

I. Read Luke 16:16-17

- A. What is the significance of the reference to John in verse 16? (Read Matthew 3:1-3.)
John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets. The fact that he is described in the New Testament indicates the *continuity* of the Old Testament and New Testament. His ministry was both a continuation of the prophetic ministry of the Old Testament, in which the Messiah was promised by the prophets, and a culmination of the Old Testament prophets' work. His ministry literally *touched* the ministry of Jesus. (See Matthew 3:13-17.) It was Jesus that the prophecies, promises, sacrifices, and even the law had pointed to!
- B. Discuss the significance of this statement: "The New Testament is in the Old concealed; the Old Testament is in the New revealed."
The Old Testament and New Testament are not two separate books or even two separate testaments, but rather one. The qualifying terms *Old* and *New* represent the changing form of the Old into the New and the fulfillment of the Old by the New. Yet, the essential message and Covenant of Grace that holds the two together remains the same. The Old Testament cannot be *fully* understood apart from the revelation of the New Testament, nor can the New Testament be *fully* understood apart from the Old Testament. That does not mean that the Jews could not understand the gospel message from the incomplete revelation of the Old Testament Scriptures. Abraham is proof that they had enough truth to be saved (Galatians 3:6-7). Nor does that mean that the gospel message is insufficiently explained in the New Testament. It means that, taken together, we have a complete and comprehensive picture of the unfolding Covenant of Grace and the gospel.

How does Matthew 5:17-18 further explain the concept of a progressively unfolding revelation in Scripture?

Jesus declared that the Old Testament revelation, in particular the ceremonial law (Passover, the Day of Atonement, circumcision, etc.), pictured His atonement. When sacrifices were being made in the Old Testament, the dead animal by itself was useless. Only those who saw in that sacrifice a picture of the sacrifice of Christ, *the Messiah who would come*, were saved. (See Hebrews 10:4, 12-14.)

- C. In order to grasp a proper understanding of the continuity of the Old and New Testament revelation, one must learn to recognize the presence of the Covenant of Grace in both. Another way to look at this concept is that all who have been saved, in Old *or* New Testament times, *have been saved by grace!* Read Romans 4:1-18 and explain how the Apostle Paul views salvation.
Paul viewed salvation through the lens of a progressively unfolding Covenant of Grace. In other words, he saw salvation completely as a matter of grace, never something that could be earned by man. When he explains that Abraham "believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness" (verse 3 — NKJV), he makes it clear that no man, not even the patriarch Abraham, could keep the law in order to be saved. When Paul speaks of David, he is pointing to the progressive nature of the unfolding Covenant of Grace. In other words, David was saved the same way Abraham was saved (vs. 6-8). When Paul refers to Abraham as "the father of us all" (verse 16) and quotes, "I have made you a father of many nations" in verse 17, he is connecting the faith of the Old Testament Patriarch Abraham with the faith of the many Gentile nations who share his faith as described in Acts and in the Pauline Epistles. The gospel was first explained in Genesis 3:15 and was progressively revealed through the New Testament — the same gospel, the same Covenant of Grace in both the Old and the New Testaments!

- D. What has been described above is known as Covenantal Theology. It has several strengths to commend itself over alternate systems of interpreting Scripture. A strong case can be made that it has been the dominant view for understanding Scripture since the Apostolic Era. Only recently has it been seriously challenged as the dominant system for viewing Scripture within evangelicalism. What are some strengths of Covenant Theology?
1. **It provides a comprehensive grid in which to view the Old and New Testaments.**
 2. **It provides continuity between the Old and New Testaments.**
 3. **It recognizes essential attributes of God such as omniscience, immutability, and omnipotence, as well as the sovereignty of God.**
 4. **It gives proper emphasis to the role of the Covenant, which not only affects our understanding of salvation, but also affects our view of the church, the family, and the community.**
 5. **It rightfully puts Jesus at the center of both the Old and New Testaments.**
 6. **It recognizes the presence of the true church in both the Old and New Testaments.**
 7. **It helps us keep our focus on what is truly important in Scripture rather than becoming obsessed with peripheral issues (i.e., end-times silliness).**
 8. **It is true!**
- E. Read Genesis 3:15 and discuss what is being inaugurated.
The Covenant of Grace, in which the Savior Jesus is promised. There is also an indirect description here of the two seeds representing Satan and his followers who war against God and His people. Regarding the Covenant of Grace, it continues in substance throughout the Old and New Testament, though it is administered differently in the Old Testament than the New.
- F. Were believers saved differently during the Old Testament administration of the Covenant of Grace than they are during the time of the New Testament?
During the Old Testament administration of the Covenant of Grace, believers were saved by faith in the Messiah *who would come*. In the New Testament, believers are saved by the Messiah *who has come*. All are saved by grace through faith.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Covenantal Theology:

The Covenantal Perspective is the biblical framework in which those of the Reformed Faith understand the first three distinctives above. One author put it this way.

"The drama of redemptive history, on which the biblical revelation focuses, is essentially the progressive unfolding of God's great covenant with His people. God has sovereignly chosen to administer His grace and to commit Himself to acting on behalf of His people within a covenantal framework. It is the doctrine of God's covenant, spanning the entirety of biblical history, which provides the organic unity of the Bible, tying together the various redemptive eras."

All of Scripture is viewed as an unfolding covenant relationship between God and His people, in which God's dealing with man is based ***consistently*** on His sovereign grace. God's covenants come to fulfillment in the glorified Body of Christ, comprised of believing Jews and believing Gentiles, in a new heaven and new earth.

The Structure of the Bible – Throughout the Old and New Testament Scripture we hear the refrain: "*I will be your God, and you will be My people.*"

Bible References: Genesis 17:7; Exodus 6:5-7; Leviticus 25:9-12
 Matthew 26:28; Acts 2:39; 2 Corinthians 1:20

Genesis 3:15

Genesis 9

Genesis 17

Exodus 19-20

2 Samuel 7

<i>Adam & Eve</i>	<i>Noah</i>	<i>Abraham</i>	<i>Moses</i>	<i>David</i>	<i>Christ</i>
God's seed will crush Satan.	Creation will be preserved for new Creation.	God's people will be numerous and have an eternal inheritance.	God's people are shown His Holiness and are to gratefully obey their Redeemer.	God's kingdom will be ruled by a Messiah who is David's son over God's house.	<i>The New Covenant in His Blood.</i>