

The Holy Constitution

Understanding the relationship between the Old and New Testaments is **essential for Christians** to appreciate the full scope of God's redemptive plan and the significance of Jesus Christ in the context of both the historical and prophetic narratives found in the Bible. It is essential for the future fulfillment of the Kingdom of God.

What is a constitution?

The Constitution of a nation is a fundamental legal document that serves as the supreme law of the land. It establishes the framework for the government, defines the structure of the state, and outlines the rights and responsibilities of its citizens. A constitution often includes provisions related to the separation of powers, the distribution of authority among different branches of government, individual rights, and the overall governance of the country.

Constitutions can take various forms, including written or unwritten, and they play a crucial role in shaping the political and legal systems of a nation. They provide **a foundation** for the rule of law, ensuring that the government operates within defined limits and protects the rights of its citizens. The process of amending a constitution is typically deliberate and involves significant input from various stakeholders to reflect the evolving needs and values of the society it governs.

A Biblical worldview includes a constitution.

For individuals or societies with a strong Biblical worldview, the laws and ethical principles found in the Bible are often considered the ultimate source of authority. In this perspective, the constitution may be seen as the divine law, and adherence to it is

viewed as a fundamental aspect of moral and legal conduct. The **Bible is considered a holy, sacred, and authoritative source** of guidance for individuals, groups or societies who adhere to a Biblical worldview.

There are biblical verses that are often interpreted to convey the idea that the laws and commandments found in the scriptures are considered the guiding principles for the Kingdom of God. Here are a few examples:

- **The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17):** The Ten Commandments, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, are foundational in the Judeo-Christian tradition. They provide moral and ethical principles that are often seen as the basis for God's covenant with His people.
- **The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40):** In the New Testament, Jesus summarizes the commandments into two fundamental principles: love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. This is often seen as a concise expression of the moral and ethical foundation of God's Kingdom.
"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40, NIV)
- **Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7):** In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus expands on various aspects of moral and ethical living. This includes teachings on humility, forgiveness, and the importance of righteousness. Many consider these teachings as central to the ethical framework of the Kingdom of God.

- **The Law as a Reflection of God's Character (Psalm 19:7-11):** In the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms, the law is often praised as a reflection of God's character and a guide for righteous living.
"The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple."
(Psalm 19:7, NIV)

Following the Law and loving the Law—what's the difference?

In a biblical context, the difference between merely following the law and genuinely loving the law of God is often related to the **motivation and attitude** behind one's actions. The Bible emphasizes the idea that a sincere love for God's law goes beyond mere obedience and involves a deep, heartfelt commitment to living in accordance with God's will.

Following the Law:

This can refer to a legalistic or external adherence to rules without a genuine internal transformation or love for God. It might involve obeying commandments out of a sense of duty or fear of punishment rather than a heartfelt desire to please God.

Loving the Law of God:

This goes beyond *mere compliance*; it involves an *internal transformation* of the heart, a genuine desire to align one's life with God's principles out of love and devotion. It reflects a recognition of the wisdom and goodness found in God's commandments.

Biblical Support:

- **Psalm 119:97 (NIV):**
"Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long."

The psalmist expresses not just an observance of the law but a deep love and meditation on it, indicating a profound internal connection with God's commands.

- **Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV):**
"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Jesus emphasizes the centrality of love for God and others as the foundation of all commandments, encouraging a deeper, relational approach to the law.

Individuals as Champions:

David:

King David is often regarded as someone who had a heart for God's law. The Psalms, many of which are attributed to David, often express his love for God's statutes and his desire to live in obedience.

Paul the Apostle:

The Apostle Paul, in the New Testament, underwent a transformation from a zealous legalist to a fervent follower of Christ. In his letters, he emphasizes the importance of faith and love as essential components of Christian living.

These individuals, among others in the Bible, are often seen as champions of not just following the law but having a deep love

and appreciation for God's commands, reflecting a relationship-driven approach to obedience.

Be a lover and a follower.

One can be both a lover and follower of the law in a biblical context. In fact, the ideal presented in the Bible is often a combination of both heartfelt love for God's law and a commitment to obedient living. Here are a few key points that highlight the compatibility of being both a lover and follower of the law:

Love as Motivation for Obedience:

A genuine love for God and His law can serve as the primary motivation for obedience. When love is the driving force, adherence to the law becomes a joyful response to God's goodness rather than a burdensome duty.

1. Psalm 119:47 (NIV):

"I delight in your commands because I love them."

The psalmist expresses the connection between delighting in God's commands and the love he has for them. This suggests that love enhances the experience of following the law.

2. John 14:15 (NIV):

"If you love me, keep my commands."

Jesus links love for Him with obedience to His commands, indicating that the two are intertwined. Obedience becomes a natural outgrowth of genuine love for God.

3. James 1:22-25 (NIV):

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

James emphasizes the importance of not only hearing the word but also doing it. This implies an active, obedient response that stems from a genuine love for God's instructions.

Key point: Ultimately, the biblical perspective encourages a *holistic approach* where love for God and His law influences one's behavior, leading to a life characterized by both love-driven devotion and obedient living. This harmonious integration reflects a deep and meaningful relationship with God.

Here are a few examples from the Bible that illustrate a profound love for God's law:

1. David's Love for the Law:

King David is often regarded as a man after God's own heart. In numerous Psalms, David expresses his love for God's law and meditates on it day and night. For example, in Psalm 119:97 (NIV), David declares, "Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long."

2. Psalm 1:2-3 (NIV):

"But whose *delight is in the law of the Lord*, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers." This passage highlights the connection between delighting in and meditating on God's law, leading to a flourishing life.

3. Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25-38):

Simeon and Anna, who were present at the temple when Jesus was presented, are described as **righteous and devout** individuals. They eagerly awaited the Messiah, and their devotion to God is reflective of a deep love for God's promises and law.

4. Paul's Transformation (Philippians 3:4-9):

Before his conversion, the Apostle Paul was a zealous **Pharisee** known for his strict adherence to the Jewish law. However, after encountering Christ, Paul's perspective shifted. In Philippians 3:8 (NIV), he expresses that everything is considered loss compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, his Lord. "What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ."

Paul's love for Christ and the transformative power of the gospel became central to his life.

These examples showcase individuals in the Bible whose lives were marked by a deep and genuine love for God's law, reflecting a commitment to obedience, meditation, and a desire to align their lives with the will of God.

There are many leaders who champion the perspective of loving and valuing the law of God without adhering to the concept of supercessionism. **Supercessionism, also known as replacement theology, is the belief that the Christian Church has replaced or superseded Israel in God's plan.** It often involves the idea that the Old Testament and its laws are no longer relevant for Christians.

There are individuals and theological perspectives which reject supercessionism and *emphasize the continued significance* of God's law. Here are a few examples:

1. Contemporary Jewish Scholars:

Scholars within the Jewish tradition often reject supercessionism and continue to emphasize the enduring importance of God's law as outlined in the Torah. They maintain the covenantal relationship between God and the Jewish people, seeing the law as a vital guide for righteous living.

2. Dispensationalist Theologians:

Dispensationalism is a theological perspective that, while not universally held, often rejects supercessionism. Dispensationalists believe in a distinct plan for Israel and the church and often emphasize the continued relevance of God's promises to Israel, including the importance of the law.

Dispensationalism is a modern hermeneutical system of theology that exists as an alternative to **historic Reformed covenant theology**. Dispensationalism originated in the nineteenth century in the writings of John Nelson Darby. It has spread rapidly throughout the church in the Western world since in the second half of the nineteenth century. So widespread was its reception that the majority of evangelicals in the United States and Britain came to embrace some elements of it. The flourishing of dispensationalism in the twentieth century was due largely to the **advent of “prophecy conferences,” the widespread use of the *Scotfield Study Bible*, and the establishment of dispensational Bible institutes and colleges.**

There are three distinct characteristics of dispensationalism: a sharp distinction between **Israel and the church**, the division of the history of salvation into dispensations, and a woodenly literal hermeneutic regarding biblical prophecy and apocalyptic literature. At the end of the twentieth century, refinements made to classical dispensationalism resulted in the propagation of progressive dispensationalism, which makes many of the traditional dispensational distinctions but also sees greater continuity overall between the various dispensations and between old covenant Israel and the new covenant church.

<https://www.ligonier.org/guides/dispensationalism>

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2023/may-web-only/rise-fall-dispensationalism-daniel-hummel-end-times.html>

Messianic Jews:

Messianic Jews are individuals who identify as Jewish and believe in Jesus as the Messiah. Many Messianic Jews maintain a connection to Jewish traditions, including the observance of certain aspects of the Mosaic law, while also affirming the teachings of the New Testament.

Review and examples of texts:

<https://www.kesherjournal.com/article/reading-romans-after-supersessionism-the-continuation-of-jewish-covenantal-identity-by-j-brian-tucker/>

<https://www.amazon.com/Reading-Revelation-After-Supersessionism-Multi-Ethnic/dp/1725274655>

Define the Relationship

The relationship between the Old and New Testaments is a central theological concept in Christianity. The Old Testament and the New Testament together form the Christian Bible, and understanding their relationship is crucial for grasping the overall narrative and theological framework of the Christian faith. Here are several key aspects of their relationship:

2. Covenantal Continuity and Fulfillment:

Many Christians believe in covenantal continuity between the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament contains God's covenants with Israel, and the New Testament presents Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of those covenants. In this perspective, the Old Testament anticipates and points toward the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the New Covenant.

3. Prophecy and Fulfillment:

The Old Testament contains numerous prophecies about the coming of a Messiah. Christians believe that Jesus Christ fulfills these prophecies as the promised Redeemer. The New Testament frequently refers to the Old Testament to demonstrate how Jesus fulfilled the messianic expectations and promises.

4. Types and Shadows:

Some Christians interpret the Old Testament as containing types and shadows that prefigure and symbolize aspects of the New Testament. For example, Old Testament figures like Moses, David, and the sacrificial system are seen as foreshadowing elements of Christ's life, reign, and sacrificial atonement.

5. The Law and Grace:

The Old Testament includes the Mosaic Law given to Israel, which includes commandments, rituals, and moral codes. The New Testament teaches that Jesus Christ came not to abolish the

law but to fulfill it. Christians believe that through Christ, believers are justified by faith and guided by the law of love.

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." (Matthew 5:17, NIV)

6. Salvation History:

The Old Testament narrates the history of God's relationship with humanity, the people of Israel, and the unfolding plan of salvation. The New Testament, particularly the Gospels and the letters (Epistles), reveals the climax of this salvation history in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

7. The New Covenant:

The concept of the New Covenant is central to the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, the prophet Jeremiah speaks of a new covenant that God will make with His people (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Christians believe that Jesus inaugurated this New Covenant through His death and resurrection.

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:25, NIV)

Sin is the problem, not the law.

The statement "sin is the problem, not the law" reflects a theological perspective that emphasizes the **role of sin** as the fundamental issue affecting humanity, rather than attributing the problem to the law itself. This perspective is often rooted in Christian teachings, particularly those found in the New Testament of the Bible.

Here are key aspects of what this statement typically means:

- **The Law Reveals Sin:**
- According to this perspective, the law, particularly the moral and ethical commandments found in the Bible (such as the Ten Commandments), serves as a standard of righteousness. The law reveals what is right and wrong, and it exposes human shortcomings and sinfulness. In this view, the law is not the problem; rather, it highlights the problem by showing where humanity falls short.
"So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good." (Romans 7:12, ESV)
- **Human Inability to Fulfill the Law:**
- The New Testament teaches that all humans are inherently sinful and fall short of God's perfect standard as outlined in the law. The Apostle Paul, in particular, emphasizes the universal human condition of sinfulness.
"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23, NIV)
- **The Law Brings Awareness of Sin:**
- The law is seen as a teacher that brings awareness of sin rather than a means of salvation. It shows the need for redemption and forgiveness, pointing people to their dependence on God's grace.
"What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means!

Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'" (Romans 7:7, ESV)

- **The Solution: Redemption through Christ:**
- In this theological perspective, the ultimate solution to the problem of sin is found in Jesus Christ. Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection provide redemption and forgiveness, allowing believers to be reconciled with God despite their inability to perfectly fulfill the law.
"For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:2, ESV)

Romans—a letter written to Gentiles

The Book of Romans is generally considered to be written by the Apostle Paul for a mixed audience of both Jews and Gentiles, but with **a primary focus on the Gentile (non-Jewish)** believers in Rome. In the opening of the letter, Paul expresses his desire to visit Rome and to preach the gospel there, indicating his intention to address both Jewish and Gentile believers.

Romans 1:13-16 (NIV) states:

"I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile."

Paul's letter to the Romans is a comprehensive theological work that addresses key themes such as sin, righteousness, justification, and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. While it

speaks to both Jewish and Gentile believers, the cultural and historical context of the Roman church suggests a predominantly **Gentile audience**. Paul aims to *promote unity among Jewish and Gentile Christians* and to deepen their understanding of the gospel and its implications for their lives and relationships within the church.

The Book of Romans contains significant theological discussions on the law, faith, and salvation. While the law is not salvific, meaning it cannot save in and of itself, it plays a crucial role in shaping the understanding of sin, righteousness, and sanctification for believers. Here is an outline highlighting key passages from Romans regarding the role of the law for believers, especially Gentiles:

1. The Universality of Sin (Romans 1-3):

- **Romans 1:18-32:** The depravity of humanity apart from God.
- **Romans 2:1-16:** The impartial judgment of God.
- **Romans 3:9-20:** All are under sin; no one is righteous.

2. The Purpose of the Law (Romans 3-4):

- **Romans 3:20:** The law reveals the knowledge of sin.
- **Romans 3:28:** Justification is by faith, apart from the works of the law.
- **Romans 4:** Abraham's faith apart from works is the model for justification.

3. Faith and Righteousness (Romans 5-8):

- **Romans 5:1-11:** Justification through faith brings peace with God.
- **Romans 6:** Believers are dead to sin and alive in Christ.
- **Romans 7:** The struggle with the law and sin.

- **Romans 8:1-17:** Life in the Spirit; the law of the Spirit sets believers free.

4. The Relationship Between Jews and Gentiles (Romans 9-11):

- **Romans 9:** God's sovereign choice; not all Israel is Israel.
- **Romans 10:** The necessity of faith; the inclusion of Gentiles.
- **Romans 11:** God's plan for Israel and the Gentiles.

5. Living Sacrifices and the Law (Romans 12-13):

- **Romans 12:** Living as a holy and acceptable sacrifice.
- **Romans 13:** Submitting to governing authorities; fulfilling the law through love.

6. Christian Liberty and Love (Romans 14-15):

- **Romans 14:** Accepting one another in matters of conscience.
- **Romans 15:1-13:** Bearing with the failings of others; living in harmony.

7. Conclusion and Greetings (Romans 16)

Key Themes and Takeaways:

- 1. Law's Role in Revealing Sin:** The law serves to reveal the reality of sin and the need for redemption (Romans 3:20).
- 2. Justification by Faith:** Believers, including Gentiles, are justified by faith apart from works of the law (Romans 3:28).
- 3. Life in the Spirit:** The law of the Spirit sets believers free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).
- 4. Unity of Jews and Gentiles:** God's plan includes both Jews and Gentiles, emphasizing unity in Christ (Romans 10-11).
- 5. Living in Love and Holiness:** Believers are called to live as living sacrifices, showing love and holiness in their daily lives (Romans 12-13).

The overall message is that the law, while **not providing salvation**, remains relevant for believers as a guide for righteous living, a divine revelation of God's standards, and a divine reflection of God's wisdom and love. Believers, including Gentiles, are called to live in faith, love, and obedience to God's moral principles as outlined in the law.

The divine revelation of God's holy Law

These verses from various books in the Old Testament highlight the divine origin and importance of the Law. They underscore the idea that God's instructions, given through the Law, are meant to guide His people in righteous living and deepen their understanding of His character and expectations.

Here's a short selection of scriptures from Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Isaiah, and the minor prophets that emphasize the idea that **the Law is a divine revelation**:

Exodus 20:1-17 (NIV): The giving of the Ten Commandments, a foundational set of moral and ethical principles.

Leviticus 19:1-4 (NIV): God instructs the Israelites on various ethical and moral principles, emphasizing holiness.

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 (NIV): Moses urges the Israelites to observe the statutes and ordinances given by God.

Psalms 1:1-2 (NIV): The psalmist extols the blessings of meditating on the law day and night.

Isaiah 2:3 (NIV): Isaiah prophesies about the nations streaming to the mountain of the Lord to learn His ways and walk in His paths.

Micah 6:8 (NIV): Micah summarizes God's expectations for His people: to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God.

Hosea 4:6 (NIV): Hosea speaks of the people's destruction due to lack of knowledge and rejection of God's law.

Malachi 4:4 (NIV): Malachi exhorts the people to remember the law of Moses, emphasizing its enduring significance.