

Week of July 29-August 4

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Scripture Reading: Read 2 Corinthians 3

In the scholastic setting, “compare and contrast” questions are quite common. They often show up in homework assignments. For example, science teachers might ask their classes to compare and contrast plant cells and animal cells. Such a question would help students differentiate between the two types of cells to determine what structures are the same and in what ways the cells differ?

Action Step: STOP! See if you can answer the following question based on 2 Corinthians chapter 3 without reading the rest of this devotional first: “Compare and contrast the old and new covenants.”

<u>OLD COVENANT</u>	<u>NEW COVENANT</u>
Given by God	Given by God
Glorious	More glorious
Law of God	Law of God
Written on tablets of stone	Written on tablets of the heart
Moses the mediator	Jesus the Savior
Of the letter	Of the Spirit
Condemns people	Brings righteousness
Causes death	Produces life
Leads to bondage	Provides freedom
Temporary	Permanent

As you review the table above, you can see in the first three rows the continuity between the two covenants. Both were God-given, both were glorious and both included God’s law. On this last similarity, you may be surprised because it is often stressed that the new covenant is all about God’s grace. It is but it does not eliminate God’s law. Rather, the law is internalized on our heart. Jeremiah prophesies this event when describing the coming of the new covenant (*Jeremiah 31:33*). “*I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.*” Ezekiel echoes this thought and reveals the Spirit’s work in the process (*Ezekiel 36:27*). “*And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*”

There is also a contrast between the covenants. The new covenant brings righteousness, freedom and life through Jesus’ death and resurrection, whereas the old covenant could only condemn people, bring bondage and cause death. Because the old covenant was of the letter and written on tablets of stone, it could not produce the change required by God due to our sin nature. Because the new covenant is of the Spirit and written on tablets of the heart, it is able to produce the life God requires.

Take-away: *When you compare and contrast, the conclusion is clear: the old was glorious but the new has no peer.*