

# Messiah Reformed

C H U R C H

a full preterist church



VOLUME 1

ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2010

## MRC Worship Gatherings

Villas Civic  
Association  
Building  
2306 Sunrise Blvd  
Ft. Myers, FL.  
33907

### Contact MRC:

PO Box 07457  
Ft. Myers, FL.  
33919  
239.220.8519  
Email: [info@  
messiahreformed.com](mailto:info@messiahreformed.com)  
Website: [www.  
messiahreformed.com](http://www.messiahreformed.com)

**Pastor of MRC**  
Alan Bondar

**Overseer**  
Jeremy DeFrehn

**Deacon**  
Brennan Courtwright

## Testaments, Covenants, and the Gospel

By Alan Bondar

Do you know that page in your Bible that reads, "New Testament"? Have you ever found yourself thinking, "This is the New Testament; everything before this is the Old Testament." Well, that page in the middle – that's the reason. Did you know that the Bible itself makes no such contrast? Many people who read the Bible do not realize that all of the books of the Bible that follow Malachi still took place under the Old Testament. And actually, the Bible doesn't really deal with Testaments at all (contrary to some translations of Hebrews 9:16-17). It deals with covenants. Do you know the difference between a testament and a covenant?

You've heard of a last will and testament. The terms of a testament come into effect when the person who made it is dead. The terms of a covenant are in effect while the people who made it are still alive. Only if the covenant terms are broken might a person under the covenant have to die. They are very different concepts. We enter into marriage covenants, not marriage testaments. Why? Because if we entered into a marriage testament, we would only be married after we died. Scripture does not deal with testaments; it deals with covenants.

Strangely, when we read through the texts of Scripture,

we can see that God deals with man through covenants simply because even our English translations use the word "covenant" throughout. In the majority of contexts, the translation of "Testament" would not make any sense based on their distinct definitions. Yet, even though the Bible doesn't deal with testaments anywhere, somehow, we've become accustomed to referring to the Scriptures as the Old and New Testaments. Wondering where I'm going with this?

Well, the problem isn't really with what we call the two portions of Scripture that we have broken into two parts (although it is a bit odd that Christians rarely concern themselves with these questions). The problem is that we have broken them into two

### **What do you think would happen if you never had that division in your Bible?**

parts. What do you think would happen if you never had that division in your Bible? Do you think Christians would read the New Testament portion of Scripture in such a segregated way as they do today? I venture to guess that we would read it in the same way that we read the Old Testament portion.

But the problem is that we read about the church in the New Testament and separate it from its Old Covenant

context. As a result, we have become accustomed to thinking of ourselves as living in the New Testament period but failing to realize that what we are reading is Old Covenant. What has happened, then, is that we have failed to see that the New Testament was written to people in a particular time and place just like we see in the Old Testament. Nobody seems to have a problem with this in the Old Testament. But here's the kicker: The New Testament takes place within the context of the Old Covenant. In other words, both the Old Testament and the New Testament Scriptures all take place in the Old Covenant.

We are right to think that we are no longer in the Old Covenant. But we are wrong to think that the Old Covenant ended before the New Testament Scriptures were completed. Jesus said this in Matthew 5:18: "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished." Do you realize what Jesus said? Which Law do you think He was referring to? The Law of the Old Covenant! And He said that not even the **SMALLEST** letter or stroke would pass from the Law until **ALL** is accomplished. All of what? All of the Law. And when did He say that would happen? When heaven and earth pass

## Testaments, Covenants, and the Gospel continued

MRC  
WORSHIP  
GATHERINGSundays, 9:30am  
Fellowship TimeSundays, 10am  
Worship Gathering\*Sundays, 11:30am  
Fellowship Lunch  
\*once a monthMRC  
BIBLE  
STUDYWednesdays,  
6:30-8pm  
@ Alan & Gail Ann  
Bondar's home.Call for more  
information  
239-220-8519New  
Covenant  
Eyes  
Radio ShowWith hosts:  
Bondar  
Grace  
ThompsonSundays @ 8pm  
[www.ad70.net](http://www.ad70.net)

away. His exact words were that not a single part of the Law would pass away until heaven and earth pass away. So we have two problems here:

1. If heaven and earth have not passed away, then neither has a single part of the Old Covenant Law.

2. If ALL of the Law has not been accomplished, then we are still under every single part of the Old Covenant Law.

How many of you eat the meat of unclean animals? How many of you would condone ceremonial sacrifices every week at church? How many of you condone circumcision as a proper kingdom practice in Jewish Synagogues? I surmise that none of you are following the requirements of the Law. Why not? You see, it does no good to say that *some* of the Law is no longer required because according to Jesus Himself, not one part of the Law would pass away until ALL of it was accomplished. The solution to these two problems is simple: Use the same language of the Old Covenant Scriptures to understand what Heaven and Earth means. Heaven and earth is not a reference to planet earth, it is reference to

**...This unbiblical division in our Bibles is one of the key reasons why so many Christians continue to fail to recognize that the language of the New Testament is the same as the language of the Old Testament.**

the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant was brought to an end in 70 AD at the destruction of Jerusalem. The new heavens and earth is a reference to the New Covenant.

This unbiblical division in our Bibles is one of the key reasons why so many Christians continue to fail to recognize that the language of the New Testament is the same as

the language of the Old Testament. That page division is what blinds us from seeing that the language of cosmic imagery is about local judgments. This is true all throughout the Old Testament Scriptures (cf. Is. 13 as an example). But, it is believed, that the same exact language in the New Testament is about the end of planet earth. Then again, most Christians don't realize this because they rarely concern themselves with the Old Testament. Brace yourself: The New Testament that you read takes places during the same covenant as that which pervades the Old Testament. That means that you've been studying the Old Covenant all along and probably didn't realize it. Here is an exercise for you to do to test what I am saying: Take your interpretation of the cosmic language from the New Testament and see if it fits the exact same cosmic language in the Old Testament.

What you will come to find is that if you try to fit a planet-wide fulfillment into these texts, it will make a mess of the Bible. It won't make any sense. Why? Because what we have done in the church today is try to interpret the text from our present day use of language, rather than interpreting it in light of the audience to which it was written. We try to take a literal approach to language that was never understood literally by the mind of an Israelite. The little exercise I gave you will demonstrate that.

The whole issue with the Old Covenant is that it was rooted in location – a Tabernacle, a Temple. Just about every Christian I know realizes that there is no more Temple. Why? Because there is no more Old Covenant. If there is no more Old Covenant, then we are in the New Covenant. But the *"present evil age"* that Scripture speaks of takes place

under the Old Covenant. If the Old Covenant is gone, then so is the *"present evil age."* And that means that we must be living in the *"age to come."* But the age to come begins at the resurrection of the dead. So those who are still waiting for a future resurrection have a major problem with Scripture. Actually, they have two major problems with Scripture. First, they have a problem with the timing of when all things would be fulfilled. Second, they have a problem with their understanding of the nature of the resurrection, which I dealt with in a previous newsletter.

Why is the timing of fulfillment so important? For starters, futurism makes Jesus and the apostles out to be liars. They were very clear in communicating when the second coming of Christ and the resurrection were going to happen: At the end of the age, when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed (Matt. 24; 1 Pet. 4:7). So as long as the church continues to make a mockery of the words of Jesus and his apostles, we will never have as great an effect on the world as we could if we would first accept that the Messiah that we follow actually did what He said He would do, when He said He would do it.

Further, the timing of fulfillment is important because the Gospel remains incomplete without it. What is the Gospel? It is the good news that Jesus has come to fulfill all the promises given to Israel, and that the Gentiles are incorporated into those promises by faith. This means that if Jesus has not yet fulfilled all of the promises given to Israel, the Gospel is still only half fulfilled. The bottom line is that many in the church have put the cart before the horse. Let me explain through an analogy:

Jack and Jill can observe a house that is not yet complete. They stand there and see that the foundation has been

## Testaments, Covenants, and the Gospel continued

built, and the frame has been put up. But the house cannot be lived in yet.

A few weeks later, Jill comes back and sees that the house has been completed. The walls are up, the windows are in, the floors installed, etc. She can now tell people that the house is ready to be moved into.

Jack, on the other hand, is still telling people that the house isn't finished, but when it's finished, it's going to be great. Jack is still waiting for a house to be finished that has already been finished. Jack only knows half the story at most. Jill has the complete story and isn't telling people to wait for something that they don't have to wait for.

Many in the church today are like Jack. They only have half the Gospel. Don't get me wrong – it's a really good half. But the Gospel promises eternal life only after all the promises given to Israel have been fulfilled (cf. Matt. 25, where eternal life occurs at the judgment). If the Gospel is only half fulfilled, people cannot enter the presence of God, but they sure can hope for it because it's coming. Consider Hebrews 9:24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf ... 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

The half that Jack has is that Jesus is in the presence of God *on our behalf*, which means that we are not yet able to be there. Why? Because Jesus hasn't yet appeared a second time *to save* those who are eagerly waiting for him. No completed salvation, no entrance into the presence of God. The writer of Hebrews states that they were still waiting for salvation. Paul says the same thing in Romans 13:11: "...for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed."

**...If the Gospel is only half fulfilled, people cannot enter the presence of God, but they sure can hope for it because it's coming...**

So while the Gospel promised salvation, we cannot say that the fullness of salvation has arrived if Jesus hasn't returned. So Jack is still looking for the completion of what the Gospel promised. It is, as of yet, an incomplete Gospel.

If, on the hand, the Gospel is complete, then people can live in the presence of God now. They don't have to wait. Jill's story is better than Jack's story, but only because Jill's story is true.

Jack is still waiting for the house to be finished. One of the reasons why Jack doesn't feel the need to see the completed house that Jill keeps talking about is because everyone else, especially professional builders, keep telling him that there is no way Jill can be right. So Jack just goes along with everybody else because surely, the majority can't be wrong. The funny thing is, none of the naysayers are willing to go with Jill to see if she is right either. They're just convinced because... well just because. And these are the people that Jack listens to.

Jill was willing to see the house for herself no matter what anybody said. Jack will never come to believe the truth because he refuses to take the time to go with Jill and see if the house is indeed built. How about you? Are you Jack or Jill?

Here is my challenge to you: Tear that page out of your Bible because it doesn't belong there. Then, read the New Testament like it is part of the Old Covenant, and watch the Scriptures make far more sense. We are in the New Covenant. We are in the *"age to come."* But only because the house has been finished.

Because of Grace,

Alan Bondar

Have you read Alan's new book? Do you have a certain person in mind that you would just LOVE for them to read it?

Well, this book would make an excellent Christmas gift or stocking stuffer! Grab a copy through Alan for a special Christmas rate of \$10.00 S/H not included.

### READING THE BIBLE THROUGH NEW COVENANT EYES



ALAN BONDAR

Other fantastic resources would include:

Can God Tell Time? By Don Preston

The Last Days Identified by Don Preston

Misplaced Hope by Sam Frost

# Messiah Reformed

## CHURCH

a full preterist church



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Member Highlight



Mariel Courtwright is a founding member of Messiah Reformed Church. We are extremely blessed by the LORD for many reasons, however, having Mariel in our church family is one of the BIGGIES! Not only does she use her God-given talents as our book keeper, she is deeply committed to the vision of MRC. Mariel and her husband, Brennan, moved to Tampa just over a year ago and they both commute to Fort Myers every weekend because of their commitment and passion for their church. One of the reasons why we love Mariel so much is her witty and clever personality. She is a force to be reckon with when it comes to politics, theology, health, books, well...come to think of it, MOST things! She is such a delight to converse with. You could literally spend hours talking with her and have a plethora of knowledge when finished. Her smile completely lights up a room when she enters and her friendly, warm personality makes everyone who visits MRC, feel extremely welcomed.

Please be in prayer for Mariel, she and Brennan are expecting their first child. Pray for the health of the baby, mommy, and well, daddy too!

MESSIAH REFORMED CHURCH INVITES YOU TO A

## COFFEE SHOP CHRISTMAS

christmas eve  
7-8pm



awesome coffee   great music   fun people   creative message

**Messiah Reformed Church** exists to glorify God by pursuing and sharing our joy in the knowledge of Him.

If you are interested in further information on Fulfilled Eschatology, then please check out these resources available to you.

- [newcovenanteyes.com](http://newcovenanteyes.com)
- [thereignofchrist.com](http://thereignofchrist.com)
- [preterism.ning.com](http://preterism.ning.com)
- [eschatology.org](http://eschatology.org)
- [deathisdefeated.ning.com](http://deathisdefeated.ning.com)

- [ardmorefamilyofgod.org](http://ardmorefamilyofgod.org)
- [70adwiki.com/](http://70adwiki.com/)
- [www.preterist.org](http://www.preterist.org)
- [bibleprophecy.com](http://bibleprophecy.com)

Check out Messiah Reformed Church on...

**facebook**

...for news, updates, events, and more!