



The scriptures of the Bible are divided into what are called the Old and New Testaments. This partition has to do with two separate covenants, which God made with man.

The Old Testament.

The Old Testament is named after the covenant God made with Abram.

God called Abram, who was childless, (God later changed his name to Abraham = father of many nations) and promised him that He would make him a great nation, from which, later, the Messiah would be born, with the words:

- *“Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, ... and **all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.**” (Genesis 12:1-3)*

Later on God confirmed His promise to Abram with a covenant:

- *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. Then **I will make my covenant between me and you** and will greatly increase your numbers.” ... I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. **I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you** and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God. (Genesis 17:1-7)*

The term ‘Old Testament’ refers to that eternal covenant, which God made with Abraham and his descendants. The people of Israel originate from this covenant.

The New Testament.

The Messiah, Jesus Christ, was born of the people of Israel and made another, new covenant with man on God’s behalf. He did that during the Seder meal with His twelve disciples, shortly before He was to be crucified.

At the Seder meal, which is still also eaten by the Jews when celebrating Pesach, Jesus gave a new symbolical meaning to the bread and to one of the cups of wine.

From the Gospel of Matthew:

- *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is **my blood of the covenant**, which is poured out for many for **the forgiveness of sins.** (Matthew 26:26-28)*

From the Gospel of Luke:

- *And he (Jesus) took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, **after the supper** he took **the cup**, saying, “This cup is **the new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you. (Luke 22:19-20)*

This cup, after the meal, is the third of four cups drunk during the Seder meal. This third cup has the significance of: ‘I shall save you’ or ‘the cup of salvation’.



Jesus establishes this cup as the symbol of a **new** covenant God makes with man.

This is a new covenant in the blood of Jesus, for:

- *God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding **of his blood** - to be received **by faith**. (Romans 3:25)*

This covenant is also eternal, for:

- *But when Christ came as high priest ... he entered the Most Holy Place (the heavenly tabernacle) once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining **eternal redemption**. (Hebrews 9:11-12)*

This covenant is the fulfilment of the promise God made to Abram when He said:

- *I will make you into a great nation, ... and **all peoples** on earth will be blessed through you. (Genesis 12:3)*

The apostle Paul elaborates on this in his letter to the Galatians, where he reaches the conclusion:

- *Understand, then, that those who **have faith** are children of Abraham. (Galatians 3:7)*
- *So those who rely on faith are blessed **along** with Abraham, the man of faith. (Galatians 3:9)*

Through this new covenant in the blood of Jesus the blessing God pronounced for the descendants of Abraham is extended 'to all nations', as Paul writes:

- *... **in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles (the non-Jews) through Christ Jesus ... (Galatians 3:14)***

The beginning of the Old and New Testaments.

In the Bible the Old Testament begins with the origin of the world, as described from Genesis 1 verse 1 onwards.

The Old Testament is actually named after the 'Old' or 'First Covenant' that God made.

The Old Testament actually **begins** therefore with God's promise to Abram in **Genesis chapter 12**, the promise that God confirms later with a covenant in **chapter 17**.

The New Testament begins in principle where the 'New Covenant' came into force.

The apostle Paul writes:

- *In him (Jesus) we have redemption **through his blood**, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. (Ephesians 1:7)*
- *Therefore, since we have been **justified through faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)*

Jesus' death on the cross, resurrection and ascension are interconnected inseparably.

It is maybe unclear precisely at what moment the new covenant came into force.

However, it could be stated that the covenant in His blood only became a reality when Jesus was glorified in heaven and took His place at the right hand of God.

Jesus' ascension is described in the first chapter of the Book of Acts:

- *After he (Jesus) said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their (the disciples') sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly*



*two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same **Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven**, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."* (Acts 1:9-11)

Paul writes:

- *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is **at the right hand of God** and is also interceding for us.* (Romans 8:33-34)

Paul remarks:

- *But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, **born under the law**, ...* (Galatians 4:4)

Jesus was born and lived 'under the law', under the 'Old Covenant'. In a manner of speaking, in the Old Testament.

In the Bible the New Testament begins with the four Gospels, which describe the life of Jesus. This means, in principle, that the four Gospels could be regarded as still belonging to the Old Testament.

It could be argued that **the New Testament begins with the Book of Acts.**

The end of the Old and New Testaments.

In the Bible **the Old Testament ends** with the Book of Malachi.

However, God made an **eternal covenant** with Abraham.

In that sense **the Old Testament knows no end.**

The New Testament is also named after an **eternal covenant**. It does not end with the Book of Revelation therefore.

The New Testament knows no end either.