label *me* as the false prophet, or "divisive person," or imply that the questions are wrong. They grab Bible authority, or claim orthodoxy (defined by them) but can't defend their positions entirely biblically. Somehow that makes *me* the one that is wrong. Happily for me, I found the Bible. It was there all along, hidden in plain sight. I just had to get God's okay to follow it, which of course He gives us all. This book is about relaying that permission to do what He says, to others who need it too.

I write both as a warning and encouragement. The warning is that many have drifted from God and need to repent and come back to His Word. The encouragement is for those individuals

---

<sup>4</sup> Check any calendar for the first day of the week and the last day of the week.

who have repented or who would repent but cannot find guidance. Some might just need a helping hand and a little affirmation that they are headed in the right direction. Let me tell you again – God has given us His permission to do what He says. So if I can heal the splits in our picture of God, and in His Word and His Body, assist a few people in grabbing hold of what God has, then I will count my efforts successful. And who knows? Maybe the warning will be heeded, too. But if people will not listen to God’s Words, why would they listen to mine?

<sup>10</sup>To whom shall I speak and give warning That they may hear? Behold, their ears are closed And they cannot listen. Behold, the word of the LORD has become a reproach to them; They have no delight in it. (Jeremiah 6:10 NASB95)

Along the way, we are going to biblically refresh word definitions and revisit basic concepts, because many words have been redefined by part-bibleists wrongly. (A part-bibleist is one who only reads and follows part of the Bible.) With the Spirit, we will unmask His riches and find the heart of the new covenant. We will reverse the splits, and put God, the Body, and the Word back together. When we have the foundation together, we will gain stability and blessings as we learn to make our stand on The Rock. We won’t be blown about by stray winds of dogma or feelings. The fruit of the Spirit that seems so hard to produce under standard church teachings will multiply to you 30, 60, or a hundred fold.

Crunch time is here. Things are heating up in the world, and it ain’t global warming. Jesus is coming back in judgment soon. Lines are being drawn sharply between good and evil.

<sup>10</sup>“Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. (Daniel 12:10 NASB95)

The salvation of the church is in re-embracing the whole, absolute truth of the Word of God. I hope we heed His encouragement to forsake our foolish ways, turn around, and partake fully of His life giving body and blood. Then maybe we can return to leading the way out of the culture rot and moral freefall. Thank you for taking the time to read, and may our Father bless your reading and doing of His Word. Nearly all puns are intended, and as they say in the seventh Narnia book, “Further up and further in!”