



The Son of Man and the New Covenant

Key idea:

With the coming of Jesus, the old covenant promises, types, and shadows find fulfillment in the glorious realities of the new covenant.

Key text:

Mark 2:18-22

Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"¹⁹ Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them.²⁰ But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.²¹ "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse.²² And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins."

Key points:

1. The practice of fasting was commanded by God for the Day of Atonement, but it had grown into a practice observed far more often than that by the time of Jesus.
2. The Presence of Jesus changed the situation so that old covenant ceremonies, sacrifices, rituals, and practices had to be evaluated in light of new covenant realities.
3. The Scripture shows a clear relationship between the old covenant and the new covenant:
 - a. The old covenant promise and commands find fulfillment in the new covenant
 - b. The old covenant is type and shadow, the new covenant is the reality
 - c. The old covenant is external and unable to change us, the new covenant is internal and powerful to change us

4. The Law of God in the old covenant has a clear relationship to the new covenant:
 - a. The law of God had different aspects
 - i. Ceremonial - circumcision; food laws; special days; clothing
 - ii. Sacrificial - sacrifices to cover sin, thank God
 - iii. Moral - ethical laws - murder; sex; stealing; etc.
 - b. The ceremonial and sacrificial aspects of the law were temporary to point to Jesus, and since He has fulfilled them they no longer apply.
 - c. The moral aspect of the law is eternal because it is based on God's unchanging character and thus it always applies and will never change.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. Why did the people expect Jesus' disciples to practice fasting? What sort of answer do I think they were expecting from Jesus?
3. Have I ever practiced fasting? Do I think it is appropriate for Christians to fast? Why or why not? If so, how should fasting be similar to fasting in the old covenant? How should it be different?
4. How is Jesus' answer to the question about fasting similar to His claims regarding His authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:1-12) and His declaration that He came to call sinners to repentance (Mark 2:13-17)? How do all of the situations change because of the appearance of Jesus?
5. Why is it important for me to understand the relationship between the old and the new covenants? What mistakes arise if I do not understand their relationship properly?
6. In what ways is the new covenant superior to the old covenant? If it is so superior, why are some Christians tempted to return to old covenant types, shadows, rituals, and beliefs?
7. Why is it important to understand the various aspects of the Law? What is the danger if I do not keep these various aspects in mind as I try to apply God's Law in my life?

8. How would I answer someone who claims that a Christian can not say homosexuality or theft is a sin if they do not follow the food laws of the Old Testament?
9. Why is it important to understand that the moral law never changes? What happens if I ignore, distort, or violate the moral law? How will that affect my soul? My joy? My view of God and the Gospel?
10. Who will I call or see to invite to gather with the church this week?

For Further Study:

[Christ: The Focus and Fulfillment of the Old Testament](#) - This lengthy series shows how Christ is the focus and fulfillment of the entire Old Testament. The major people, places, and events in the Old Testament are types and shadows of the reality that is found in Christ, and through Him, all believers inherit the Old Testament promises. This includes teachings on the different aspects of God's Law, and the relationship between the old and new covenant.

[BRCC Catechism, Question 52](#) - This question looks at how God has given us His moral Law, which is a reflection of His character and thus never changes, to guide us into holiness and a life where we can glorify God and enjoy Him forever.