

When Did The New Covenant Begin?

A few weeks ago, we looked at a false doctrine that teaches that the resurrection taught in the New Testament has already passed. Another ramification of this doctrine is that the Old and New Covenants overlap. For instance, the upholders of this doctrine say phrases like "*is ready to vanish away*" in Hebrews 8:13 are an anticipation of the imminent, age-consuming coming of Christ.

Because of this point of view, the 40 years between the cross and destruction of Jerusalem was the "eschaton," or the last days of the Jewish period. In fact, they claim that the term "*last days*" never apply to the Christian age, but always to the closing period of the Jewish age, which ran from Pentecost to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

This means that the New Testament's end-time prophecies all deal with the end of Judaism and birth of the Christian faith from its ashes. This makes the period between the cross and the fall of Jerusalem was a four-decade covenantal transition, in which the law of Christ was not yet fully realized or in effect. Max King, a huge proponent of this theory writes:

Christianity is a fulfillment of the prophecies, types and shadows of the law and not merely a "fill-in" between Judaism and another age to come. Abraham had two sons, and there was no gap between them. They overlapped a little, but Isaac "came on" when Ishmael "went out." The son born of the spirit was given the place and inheritance of the son born of the flesh. Hence, this simple allegory (Galatians 4:21-31) establishes the "Spirit of Prophecy," confirming prophecy's fulfillment in the spiritual seed of Abraham through Christ (Galatians 3:16, 26-29), and beyond the fall of Jerusalem these prophecies cannot be extended.

The problem with this teaching is that the overlapping of laws would constitute spiritual adultery and make the fall of the city of Jerusalem the beginning of God's grace (Romans 7:1-6; Colossians 2:13-15). Also, the change that the New Testament writers described as past would still have been future (2 Corinthians 3:14; Hebrews 8:13). The only sense in which the covenants overlapped is when unbelieving Jews continued to observe the law of Moses after it was nailed to the cross and abolished.

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