



Christian Questions

Think about the Bible like you never have before

A question from Frank from the CQ App: How many references are there in the New Testament to the Old Testament? My understanding is the New Testament is the New Covenant with God the Old Testament closed the old Covenant. Is this not true? The New Testament being the Covenant of Love.

Dear Frank:

The number of references in the New Testament of the Bible to the Old Testament, as identified by multiple sources, varies. Conservatively, there are over 200 citations from the Old Testament in the New Testament. The number increases to nearly 1,000 or more when including allusions or references to Old Testament verses. Some estimates exceed that figure. 2 Timothy 3:16 (ASV) states, “Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.” The numerous references from the Old Testament found in the New Testament reflect God’s desire to assure us of the continuity, truthfulness and absolute necessity of His word. These abundant references also reinforce the fact that only the Supreme Being, God, our heavenly Father, could inspire and supervise so grand a project as the Holy Bible, written over a span of about 1,600 years and penned by over 40 humbled individuals chosen by God to receive His divine inspiration to write them. These chosen writers included individuals from various societal classes, different countries and in a wide array of time periods, yet the beautiful harmony of the 66 separate books of the Bible point to God as the only possible author. The worldwide proliferation of the Bible, the most widely read book on earth, in spite of strenuous attempts to eradicate it, is also faith strengthening to Christians as we realize that God has overseen the preservation of the Holy Scriptures throughout millennia regardless of massive opposition. The agreement of scriptural teachings, the consistency of the two testaments of the Bible encompassing numerous individual books, manifests its magnificent authorship, that of our loving Creator, Jehovah.

Romans 15:4 (KJV) in the New Testament, states, “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” This New Testament verse assures us that the Old Testament writings were previously written to educate and provide strong evidence for faith and hope to the Church, whom Paul was addressing. Eventually all mankind will benefit. We read in 1 Timothy 2:4 (Weymouth), that, God, “...is willing for all mankind to be saved and come to a full knowledge of the truth.”

The New Testament is the 27-book second part of the Bible containing the four Gospels, epistles (letters) of Paul and others, the Acts of the Apostles and the book of Revelation.

The Old Testament is the 39-book first portion of the Bible which includes “the law and the prophets” (see Matthew 22:40 and Matthew 5:17), establishes foundation principles that represent New Testament truths, and contains many prophecies that come to fruition in the

New Testament. While the term "testament" does mean "covenant," it is helpful to keep in mind that, aside from the fact that we call the two parts of the Bible the Old and New Testaments, God designed many covenants or agreements listed in the Bible to enter into with humanity.

The Law given to Moses is spoken of in [Galatians 3:24](#) (NASB) as, "...our tutor to lead us to Christ..." God's Law given to Moses for the Israelites identified sin and was impossible for imperfect humans to keep. The identification of sin and the great need for a redeemer was displayed. God gradually prepared the Israelites, whose history was an example for all people, for a law that went far above and beyond strict justice.

In [Matthew 5:17](#) (ESV), Jesus emphatically states, "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." Once Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Law given to Israel by God through Moses, for his entire earthly life, then died on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, he opened up a "...new and living way..." ([Hebrews 10:20](#) ESV). Followers, hearing the call of God through Christ, could then lay down their lives in full consecration to God (see [Matthew 16:24](#) and [Acts 22:16](#)).

Anyone of Jewish descent could then come out from under the Mosaic Law, if and only if they followed the still higher Law Jesus taught in [John 13:34](#) (NIV), "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." The higher thought of not only attempting to refrain from all wrong doing such as stealing, etc., is expanded to encompass doing all things with the highest and best welfare of all in mind, sometimes even to the point of sacrificing one's own actual rights, thus going beyond strict justice. [Matthew 5:44-48](#) instructs us to love our enemies, not simply those that love us. We see the example of God who provides rain and sunshine for the righteous and the unrighteous. God encourages us to climb higher in loving all of His creatures even before they cease to behave as an enemy.

We must do more than just perform based on a checklist of right actions in order to please God and to live righteously. Following the spirit of the law from the heart - not just as a matter of policy - is what matters. God's plan includes showing all people the better way eventually. We are told to aspire to, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." ([Luke 6:36](#) NIV). In order to acquire and maintain the desire needed to intend and attempt in all things to follow the Law of Love, Jesus admonished, "...You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." ([Matthew 22:37](#) NLT). The New International Version rendering of Jesus' words in [Matthew 22:37-40](#) states, "...'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." When love for our heavenly Father, who in no way was required to create us, becomes foremost in our lives, that higher love for all others falls into place. We will not be able to perform perfectly in our imperfect human bodies, so asking forgiveness of God, through the merit of Jesus Christ, is necessary as we sincerely strive from the heart (see [Proverbs 23:26](#)) to do the best we can and to always will to do right.

In summary, there are numerous citations and references connecting the Old and New Testament portions of the Bible. Followers of Jesus, Christians, are not under the Mosaic Law

listed in the Old Testament. That Law Covenant is still applicable to the earthly seed of Abraham with whom it was made, other than those that have “died to the law” (see [Galatians 2:19](#)), and faithfully carry out the lifelong consecration of their lives to God through Jesus. The Law Covenant was a precursor to the New Law Covenant. Moses, in mediating the Old Law Covenant, pictured Jesus, the Head, and also the Church, his figurative body. The New Covenant will be in force for mankind in the future, when the Mediator, Jesus, united with his eventually fully prepared Church or “bride” (see [Revelation 19:7](#)), dispenses blessings to all people to afford them a full opportunity to come into heart agreement with their heavenly Father and obtain life everlasting.

Finally, love will eventually flow from all creatures to all creatures on every plane of existence, with God being recognized as rightfully above all.

[1 Corinthians 15:28](#) (ESV) states, “When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to Him who put all things in subjection under Him, so that God may be all in all.” The higher Law, that of love, will rule in all hearts. [Isaiah 35:5-10](#) (NIV) teaches us, “The eyes of the blind shall be opened...a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way...the redeemed will walk there...They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads... joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.” [Revelation 21:4](#) (NAS) states, “...He shall wipe away every tear...there shall no longer be any death...mourning...crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” We joyfully look forward to that glorious day described in so many Scriptures!

Thank you for your thoughtful questions. We hope we have shed some scriptural light and suggested some food for thought for use in your further study and reasoning on these biblical topics. Please feel free to write us again. Please visit www.Christianquestions.com to find scriptural advice on a wide variety of questions, as well as hundreds of archived programs with a scriptural perspective.

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