



The effective bow fisher must adjust for refraction at the surface of the water. So too the faithful exegete must account for the distinction between an inseparable Old and New Testament.

Jesus said, *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets...”* (Matthew 5:17), and yet insisted that, *“This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood”* (Luke 22:20). John, after years of ministry and reflection wrote,

*“Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you”* (1John 2:7-8). God himself foretold of a newness within his everlasting covenant: *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts”* (Jeremiah 31:31-36).

The coming of Christ marked a transformation in the primary way that God chooses to reveal himself and his covenant.

In the Old Testament, though intensely and intimately involved in both the daily grind and the eternal inheritance of individual lives, God primarily reveals himself in the sweeping strokes of historical, geographical, physical, and national sagas. Lessons are learned as truth is revealed through generations of slavery, epic migrations, empirical narratives, and the rise and collapse of entire people groups.

In the New Testament, though actively sustaining and influencing the generational habitation within physical creation, God primarily reveals himself in the inner spiritual workings of the individual.

The Apostle Paul alluded to this in his description of the battles within us: *“I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me”* (Romans 7:23-24). The physical, generational, national battles waged in the geography of Old Testament history depict the eternal struggle on battlefields within. Paul further expounds in his depiction of God’s new work to reveal and to engage: *“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay...”* (2Corinthians 4:6-7). The God who revealed himself and his purposes through the sweeping brush strokes of creation is the same God who now works to reveal himself within the souls of those created. *“The mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed... this mystery, which is Christ in you”* (Colossians 1:26-27).

If we miss this covenantal refraction we miss the fish.

I wonder how many ecclesiastical struggles in orthodoxy and orthopraxy find their origin in mishandling this distinction between the everlasting Old and the ancient New. Like the bow fisher who stalks his prey from above the water’s surface, the Christian must account for the surface tension that separates these two testaments. We welcome the hunt for archetypal metaphors in the historical accounts of the Old Testament, taking confidence in knowing that throughout all of time God’s revelation remains consistent. Yet, we must carefully account for the refraction of the New as we render those sweeping temporal strokes of external revelation into grassroots application amidst the intimacy of God’s eternal work within us.

