

A Historical Study On The Book Of Luke
Teaching #4: Luke Is Not A Book In The New Testament
Luke 22:20

*Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is **the new testament in my blood**, which is shed for you.*
Luke 22:20 (Webster's Bible Translation)

Notice in Luke 22:20 Jesus says **the new testament is about his blood shed for you.**

In the context of Luke 22:00, Jesus and his disciples are observing the Jewish remembrance of the Passover, when a lamb's blood was shed. The angel would pass over the homes of those who had the blood of the lamb on the sides and tops of the doorframes of their homes (Exodus 12).

Jesus is the true Lamb of the Passover.

1 Corinthians 5:7 says, "...*the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*" (Romans 3:21-25; John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:19; 1 John 2:1-2)

This is the new testament.

We learn in Luke 22:20 the new testament is not about **27** books in the Bible called The New Testament; rather, the new testament is about **1 Savior's blood** shed for the forgiveness of sins (see Matthew 26:28).

*For this is **MY BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**, which is shed for many for the remission [forgiveness] of sins.*
Matthew 26:28

When pastors, professors, and teachers begin teaching through the book of Luke, typically they say Luke is the third book in the new testament. From this statement, their understanding is the new testament is a collection of books to be read rather than our crucified Savior's blood that was shed. Because this is their understanding of the new testament, those who are learning from pastors, professors, and teachers develop the same understanding.

Let's test this.

If you were to ask pastors, professors, and teachers, as well as church members and students to tell you about the new testament, the overwhelming majority would say the new testament is a set of 27 books that begin with the birth of Jesus in Matthew chapter 1. **This answer may be traditionally correct, but it is biblically wrong.**

How do we know this?

If you were to ask Jesus to tell you about the new testament, **Jesus would say: *the new testament is my blood shed for the forgiveness of your sins.*** (Matthew 26:28).

Jesus' answer is quite the contrast to the answers of pastors, professors, teachers, church members, and students who say the new testament is a set of books beginning with the birth of Jesus. Jesus says the new testament is about his blood pour out for the forgiveness of sins.

According to Jesus, the new testament begins with his death.

Let's examine this further.

In the Bible, there is also an old testament. Again, if you were to ask pastors, professors, and teachers, as well as church members and students to tell you about the old testament, the overwhelming majority would say the old testament is a set of **39** books beginning with Genesis chapter 1. This answer, too, may be traditionally correct, but **it is also biblically wrong.**

How do we know this?

According to the Bible, the old testament went into effect in **Exodus 24:8** when an animal was sacrificed. This was a covenant between God and the people of Israel. This covenant was the Law of Moses the people promised to obey, but they did not; therefore, the curses of the law came upon them.

We will examine this later in the study.

Because the old testament begins in **Exodus 24:8**, then all of the book of Genesis and most of the book of Exodus are not old testament books. If all of Genesis and most of Exodus are not books in the old testament, then what are they? Simply put, they are books in the Bible that should **not** be divided in the Table of Contents as 39 books in the old testament and 27 books in the new testament. Rather, they should be all grouped together as 66 books of the Bible. This would bring clearer understanding to those teaching and learning about the Bible.

Here is what I mean.

There are 66 books in the Bible from Genesis through Revelation. **The old testament of law is from Exodus 24:8 through Matthew 27:50, when Jesus died.** Since Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John cover the same period of time, most of the events recorded in those books are during the time of the old testament. Only when Jesus shed his blood and takes his final breath from the cross does the new testament go into effect in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The misunderstanding for most pastors, professors, teachers, church members, and students originates with the Table of Contents in the Bible. It is vital to know the Table of Contents is **not** a part of the Scriptures, but it was added by those compiling the writings in the Bible to help organize the Bible into one volume.

Unfortunately, those organizing the Table of Contents incorrectly identified the old testament as 39 books, starting with Genesis and ending with Malachi. They also incorrectly identify the new testament as 27 books, beginning with Matthew and ending with Revelation. However, this miss-identification of the 66 books in the Bible has led to a misunderstanding of the Bible. **Neither the old or new testaments are about books to be read, both are about blood shed for the forgiveness of sins.**

The old testament is about the blood of animals shed for temporal forgiveness of sins (Exodus 24:8), and the new testament is about the blood of Jesus shed for eternal forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:12; Ephesians 1:6-8).

Because of this misunderstanding, most believers, have been miss-taught by their pastors, professors, and teachers. And who can blame the pastors, professors, and teachers, this is what they were taught as well.

So how do we know for sure where the old and new testaments start and end? **The Bible tells us.**

How do we know if the old and new testaments are books of the Bible or if they are blood shed for the forgiveness of sins? **The Bible tells us this also.**

And why does it matter?

It matters because in our study if the book of Luke if we view Luke as a new testament book, then we will misunderstand the book and misapply its verses. It is vital to understand that **most of the book of Luke takes place during the time of the old testament not during the time of the new testament.** This will become crystal clear in our study, thus preventing us from taking verses out of context and misapplying them.

With this understanding, let's begin our study of the book of Luke, starting in **Luke 1:5.**

Luke writes,

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. (Luke 1:5)

Who is Herod king of Judea and what time was he king?

- Judea was one of the three major sections of ancient Israel: Galilee was the north, Samaria the center, and Judea the south. Judea included the following towns, among other towns:
 - Jerusalem
 - Bethlehem
 - Jericho
 - Emmaus
- Herod the Great was appointed by Rome to rule over Judea as King. He ruled from around 36 BC to 4 BC, and was the King who had all the male children two years and under murdered in his attempt to kill Jesus (Matthew 2).

Notice the dates that Herod the Great ruled: 36 BC to 4 BC.

King Herod died in 4 BC. This means Jesus was born before 4 BC. Many place the birth of Jesus around 1 AD; however, because of calculation errors in the calendar system created centuries later, the date of Jesus' birth

is between 6 BC and 4 BC. This two-year span allows for the time the Magi traveled to Bethlehem to worship Jesus.

The main point I want us to see is that **Jesus was born during the time of the old testament law** (see Galatians 4:4). Since Jesus stated the new testament went into effect when he died, which would have been around 29 AD, then in 4 AD the old testament of law would have been in effect for the nation of Israel.

This leads us back to **Luke 1:5**, which reads,

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron.

Let's also read **Luke 1:8-10**.

*Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, **9**he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. **10**And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.*

There are **very important words** to pick up on in these verses that clearly show the old testament of law was in effect during this time, dispelling the common belief the book of Luke is a book in the new testament. These words are: *Aaron, division, priest* (used 21 times in the book of Luke, including the word priests), *priesthood, temple* (used 19 times in the book of Luke), *burn incense*, and *the time for the burning of incense*.

Each of these words are old testament words, proving the old testament was in effect during the period of time covered in the book of Luke – since the new testament went into effect at the death of Jesus.

Let's examine these words.

To understand *Aaron, division, priest, priesthood, temple, burn incense*, and *the time for the burning of incense*, **we need to start in Exodus**.

In Exodus, the people of Israel are delivered from Egyptian captivity and taken to Mount Sinai (Exodus 1-18), where Moses received the law (Exodus 19-23).

In **Exodus 24:8, the law was officially put into effect**.

Exodus 24:1-8 reads,

*Then the Lord said to Moses, "Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, **2**but Moses alone is to approach the Lord; the others must not come near. And the people may not come up with him." **3**When Moses went and told the people all the Lord's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the Lord has said we will do." **4**Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. **5**Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. **6**Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he splashed against the altar. **7**Then he took the Book of the*

*Covenant [testament] and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey." **8**Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "**This is THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT** that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words."* (See Hebrews 9:19)

What do we learn in these verses?

The law was written in a book called **the Book of the Covenant/Testament** (throughout the Scriptures the Book of the Covenant is called the Book of the Law (Nehemiah 8:3; Galatians 3:10), Book of the Law of Moses (Joshua 23:6), the Book of the Law of God (Joshua 24:6; Nehemiah 8:8, 18), and the Book of the Law of the LORD (Nehemiah 9:3). However, the covenant is not the book, it was only written in the book. The book contains the content of the covenant/testament, which is the law God gave Moses to govern the people of Israel. The covenant, which is **now called the old covenant** since it is no longer in operation because the blood of Jesus ushered in the new covenant/testament (Hebrews 13:8), was **a temporary agreement** between God and the people of Israel.

The agreement was that if the people obeyed the law, God would bless them; but if they disobeyed, God would curse them (see Deuteronomy 28-29). This is much like a parent who tells a child that if he obeys, he will get a cone of ice cream, but if he disobeys, he will sit in time-out.

The covenant of law system between God and Israel is also like a parent and a teenager. The parent tells the teenager that if he makes good grades and stays out of trouble at school, then he can drive the car on the weekend. However, if his grades falter and he gets into trouble at school, then he cannot drive the car on the weekend, and additionally, he will be grounded on the weekends until his grades and behavior improve.

With the people of Israel, God is not dealing with a child or teenager but with a nation that is surrounded by other nations. God promised to bless the nation if the people obey but curse them if they disobey. You can read about this in Deuteronomy 28-29.

The purpose of the blessings and curses was to motivate Israel to stay true to God so they could reveal to the other nations who God is. The other nations were worshipping false gods. If the nation of Israel intermingled with the other nations, then the people of Israel would abandon God and worship the false gods, causing them not to reveal the true God to them.

I write on this extensively in my book, [The Story of Grace](#).

Let's return the book of Exodus when Moses received the law from God.

In addition to the law, Moses received instructions from God to build a sanctuary (tabernacle) for God to dwell among them (Exodus 25:8). The furnishings (items inside and outside the sanctuary), activities, and the people who would oversee the furnishings and activities are recorded in Exodus 25-40.

NOTE: To see how the furnishings (items) in the sanctuary (tabernacle) point to Jesus, see Brad's teaching series: [How The Items In The Tabernacle Point To Jesus](#).

Remember, we are looking into Luke 1:5-10,

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, 9he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

We are examining the words *Aaron, division, priest, priesthood, temple, burn incense, and the time for the burning of incense* in the book of Exodus.

In the book of Exodus:

- The people of Israel are delivered from Egyptian captivity and given the law.
- The law is officially instituted in Exodus 24:8, when the blood of an animal was sprinkled on The Book of the Covenant.
- Moses was instructed to build a sanctuary (tabernacle) where God would dwell among the people.
- The furnishings, activities, and people who managed the sanctuary are recorded in Exodus 25-40.

Those who managed the sanctuary were called **priests**. They would come from the family tree of Aaron.

We learn this in **Exodus 28:1**.

*“Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve me as **priests**.”*

All the priests together were called the priesthood.

The priests were placed into different divisions or groups (see 1 Chronicles 24, specifically verse 10). **Abijah was the division Zechariah was from** – Luke 1:5).

The roles for the priests are described in Exodus 28 through Leviticus.

One of the roles of the priests was burning of incense.

Exodus 30:1 says,

“Make an altar of acacia wood for burning incense.”

The altar of incense was placed inside the sanctuary.

Exodus 30:6 says,

“Put the altar in front of the curtain that shields the ark of the covenant law—before the atonement cover that is over the tablets of the covenant law—where I will meet with you.”

One of the role of the priests was to burn a fragrant incense at the prescribed times as seen in **Exodus 30:7-8**.

“Aaron [the first priest] must **burn fragrant incense** on the altar every morning when he tends the lamps. **8**He must burn incense again when he lights the lamps at twilight so incense will burn regularly before the Lord for the generations to come.” (Exodus 3:7-8)

With this information, let's return to **Luke 1:5-10**.

*In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, **9**he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense . **10**And when the time for the burning of incense came [see Exodus 30:7-8], all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.*

God gave the law to Moses around the time of 1500 BC. About 1500 years later, around the time of 6 BC to 4 BC, Zechariah was a priest in the division of Abijah. He was chosen by lot to enter the temple to burn incense in accordance with Exodus 30.

The sanctuary initially constructed during the time of Moses was eventually built into a temple by Solomon (2 Chronicles 2). It was later destroyed by Babylon under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 26:15-21) then rebuilt by Nehemiah (see the book of Nehemiah).

In AD 4, the temple was under the rule of Rome. This is because one of the curses of disobedience to the law was that foreign nations would invade and occupy the land of Israel (Deuteronomy 28).

In AD 4, Rome ruled the nation of Israel but allowed the priests to continue to manage the temple as prescribed in Exodus and Leviticus. One of the priests during this time was Zechariah. His division was on duty when it was time to burn the incense inside the temple as prescribed in Exodus 30. According to Luke, Zechariah was chosen by lot to enter the temple for the burning of incense.

How did Luke know this information about Zechariah?

Luke probably obtained this information directly from Mary, the mother of Jesus, while investigating the life of Jesus to provide credible information about Jesus for Theophilus. Mary spent considerable time with Zechariah and Elizabeth where she received detailed information about Zechariah's experience. She passed this information to Luke.

So what do we learn about the old and new testaments in **Luke 1:5-10**?

When the book of Luke opens up, it is crystal clear **the old testament of law was still in full operation. The new testament of grace** had not been established at this time, since Jesus had not shed his blood.

Remember, according to Jesus, the new testament went into effect **when he died**. Therefore, it is **impossible** for Luke to be a new testament book, thus making the Table of Contents 100% inaccurate concerning the book of Luke.

Let's take a look at other verses in Luke that provide clear evidence the book of Luke is **not** a new testament book but records information and events that took place during the time of the old testament of law.

- Both John the Baptist and Jesus were circumcised on the eighth day as required by the law of Moses (Leviticus 12:3; Luke 1:59; 2:21).

Paul, in **Galatians 4:4**, writes that Jesus was born under the law of Moses, which is why Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day.

Paul writes in **Galatians 4:4-6 (Berean Study Bible)**,

*But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, **5**to redeem those under the law, that we might receive our adoption as sons. **6**And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” **7**So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son [Greek word for **son** is sons and daughters], you are also an heir through God.*

It is clear in these verses that Jesus was born under the law. He eventually redeemed people from the law with his death so they could go from being slaves to the law to sons and daughters of God under grace, calling him **Abba, Father**.

Slavery to the law was being a slave to the rules, requirements, rituals, duties, demands, days, and diets prescribed by the old law/testament of Moses from Exodus 19-Deuteronomy. Under the law, God was a judge.

Being redeemed from the law, believers in Jesus now relate to God as *Abba, Father*. We are loved sons and daughters of God not slaves to a religious system. God sent the Spirit of Jesus into our hearts so we now call God, **Abba Father**.

Abba is the relational term Jewish people call their dads.

By using the term *Abba*, Paul is showing how believers are in a loving relationship with God where they know they are fully forgiven and completely accepted. They no longer relate to God as judge under law, or any religious system, but they relate to God as *Abba, Father* under grace. **They no longer relate to God by a list of requirements to practice daily but relate to God in a loving relationship which they enjoy daily.**

Something to keep in mind:

- During the life of Jesus on earth he lived under the law.
- When he died, he redeemed (set free) people from the law.
- Following his ascension, God sent the Spirit of Jesus to indwell believers, enabling us to be his dearly loved sons and daughter who call him Abba, Father.

When we read the book of Luke, we must remember Jesus was living under the law during the period of the old testament law. This directly affects how a person interprets and applies what Luke wrote.

Okay, let's continue to examine the book of Luke to see that Jesus lived under the law during his life on earth.

- Mary and Joseph followed the purification requirements of the Law of Moses after the birth of a child (Luke 2:22-24).

*When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses [Leviticus 12], Joseph and Mary took him [Jesus] to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord **23**(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”) [Exodus 13:2, 12] , **24**and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.” [Leviticus 12:8]*

- Joseph and Mary returned to Galilee after they had done everything required by the law of the Lord (Luke 2:39).

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.

- Jesus’ parents observed the Festival of the Passover as instituted in Exodus 12 and required in Leviticus 23. (Luke 2:41-42).

*Every year Jesus’ parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. **42**When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom.*

- Jesus told the man healed from leprosy to offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded (Leviticus 14; Luke 5:11-14; see also Luke 17:11-17)

*While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” **13**Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” And immediately the leprosy left him. **14**Then Jesus ordered him, “Don’t tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.”*

In the book of Hebrews, we see that Jesus is the final sacrifice for sins. Sacrifices were only required **before** Jesus died on the cross. **After** his death, no more sacrifices were needed.

Hebrews 10:12-18 says,

But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins [final], he sat down at the right hand of God... And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

Sacrifices were required under the old testament of law. After the sacrifice of Jesus, sacrifices were no longer needed because the sacrifice of Jesus was the final sacrifice. The sacrifice for Jesus was for all people, for all sins, and for all time, resulting in eternal forgiveness of sins.

During the book of Luke, sacrifices were ongoing since Jesus had not offered himself as the final sacrifice for sins.

Let's continue to look in the book of Luke to see the old testament of law was still in effect in most of the book of Luke.

- Jesus and his disciples observed the Passover as required by the Law and for the people of Israel. (Exodus 12:14–28; Leviticus 23:4-8; Numbers 28:16–25; Deuteronomy 16:1–8; Luke 22)

In **Exodus 12:1-21**, the people were instructed to sacrifice a male lamb without blemish in preparation for the Passover. In Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, they sacrificed a male lamb without blemish in observance of the Passover.

Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 5:7** that Jesus is our Passover lamb.

Mark, in **Mark 14:12**, states that Jesus was crucified during the Passover.

There are several other verses that refer to Jesus as the Lamb.

Isaiah 53:5-11

*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities...He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. He was **led like a lamb to the slaughter**, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth...my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.*

John 1:29

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, **the Lamb of God**, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

1 Peter 1:18-19

*For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, **19**but with **the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.***

Hebrews 9:10

*How much more, then, will **the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself **unblemished** to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

Revelation 5:12 (The word *Lamb* is used 29 times in Revelation)

In a loud voice they were saying: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain..."

Revelation 1:5 states, "...Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and **has freed us from our sins by his blood.**"

What we see in this verses is that Jesus, as the Lamb of God, shed his blood to forgive us of all sins (took the guilt of our sins upon himself, leaving us not guilty of sins) and justify us (make us innocent of all sins).

When Jesus was sacrificed as the Lamb of God was when the new testament was established, showing us the new testament is not about 27 books but 1 Savior's blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins (taking our guilt open himself) and shed to justify us (make us innocent of sins).

Jesus spoke this to his disciples when he was in the upper room with them (**Matthew 26:26-28** – Webster's Bible Translation as well as the King James Version).

*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. **27**And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; **28**For **this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sin.**"*

We receive the forgiveness of sins and the justification for our sins through faith in Jesus (Acts 26:18; Acts 13:38-39).

This leads us to one more piece of evidence about Luke not being a book in the new testament.

- Before the cross, and during the time of the old testament of law, Jesus told his disciples to request God's forgiveness through prayer (Luke 11:4, see also Matthew 6:12, 14-15; 18:21-35) based upon their forgiveness of others.

Jesus says in Luke 11:4,

Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.

After the cross, Jesus told Paul to tell others to receive and possess God forgiveness through faith in Jesus. Let's look at these verses.

Jesus says to Paul in **Acts 26:15-18**,

*"Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' " 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. **16**'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. **17**I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them **18**to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, **so that they may RECEIVE FORGIVENESS of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.**"*

Paul carries out Jesus' instructions in **Acts 13:38-39** when he says,

*Therefore let it be known to you, brothers, **that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39**Through Him everyone who **believes** is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.*

- Forgiveness is the full payment of the sin-debt for all people, making us not guilty for sins.
- Justification is standing before God innocent of all sins. This is a righteous standing before God.

Peter says in **Acts 10:43**,

*All the prophets testify about Him that **everyone who believes in Him RECEIVES forgiveness of sins through His name.***

Paul writes about forgiveness in **Ephesians 1:6-8**,

*...to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him **we have redemption THROUGH HIS BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins**, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.*

Ephesians 4:32 says to forgive others as God has forgiven us.

*Be kind and tenderhearted to one another, forgiving each other **just as in Christ God forgave you.***

Colossians 2:13 says to, "Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Notice the difference in these verses compared to the Lord's prayer and Matthew 18:35.

Why is there a change in the message about forgiveness? Because the cross changed the message, Jesus changed the message, which is why we see such a clear change in the Bible when it comes to forgiveness before and after the cross.

Paul writes in **Colossians 1:13-14**,

*For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14in whom **we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.***

Again, Paul writes in **Colossians 2:13-14**,

*When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. **He forgave us all our sins, 14having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, **nailing it to the cross.*****

Notice in these verses, we have the forgiveness of sins through the cross of Jesus, the blood of Jesus...we have been forgiven of all sins...we possess forgiveness. We possess forgiveness by faith, not through prayer as in the days of the old testament of law when people such as Moses, David, Daniel, and Nehemiah prayed for God's forgiveness. We live in the new testament where we received eternal forgiveness of sins the day we believed/faith in Jesus.

Paul writes in **2 Corinthians 5:17-21**,

*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. [no longer under the old testament of law, which is a ministry of condemnation and death; now under the new testament of grace, which is a ministry of eternal forgiveness, righteousness, and life – see 2 Corinthians 3]. The old has passed away [the old testament of law is now gone – see 2 Corinthians 3]. Behold, the new has come [the new testament of grace has come]! **18**All this is from God [God ended the old testament of law when Jesus, through his blood, established the new testament of grace], who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: **19**that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, **not counting men's trespasses [sins] against them.** And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **20**Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God. **21**God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*

This is the core of the new testament message of grace that Jesus spoke about in the upper room. God, through the death of Jesus, reconciled himself to people (removed the barrier of sin) by having all of our sins counted against Jesus in his death; therefore, no sins are left to be counted against us. Jesus took our sinfulness at the cross and now offers everyone his righteousness as a gift that is received by faith.

This message about forgiveness is not in the book of Luke. It was spoken about by Jesus when he was in the upper room with his disciples (Matthew 26:28; Luke 22:20) and just before he ascended (Luke 24:46-48 – in these verses, repentance is an unbeliever acknowledging one's sinful condition then accepting God's forgiveness through faith in Jesus]. However, this message about forgiveness was not the message of Jesus before the cross. But it was the message of Jesus after the cross and after his ascension that he told his apostles and Paul to take to the world. Before the cross, Jesus said people were to ask/request God for forgiveness. After the cross, said to tell people to accept/receive forgiveness by faith in Jesus.

Additionally, the new testament message of forgiveness, not 27 books but 1 Savior's blood, is the heart of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). This is what the 12 disciples were to take to the world and teach people. They were to take the new testament of grace to the world.

Jesus told them in the upper room that he would establish the new testament in his blood for the forgiveness of sins. This meant they were to no longer observe the old testament law of Moses but were to observe the new testament grace of Jesus, where his blood was poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

Most churches and ministries emphasize the Great Commission, but they fail to educate people about the new testament of grace, which is the heart of the Great Commission, as seen in the verses above and the verses that will follow later in this study.

What's the difference in forgiveness before the cross and after the cross?

Jesus teaching on forgiveness before the cross was during the time of the old testament of law. The teaching of Jesus after the cross is during the time of the new testament of grace, which is the time we live in today.

Some may ask the following question: What about 1 John 1:9? Good question.

I have written a book on the context of 1 John 1:9, [Forgiven and Cleansed: 1 John 1:9 In Context](#).

Also, I have six teachings about 1 John 1:9 on the Gracereach website: [CLICK HERE](#).

Additionally, I have many teachings about forgiveness on the Gracereach website: [CLICK HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

Let's look at evidence from the book of Matthew that Jesus lived and taught during the time the law of Moses was in effect.

Evidence From Matthew

- Jesus told the Jewish people that before they presented to a priest an animal to be sacrificed (gift) at the altar, to first seek reconciliation with a brother then offer an animal to be sacrificed (gift) (Matthew 5:23-24)

*"Therefore if you are presenting your offering [animal to be sacrificed] at the altar [Brazen Altar], and there remember that your brother has something against you, **24**leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering [to the priest to be sacrificed]."*

The altar Jesus is referring to is the Brazen Altar located outside the temple in Jerusalem where Jewish people would present their gift (animal) to the priest to be sacrificed [Exodus 27:1-8; 38:1-7; Leviticus 1:1-17]. The old testament, sacrificial system was fully functioning during the life of Jesus. However, when Jesus offered himself for our sins, the new testament was established and the old testament ended. This is why the majority of the book of Luke covers the old testament period.

Hebrews 7:27 states,

He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

Hebrews 9:26-28

*But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by **the sacrifice of himself**. **27**Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, **28**so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many...*

- Jesus told the man healed from leprosy to show himself to the priest and offer the sacrifice commanded in the law of Moses (Leviticus 17).

*When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. **2**A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." **3**Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. **4**Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But **go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift (sacrifice) Moses commanded**, as a testimony to them."*

Before the death of Jesus, millions of animals were sacrificed under the old testament of law, starting in Exodus 24:8.

The writer of Hebrews in 10:1-18 makes it clear the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins was the final and forever sacrifice for sins, that resulted in full forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 10:1-4

*The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason, it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. **2**Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. **3**But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. **4**It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

Hebrews 10:5-10

*Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; **6**with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. **7**Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll— I have come to do your will, my God.’ ” **8**First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. **9**Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. **10**And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

Hebrews 10:11-14

*Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. **12**But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, **13**and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. **14**For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

Hebrews 10:15-18

*The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: **16**“This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” **17**Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.” **18**And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.*

Hebrews 10:1-18 is very clear the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins was the final and forever sacrifice for the full, eternal forgiveness of sins. This was after millions of sacrifices under the old testament of law for partial, temporal forgiveness of sins.

Jesus offered himself one time for all sins and for all people to forgive all sins and cleanse from all sins.

We receive forgiveness of sins and cleansing from sins through faith in Jesus (Acts 26:18 and 13:38-39).

During the book of Luke, Jesus had not offered himself as the final sacrifice of sins, which is why he told the man healed from Leprosy to show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice as prescribed in the law of Moses.

Under the old testament of law, the work of the priests was never done. The priests could never sit down because there was always a line of people bringing an animal to be sacrificed. But when Jesus offered himself as the final sacrifice for sins, achieving eternal forgiveness, he sat down.

The writer of Hebrews is communicating to the Jewish people that they can get out of the sacrificial line, since the old testament has ended and the new testament has begun. They no longer have to wait in line to have an animal sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins. They can now rest by faith in the finished work of Jesus who was sacrificed on the cross for their sins, resulting in eternal forgiveness. They are now fully forgiven of all sins. There are no more sacrifices needed (Hebrews 10:18) because there is no more forgiveness needed. Forgiveness is received by faith in Jesus. They can now rest, knowing they are forgiven.

Paul stated in Ephesians 2 that believers in Jesus have been seated with him in the heavenlies. This means we are forgiven! Jesus sat down in heaven after providing the final sacrifice for all sins, for all people, and for all time. Those who trust in Jesus are now seated with him as an eternally forgiven person.

Let's continue to examine Matthew to see that the old testament was in effect while Jesus was living.

- Jesus told the people to do what the Pharisees told them to do relating to the Law of Moses (Matthew 23:1-3).

*Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: **2**“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. **3So you must be careful to do everything they tell you.***

- Jesus referred to the sacrifices on the altar numerous times in Matthew 23:16-22 in pointing out the Pharisees and teachers of the law hypocrisy.
- Jesus told the Pharisees to tithe with the right attitude in Matthew 23:23-24 (Leviticus 27:30-32; Numbers 18:26; Deuteronomy 26:17; 14:22-28; 26:12-13).

The new testament family of grace is not under the law of tithing as those were during the days of the old testament of law. If people would like to give financially to support a church, ministry, or missionary, they can. But no believer today is under the tithing laws of the old testament of law.

We see in both Luke and Matthew that the Law of Moses, the testament of law, was in effect during the life of Jesus. However, God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah about a new testament was coming that would be different than the old testament of law.

In **Jeremiah 31:31-34**, God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah these words about the coming new testament.

*“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when **I will make a new covenant** with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. **32**It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord.*

33*“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. **34**No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”*

There is much to study and learn in these verses about the new testament. Fortunately, the writer of Hebrews wrote a clear explanation in the book of Hebrews. He explains that Jesus, with his once-for-all sacrifice for all people and for sins, established the new testament in his blood for the eternal forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:12; 10:17-18).

NOTE: For Brad’s complete teaching through Hebrews, [CLICK HERE](#).

When Jesus was in the upper room with his disciples just prior to his arrest and eventual death, he spoke the following words to them,

*Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is **the new testament in my blood**, which is shed for you. (Luke 22:20-Webster’s Bible Translation).*

Many Bible versions use the word covenant in the place of testament. However, the Greek word used by Luke, as well as Matthew, is the word for testament. The Greek word is *diathéké* -see [Bible Hub Strongs Greek Concordance](#).

The words covenant and testament are synonymous. The King James Version and the Webster’s Bible Translations use the word *testament* and the other translations use the word *covenant*, but the Greek word *diathéké* is the actual word used by Luke and Matthew regardless of how a Bible translates the word.

Those who translated the Jewish Bible from Hebrew to Greek (Septuagint) used the word *diatithēmi* (see [Bible Hub 1303](#)), which is the origin of the word *diathéké* (see [Bible Hub 1242](#)).

When writing about the old and new testaments or covenants, the writer of Hebrews uses the word *diathéké*.

The NKJV uses both the word *testament* and *covenant* to translate the Greek word *diathéké*.

In Hebrews 9:16-17, the NKJV translates the word *diathéké* as testament.

*For where there is a **testament**, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a **testament** is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.*

In Hebrews 9:15, the NKJV translates the word as covenant

*And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new **covenant**, by means of death...*

Let's look at how the Webster's Bible Translation translates the same verses (the KJV translates the word *diathéké* as testament in these verses as well).

*And for this cause he [Jesus] is the mediator of **the new testament**, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first **testament**, they who are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance. **16**For where a **testament** is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.*

Regardless of how the different translations translate the word *diathéké*, as covenant or testament, the point the writer of Hebrews is making is that Jesus, with his death, ended the old testament of law and established the new testament of grace. Whether one uses testament or covenant, both are referring to blood not books as made clear by the writer in Hebrews in chapter 9.

The reason I emphasize this is that people will say that the new testament starts with the birth of Jesus and the new covenant starts with the death of Jesus, which is completely incorrect. When Jesus was about to go to the cross he stated **this is my blood** for the new *diathéké*. Some versions, such as the Webster's Study Bible and the King James version use the word testament, while other versions use the word covenant. Yet, the Greek word is the same: *diathéké*

So when Jesus spoke that through his blood he was going to establish the new testament or covenant, he was foretelling his disciples that he was about to fulfill the prophecy where God promised to make a new testament (covenant), thus ending the old testament, making it out of date and obsolete. This is why the covenant of Law God made with the people of Israel in Exodus 24:8 is **now** obsolete and outdated.

Hebrews 8:13 clearly shows that because the new testament was put into effect with the blood of Jesus, the old testament is no longer in effect.

By calling this covenant "new," [in Jeremiah 31:31-34] he has made the first one obsolete [old testament law]; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear [in AD 65, the law was fading away}. (Hebrews 8:13)

Yet, during the period of time covered in Luke and Matthew, the law was **not** obsolete and outdated, but it was in **full** operation. Not until Jesus shed his blood on the cross and died did the new testament or covenant go into effect.

While Jesus was living, the old testament was in effect. When he died, the new testament went into effect.

Therefore, as the Bible clearly shows, most of the book of Luke covers the period of time when the old testament of law was still in operation. **Consequently, the book of Luke is not a book in the new testament.**

In reality, there are no books in the new testament because the new testament is not a collection of books. Rather, the new testament is the blood of our crucified Savior who loved us and gave himself for the forgiveness of our sins. He was raised to life to give us eternal life.

Also, there are no books in the old testament because the old testament is about the blood of animals sacrificed for the temporary forgiveness of sins.

The more accurate way to group the books of the Bible is there are 66 books in the Bible. Exodus 24:8 through the death of Jesus covers the old testament of law the Jewish people lived under and that Jesus was born under and lived under. The book of Acts, which follows the ascension of Jesus, covers the transition from law to grace and from God transitioning from Israel to the church (God's family of grace). Paul explains both of these transition in Ephesians.

The book of Acts and Paul's letters record the difficulty many had in this transition, such as Peter in Acts 10 and Galatians 2. Peter was pulled back to the law-way of life as seen in Galatians 2 after James, the brother of Jesus, sent specific men to pressure him to return to the law. This was after Peter's vision in Acts 10 where he learned he no longer had to follow the law for relating to the Gentiles. This was also after Acts 15 where it was agreed upon the Gentiles did not have to follow the law of Moses. After Peter returned to the law, Paul confronted him. This is recorded in Galatians 2.

For those who may be interested in this fascinating event, I cover it in my commentary on [Galatians: Return to Grace](#).

I also teach on this event on YouTube and the Gracereach Podcast. The notes and the teachings can be accessed by [CLICKING HERE](#). See Galatians #8. Also, see the Galatians Project #3.

It is possible there is someone reading these notes who has never trusted in Jesus for salvation. If you have never trusted in Jesus or are not sure, today you can trust in Jesus. Below is a simple prayer to God to express your faith in Jesus.

Jesus, today I am trusting in you for salvation. I believe you lived, died, and rose from the dead. I believe you died to pay my sin debt in full. I believe you rose from the dead and defeated death and now give eternal life to all who believe in you. Through this prayer, I express my belief in you.

All verses are NIV unless otherwise noted.

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Thanks for being a part of this Bible study!

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