

## The School of Biblical Law

### Introduction to Law and Grace

#### Lesson Fourteen: "Continuity and Discontinuity in the Covenants"

Throughout the pages of Scripture, God advances mankind's understanding of eternal realities every time a covenant is cut. Each covenant structure carries over aspects of the older model that remain unchanged while morphing other features for the newer covenant and even discarding some portions. Covenantal continuity and discontinuity must be considered when discussing Jesus' statement that He would establish His called out people, His church.

1. Jesus used the word of church, *ekklesia* (Greek), in only two passages.

In Matthew 16:18-19, Jesus defined the nature of his called out people, who would not be bound by the death sentence, and declared that they would be given keys (authority and tools) to operate the Kingdom.

In Matthew 18:15-20, Jesus instructed that the effect of using the keys (authority and tools) would be establishing justice, settling disputes, releasing truth in the earth, binding evil deeds, instituting peace, and advancing the Kingdom, which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17).

Because Jesus only used the word *ekklesia* in these two passages, He was either placing little importance on the church or he was placing his comments in the context of a covenant structure and was ear-marking where there would be continuity and where there would be discontinuity.

2. Covenantal theology tracks continuity and discontinuity within the covenants. The subject of sacrifice provides a good example.
  - Adam and Eve – Coats of Skin
  - Patriarchs – Altars and sacrifices
  - Abraham – God will provide a sacrifice (Jehovah Jireh)
  - Moses – Temple, brazen altar, types and details of offerings
  - Jesus – Cross and blood atonement
  - New Testament – No more blood sacrifices but living sacrifices

3. Jesus use of the word *ekklesia*, church, was in the context of covenant.

The continuity of Kingdom stewardship would carry over but the discontinuity came by identifying those who would activate, advance, and enforce the Kingdom.

- New stewards would be those made alive – or resurrected – from the old, Adamic lineage by way of the new birth because the doors of death would not be able to stand against the power of the resurrection.
- God gave Paul the mystery of Jew and Gentile being in one body with the wall that separated being torn down (Eph. 2:11-18).

The stewards would still need keys (authority and tools) in order to know what to allow and what to disallow.

- The keys would be the same. God's holy standard, the Law, is the tool that defines what is lawful and what is sinful.
- The discontinuity would be found in where the law resides as the new heart was the new designated container of the law (Ez. 36:26; Jer. 31:33; II Cor. 3:3).

Jesus expected the hearers to plug into covenantal history. He was not introducing an entirely new concept but was transitioning the old order into the new. The church has been grafted into the tree and root system of God's historical covenantal people (Rom. 11:16-17). Proper understanding of the Matthew passages causes the church to carry on the assignment and understand the parts of the old order which are to be maintained and which are to be discarded.