

Question by a Correspondent

SOME anxiety prevails among us here respecting the Covenants—*Whether we are now living under the Old or the New?* If under the Old, is not the Sabbath of the fourth commandment still obligatory upon us? If we Gentiles are not under the Old, *how do we get under the New?* Have the days come as yet when the covenant mentioned in Jer. 31:31, is made with Israel and Judah?

These subjects have weighed heavily on my mind for some time back. I cannot see that we are yet under the Old Covenant, which was made with Israel when they were brought out of Egypt; and yet I do not fully understand how we enter into, or are brought under, the New.—
C.H.

Dr. Thomas's Answer

Primarily and generally, there are two covenants—the Abrahamic and the Mosaic. These are styled “Old” and “New,” not with reference to the order of their record on the page of history, but in relation to the time of their *coming into force*. The Mosaic, styled in Jer. 31:31: “the covenant which I made with Israel’s fathers, when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt”—this was instituted at Sinai 430 years after the *typical*-confirmation of the promise to Abraham.—(Gal. 3:17; Gen. 15:18.) The Mosaic continued in force for sixteen centuries, a period that brings us down to the time of Jesus and the apostles. About six hundred years before their day, the Spirit of Christ in the angel Gabriel, informed Daniel, as recorded in chap. 9. of his book, that Messiah the Prince should confirm a covenant; and in the last half of the seventieth week of years from a certain decree, should cause to cease from sacrificing and offering. This teaches that Messiah was to effect a change respecting the law as the result of his confirmation of a covenant, and consequently another covenant than the Mosaic.

This being the purpose of God, the apostolic writings record the fulfilment. Paul, who had made greater progress in the Jews’ religion than any of his contemporaries, who were more learned in Judaism than any Rabbi now living; and consequently Paul, even if he were not a Christian, is better authority in constitutional questions concerning the Hebrew Commonwealth than all Rabbis of our day—this same constitutional Jewish lawyer—Paul saith that the Mosaic covenant had been made old by the promise of a new one, and that in his time it was ready to vanish away.—(Heb. 8:13.) Furthermore, he tells us that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to CONFIRM the promises made unto the fathers.—(Rom. 15:8.) These promises are the truth of God, and Jesus Christ was the confirmer thereof as Gabriel had foretold to Daniel. But, *when did he confirm this New Covenant?*

This question is answered in the words of Jesus recorded in Luke 22:29, 30, and elsewhere, saying, “And I am covenanted for you, as my Father covenants for me a kingdom; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit upon thrones, ruling the twelve tribes of Israel.” “I am covenanted”—*διατιθεμαι*, yes; yes; and in so doing, he said, “This is my blood of the covenant, being poured out for many for remission of sins.”—(Matt. 26:28.) “I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father;” and, therefore, it was not *felo de se*.—(John 10:17.)

Now, having accomplished this decease and taken up his life again in rising from the dead, the covenant with Abraham was *antitypically* confirmed. The antitypical Isaac was offered up, and received again by the Father by resurrection from the dead. This offering of Isaac’s seed, the Christ, was the death of the mediatorial testator of the New Covenant; for where a Testament or

covenant is, there must also, of necessity, be the death of the testator. If there had been no covenant, new or old, there would have been no occasion for the death of Isaac's Seed. The Abrahamic Covenant, then, is called New, because it did not come into force till the resurrection of Jesus, which happened in the vanishing period, "the last days" or "end of the" Mosaic "Aion."

This covenant, confirmed by Jesus as its Mediator (Heb. 12:24) is the covenant to be made with Judah and Israel, according to Jeremiah, Ezekiel and other prophets. It has not yet been made with Israel and Judah; that is, they have not been brought into the bond, or a delivering of the covenant.—(Ezek. 20:33–37.) At the period of confirmation it was offered to Israel and Judah's brotherhood; but they rejected it with scorn, because it was offered in the name of Jesus. This brotherhood, which then existed in the commonwealth of Judah, is represented in Zech. 11:14, as a staff in Jehovah's hand, named "bands." They were in the *bands* of the Old Covenant, which bound them together as one nation. Now, the prophet teaches, in this place, that the cutting asunder of the staff, Beauty, or the cutting off of Messiah the Prince, in whom no fault was found, would be the disruption of an existing covenant (verse 10); and that, after this, the other staff, bands, should be cut asunder, indicating the dissolution of the commonwealth of Israel and Judah. This came to pass accordingly in the apostles' days, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Little Horn. This was the epoch of breaking the Old Covenant, not of making the New, with Israel and Judah. When the New is made with them, the law of Jehovah will be in their inward parts and written in their hearts; and all Israelites will know him, from the least of them to the greatest. This is yet to come to pass.

The Old Covenant was never given to the Gentiles. A man of another nation never came under it, unless he became an adopted citizen of the Hebrew Commonwealth. The Gentiles were not even called by the gospel until Beauty was cut asunder, or the Mosaic covenant was broken "*with all the people.*" There is no obligation on Gentiles to keep the Jewish Sabbath. There is no one on earth, Jew or Gentile, that keeps it according to law, and any other observation of it only brings into condemnation. Gentile Sabbatarianism is a fig-leaf of the apron devised by the Old Man of the Flesh for the concealment of his shame. His teaching concerning it is mere twaddle.

The New, or Abrahamic, Covenant having been brought into force by the death of Jesus, Gentiles are invited to avail themselves of it, though for the time being Israelites rejected it. The last eighteen hundred years has been a period of *individual acceptance* of the Abrahamic Covenant, and of *national rejection* of it. Multitudes of individuals have embraced it joyfully, and at the hazard of property, liberty and life; but not a single nation has received it. It offers to individuals remission of sins, and inheritance among the sanctified through faith that leads unto Jesus Christ. In other words, it confers the right of life for ever of dominion over the nations in Messiah's aion, commonly called "*The Millennium.*"

When the day of Christ's power arrives, the Israelitish nation will be willing and glad to receive it even from the Nazarene they now so cordially despise. Many other nations will also receive it, and rejoice with Israel in its blessing. This is the testimony of Moses as well as of all the prophets and apostles. But they do not, and will not, accept it in the absence of Jesus from the earth. They will, therefore, be *subjects* not *rulers*, mortals not immortals, people not princes, in the age to come.

"How do we Gentiles get under the New Covenant?" Individually? Yes. The answer to this question is, "By taking hold of it." But what does taking hold of the Covenant consist in? In believing the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ: and then being immersed into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.—(Acts 8:12; Mat. 28:20.) In other words, believe the exceeding great and precious promises covenanted to the

fathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David, and confirmed by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ; and having this faith, put on Christ by baptism into him, for in Hebrews, Paul says, “By the new, or second, will (covenant or testament) we are sanctified through the offering of Jesus Christ once.” *We are sanctified by the Abrahamic Covenant, which is made sanctifying by Jesus, the seed of Abraham, its mediatorial testator, having dedicated it by his blood.* IGNORANCE OF THE PROMISES COVENANTED TO THE FATHERS EXCLUDES FROM THIS COVENANT-SANCTIFICATION, WITHOUT WHICH THERE IS NO SALVATION. “Alienated from God’s life,” says Paul, “through the ignorance that is in them.”—(Eph. 4:18.) Let those who cannot get beyond the faith and trembling of the demons, who as well as they believed that Jesus was the Christ the Son of God, think on these things. Read James 2:19; Mark 1:24, 34.

With the hope that sufficient has been adduced to relieve our correspondent of her difficulty, we conclude, wishing her and her friends a glorious participation in the consolation, in the expectation of which she patiently endures.¹

¹ (2001). *The Christadelphian*, 13(electronic ed.), 484–487.