



GLOBAL GRACE NEWS

GGN is a teaching resource for ministers and churches all over the world. We advocate the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ - Jesus alone, grace alone, faith alone. Our purpose is twofold: to help the Church rediscover Jesus and to take this message to the world.

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2010

Promises Or *Requirements*

A certain thought has stayed with me these last weeks: Don't turn the promises of God into requirements! Don't turn the wonderful promises of who God is in our lives into requirements that we have to fulfil in our own strength.

The Old Covenant contained a lot of requirements that the Jews had to fulfil in order to be blessed. In the New Covenant there are also instructions concerning our lifestyle, but there is a huge difference. Now it is GOD who works in us both to will and to do according to His good pleasure (Phil 2:13). Christ in us, the hope of glory. When Paul and others gave instructions to born-again believers, He often emphasized that it was possible because we have a new nature and the love of God has been poured out in our hearts and God is working in our lives through the Holy Spirit.

Paul describes the new life that we now can live, not as a requirement to be accepted by God, but as a fruit of the new life in us. Let us keep our focus right, and keep remembering that Christ in us is the solution.

This truth also applies to areas like Guidance of the Holy Spirit and faith. Both are wonderful promises from God, so let us not turn them into a burden and something we have to try to achieve.

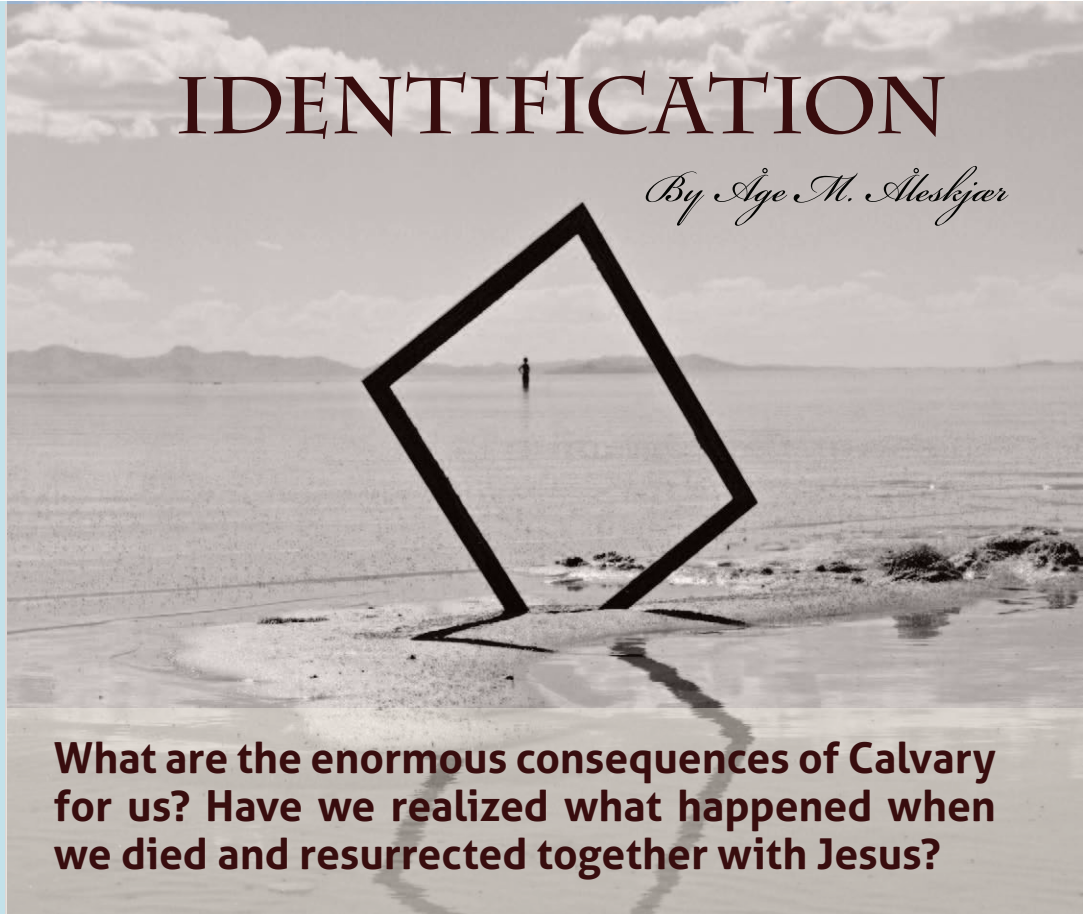
Enjoy the realities of His promises in this New Year, and know that Jesus came to be your life – abundance of life!



Mary Felde
Editor

IDENTIFICATION

By Aage M. Aleskjær



What are the enormous consequences of Calvary for us? Have we realized what happened when we died and resurrected together with Jesus?

The mystery of the cross is that Christ identified Himself with us, and we became one with Him. By Him becoming one with us, taking our place, carrying our sin, punishment, blame, and judgment, we could identify ourselves with Him, becoming one with His righteousness, victory, liberty, and holiness. Look at what the Word says: "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. 5:21)

He became one with our sin, so that we might become one with Him in righteousness.

"For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." (Rom. 6:5-6)

By His death and resurrection we are dead and resurrected. We are dead to sin, and alive to God. Everything happened because Jesus became one with us in such a way that we died with Him and rose with Him.

Jesus took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses, so that we could receive His health (Matt. 8:17).

Jesus became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

By the cross of Christ the world was crucified to us, and we to the world (Gal. 6:14).

The consequences of Calvary are enormous!

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The Effect of Redemption

Let us take some time and look into the redemption and what happens with us as we are identified with Jesus.

Dead to Sin, Alive to God

Jesus has taken away the sins of the world in such a way that the sins are gone, purged. But man would still be miserable if the sinner was not taken away as well. As a sinner one lives a life in sin and is constantly producing new sins. With Jesus as Lord and Savior this would be a frustrating existence. So God's solution to this is fundamental in the Gospel. The message is that we "died to sin" when we "died with Christ."

"Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." (Rom. 6:6)

This is good news! Jesus has not only dealt with sin, He has also killed the sinner. In Him we are new creations with the nature of God within us. We cannot sin, because we have been born of God (1 John 3:9).

This is the fundamental message concerning this issue. However, the Bible teaches that "babes in Christ" are still fleshly, and that Christians can still sin. John deals with this matter, and how it shall be handled, in the first chapter of his first letter. But this must not take the sting out of the message in Rom. 6:1-11, 1 John 3:9 and 5:18, and 1 Pet. 4:1-2.

Rom. 6:11 says that we should reckon ourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Peter says that we have ceased from sin (1 Pet. 4:1), and on this specific issue Jesus emphasizes that "if the Son makes you free, you shall be free *indeed*" (John 8:32-36).

Free From the Law

In Christ the Jews died to the Law, and Christ is the end of the Law. The purpose of the Law is fulfilled, and we are free, together with the born-again Jews.

Jesus has not only dealt with sin, He has also killed the sinner.

This liberty from the Law is a must to be

able to live in freedom from sin: "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace." (Rom. 6:14)

"Only the one liberated from the law, is liberated from sin."¹

"Only the one liberated from the law, is liberated from sin."

Not Under Curse, But Under The Blessings of Abraham

Some people are concerned about the curse of the Law. But we have never been under the Law, and therefore not under the curse of it either. And the fantastic, liberating message is also that the Jews are free. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." (Gal. 3:13)

The redemption breaks the yoke of poverty and sickness, and instead it leads us into the blessings of Abraham.

He Became Poor for Us to Be Made Rich

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich." (2 Cor. 8:9)

Some people are concerned about the curse of the Law. But we have never been under the Law, and therefore not under the curse of it either.

The context of this verse is an offering exhortation. Paul is challenging them to give, and is reminding them of the fantastic thing, that Jesus – who was richer than any – became poor for our sakes. On the cross He was robbed from everything. He was poor, homeless, hungry, naked, and thirsty for our sakes, so that we might become rich.

God wanted us to always have all sufficiency in all things, and have abundance for every good work (2 Cor. 9:8).

He declares that "all things are ours!" This is a result of the redemption on the cross. These are side effects of us being declared righteous.

He Bore Our Sicknesses, for Us to Be Healthy

"He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." (Matt. 8:17)

The prophecy that is quoted in Matt. 8:17 is from Isaiah 53:4-5:

"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." (Is. 53:4-5)

This gospel about healing is more than intercession and the laying on of hands, even though this has its rightful place in the ministry of the saints. The redemption is the foundation for a life in health, a life of freedom from sickness and diseases.

The spirit who is at work in the children of unbelief is bankrupt.

This corresponds to the promise given in Ex. 23:25-26, which says: "And I will take sickness away from the midst of you" and "I will fulfill the number of your days."

Health and a long life are the results of Calvary!

Crucified To the World

"But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Gal. 6:14)

The world has been crucified to me. What does it mean?

Calvary was a judgment of this world and the ruler of this world (John 12:31). The world was judged and the ruler of this world was judged. The world was doomed to come to an end, and the ruler of this world was doomed to be damned forever.

This lets me relate to "the form of this world" in a totally new way. In reality the word "world" here can be translated "age." The spirit who is at work in the children of unbelief is bankrupt. It still keeps its doors open, but we are free from its attraction and deception. The world is crucified to us.

But it gets even stronger knowing that we are crucified to the world! The world is still very active, even if it is declared

bankrupt, and has no future. But when we at the same time are crucified to the world, it makes us free from its dominion. The ruler of this world is not a ruler in my world, because we have been delivered from the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of the Son of His love. It is Jesus who is the Lord in our world. We are moving in His Kingdom, and the ruler of this world “has nothing in us.” This is why John is saying: “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one, and the wicked one does not touch him.” (1 John 5:18-19)

We are destined to reign in this life.

We are gloriously redeemed and we are free. We have moved out of Egypt and away from Pharaoh and his soldiers, and we have moved into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey.

The World Belongs To Us

It might be confusing that the Bible at the same time is saying, “The world is ours.” But the point is that we have to understand the difference between “the world” in the sense of “the spirit of this age,” and “the world” as “the earth and all its fullness.” God has redeemed us from the spirit of this age, and delivered us from the power of darkness, and the ruler of this world.

On the other hand it was God who created this world and all its fullness for His children to enjoy and have dominion over it. He did not create the resources on the earth for the devil and his children.

According to Genesis 1 God wanted to give the gold, the diamonds, the fertile plants and the seed, the oil resources, and all the riches to His children.

Now, this blessing is redeemed back to us, so 1 Cor. 3:21-23 explains that everything belongs to us: the world, life and death, things present and things to come. We have been made rich in everything.

We are destined to reign in this life; we are kings and priests to our God. Christ is the head – we are the body. All things are put under His feet, meaning that the whole body is above all principality and power and might and dominion.

We In Him And He In Us

Jesus said,
“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. “I am the vine, you are the

branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4-5)

This is the very essence of the revelation the Apostle Paul received. His message about who we are in Christ, and who Christ is in us is the nerve center in New Testament Christianity. The mystery that now is revealed is: “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27)

This identification with Christ was released in the redemption when Jesus became one with our sin, sickness and curse, and we became one with His death, burial, and resurrection.

Reality And Experience – Not Just Theory
After the Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, this became a living reality.

“At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” (John 14:20)

“And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.” (1 John 3:24)

This is Christianity. It is to be a Jesus person. It is to be one with Him

The experience of this living reality comes through the Holy Spirit. Our identification with Christ is as total as this:

“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” (Col. 3:3-4)

“Hidden with Christ in God.”

Then it is not easy for the enemy to get hold of you. He first has to get past God and Christ to find you.

Take a look at the expression: “Christ, our life.” We are so one with Christ that He is our life. He is our righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

We are crucified with Christ. It is no longer we who live, but Christ lives in us (Gal. 2:20).

This is Christianity. It is to be a Jesus person. It is to be one with Him - Him speaking through our mouth, touching with our hands, and looking through our eyes.

Reinhard Bonnke experienced that when a shopkeeper of a music store fell on his knees and asked for prayer when Bonnke and his team went to a store to buy an organ. He said, “I can see Jesus in your

eyes.” When Bonnke later asked the Lord about the incident, He answered, “I live in you, and sometimes I look through the window!”

We Are Like Him

We are completely one with Christ. We are in Him, and He is in us. This unity came into being by Christ coming to us. He became one with us. This started with Him becoming a human being. The incarnation was the beginning of His identification with us.

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” (Heb. 2:14)

For Him to be able to save us, He had to become like us. It was only a representative for man that could save man.

And it was only through death that He legally could enter Hades, that is the place of death, and the devil had to fight on home ground.

In this encounter between Jesus and the devil there is a lot that the wisdom of this age does not grasp, and that modern theologians do not comprehend, because this can only be spiritually discerned.

After He came down and became a man, He took the next step: He became one with our sin, sickness, and curse. This is why He had to die on a cross, because the wages of sin is death.

It was when that price was paid, that he could establish an eternal righteousness. “For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” (Heb. 10:14)

Dead With Him

This is where the incomprehensible thing happens: By Him becoming one with us, we became one with Him. Because He died our death, we are also reckoned as dead. We died with Him, and in that way we died to sin, and we died to the world.

We died with Him, and in that way we died to sin, and we died to the world

Our union with Him makes Him our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. This is the message:

“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.” (Rom. 6:5-8)

The following verses show that we are dead with Him once for all, and now we live a life where we are dead to sin, and alive to God. The message in Romans 6 is crystal clear and unmistakable. Just read it without prejudice. I think you will understand that this message has not taken root in the Christianity of today. The tradition has put a veil over the truth, and this veil needs to be taken away.

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Seated With Him in Heavenly Places
Paul’s focus is on who we are in Christ, and who Christ is in us. He says that what he is laboring for is to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. The basis is the mystery about Christ in us.

“To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” (Col.

1:27:28)

Because this is what he focuses on in his teachings, we will come to see that Ephesians is full of it. He says in Ephesians 3:1-6 that the mystery that was made known to him is briefly written in chapters 1 and 2. Ephesians 2:4-6 is some of the most powerful writing about our identification with Christ:

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

Dead with Him, raised with Him, and seated together with Him in the heavenly places. We are where He is, and He is where we are.

“Because as He is, so are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17)

This is hard to receive for those who are used to the picture that tradition portrays us being poor and miserable sinners. But it is simple and glorious light for those who have started to gaze into the perfect law of liberty where the light of the gospel shines forth.

Because Christ is our life, we do not need help from the law that belongs to the basic principles of the world.

Walk In Him

“As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.” (Col. 2:6-10)

It is not only the salvation, but also the “walking” that takes place in Him. Because Christ is our life, we do not need help from the law that belongs to the basic principles of the world.

“Christ is *all* and in all!” (Col. 3:11)
Christ is all! Then we need nothing else but *Him!*



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Two Covenants , not one!

By Steve McVey

Let's get these covenants separated. That simple step will make a world of difference in understanding our Bible.

Over three weeks, I've been sharing a three-part series of teachings on the "Sunday Preaching" broadcast called, "Two Covenants, Not One." For many years, I stayed confused when I read the Bible because I didn't understand this simple aspect of understanding the Scripture. The Old and New Covenants are very different from each other in many ways. God told those in the Old Covenant that a day was going to come when He would make a new covenant with His people and it would not be like the covenant He had made with them through their Fathers. (See Jeremiah 31:31-32) Through Jesus Christ, that day came to us so that now the covenant He has made is totally different - not at all the same. It's new and, according to Hebrews 8:13, the old one is "obsolete." It has passed away. It's gone, expired, finished, over!

Isn't the Old Testament God's Word?

This fact is a sticking point in many people's minds. "Isn't the Old Testament God's Word?" they will ask? Of course the Old Testament is as much a part of the Bible as the New Testament, but here's a key that will help us immeasurably when we understand it. The Old Testament was

The Old Testament was not written to us! It was written for us, but not to us.

not written to us! It was written for us, but not to us. (See Romans 15:4) There's a big difference. That's why the Apostle Paul cautioned Timothy to take great care to ensure that he would "rightly divide the word of truth" when he taught the Bible. (See 2 Timothy 2:15) All kinds of trouble are created in our minds and lives when we don't do that.

First of all, the Law was never even given to the Gentiles. It was given to Israel. Consider these texts:

These are the statutes, the ordinances, and the laws that the Lord gave between Himself and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai, by the hand of Moses" (Leviticus 26:46).

He tells His words to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. He did not do so to any nation ... (Psalm 147:19-20).

For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves. . . (Romans 2:14).

The New and the Old don't mix!

Christians today put themselves in a confusing cycle of condemnation when they try to apply an Old Covenant mentality to understanding the Bible. The New and the Old don't mix!

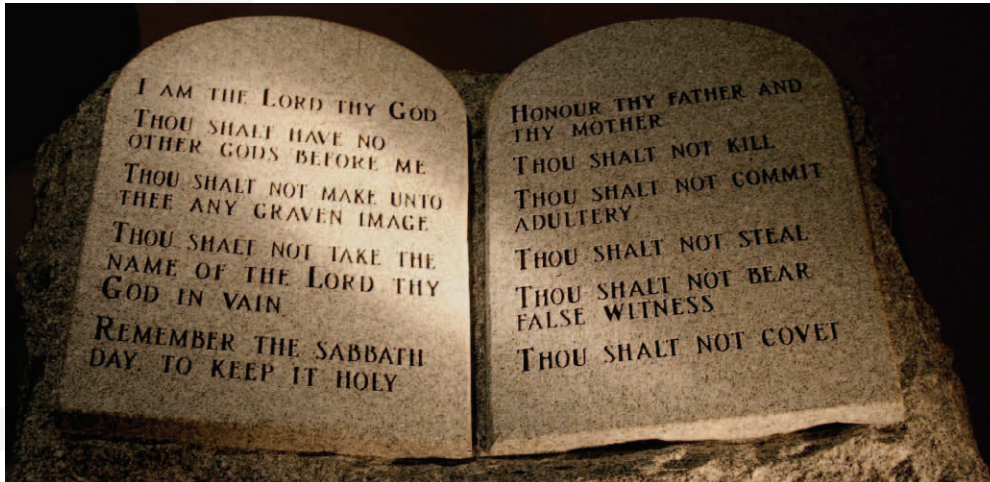
Example: Do you believe your

heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things? If you do, it's because you've failed to "rightly divide the word." God had Jeremiah tell the people that

Christians today put themselves in a confusing cycle of condemnation when they try to apply an Old Covenant mentality to understanding the Bible.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9) but in Romans 5:5 Paul said that "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." Which is true? They both are! It was true when Jeremiah said it to those to whom He spoke in the Old Covenant and Paul's words are true for we who live under the New Covenant! Do you see the confusion that happens when

we fail to make the distinction between the covenants? There are many biblical texts like that. When we read the Bible, we need to ask ourselves, "Who is speaking? To whom is he speaking? When is He speaking?" These are basic questions that will settle a lot of confusion in reading the Bible.



Remember this: The new covenant doesn't start at Matthew 1:1. It starts at the death of Jesus.

When does the New Covenant start?

Remember this: The new covenant doesn't start at Matthew 1:1. It starts at the death of Jesus. The importance of this fact can't be overstated. Hebrews 9:16 says, "For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it." In other words, a Last Will & Testament means nothing until the person who wrote it dies. That's important even when we read the New Testament pages.

For instance, you'll get yourself into a world of confusion if you try to apply the Sermon on the Mount to yourself. Remember that Jesus hadn't died when He spoke those words. He was talking to them, not you. They were a group of people who thought they could gain righteousness by their moral living so Jesus showed them

just how impossible that is. He said things like, "If you lust, gouge your eye out. If you steal, cut your hand off." So here's the question: Do you really believe that's what you're supposed to do? "Of course not!" a critic might respond, "It was obvious He didn't really mean that!" Wait, a minute. If you claim that we're supposed to do everything Jesus said, you can't take

that cop-out. The Bible isn't a menu you can choose from.

The importance of rightly dividing the covenants

The fact is that if we don't rightly divide the covenants, we will end up treating the Bible like a buffet where we take the things we like but leave the things we don't like. That's no way to treat the Scripture. Better to respect the Scripture enough to accurately interpret it instead. No, Jesus wasn't telling you to pluck your eye out. He wasn't even talking to you.

One more example: Jesus said that if we don't forgive people who have offended us, then God won't forgive those who don't forgive. (See Matthew 6:14-15) Do you really think that's for you? Do you

honestly believe that it's possible that you've trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, walked with Him, known and loved Him, trusted in His finished work on the cross and now, if it should happen that somebody offends you and you die before you've forgiven them that you won't be forgiven? Anybody who even slightly uses common sense knows that can't be right!

What's the answer? The answer is that Jesus spoke those words *before* the cross - before the inauguration of the New Covenant. Notice how everything changed after the cross.

Ephesians 4:32: "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, *just as God in Christ also has forgiven you*". Notice here that we forgive because we have already been forgiven, not so we can get it.

What does Colossians 3:13 teach is our motivation to forgive others? "... bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; *just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.*"

See how everything changes with the end of the Old Covenant and the beginning of the New?

Let's get our covenants separated. That simple step will make a world of difference in understanding our Bible.



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