

WHAT CHANGED BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

God's People Change—God Does Not

We find in both Testaments:

1. Unity of Scripture and consistency of God's nature.
2. God's desire for forgiveness and reconciliation.
3. Divine insistence on love, compassion and justice as seen in the Law and the Prophets and Jesus.
4. From creation through redemption, in both law and gospel, in both judgment and forgiveness, the will and purpose of God are to make right all that is broken.

Changes related to the differences between Old and New Testaments--A change occurs in the kind of group that is identified as the people of God.

1. In the O.T. God's people are a nation.

- a. Physically defined by land with enemies and wars. Thus in the O.T. we read about battles and casualties.
- b. Must have a criminal justice system with offenses and penalties.

2. In the N.T. God's people are a church.

- a. Jesus and Paul give instructions, not for a nation and its society, but individual ethics, how one is to live his or her life and how the church is to function.
- b. The struggle for the church is not against flesh and blood but against the spiritual forces of evil.
- c. The shift has been made from a land of borders to a different sort of "kingdom"—the kingdom of God.
- d. Kingdom language pervades the teachings of Jesus—God's people are engaged in spiritual conflict.

*A church and nation are very different contexts but the principle is the same for both—the people of God must not tolerate sin in their midst and must seek to eradicate it.

*God is patient with sinners but wants us to see that sin is not only offensive to God but injurious to us.

Joshua 4 and I Corinthians 5

Matthew 5:29-30 and Revelation 2:20

John 8:2-11

*The unmitigated testimony of both testaments:

1. God is not static—God feels a variety of emotions, regrets, and even changes his mind.
2. God only changes his mind in one direction: the direction of forgiveness and redemption.

Genesis 6:6 and I Samuel 15:35

Exodus 32:14 and Amos 7:1-6

Luke 13:6-9

*In both testaments God has an overwhelming desire to be in relationship with us.

*We humans can make choices that dramatically impact our relationship with God.

*God does not run hot and cold—we do!

John 15:4-5—the judgment of God is an extension of the human choice.