

The background of the entire image is a vibrant aurora borealis in shades of green and teal, set against a dark, starry night sky. Below the sky, a snowy, mountainous landscape is visible, with snow-covered peaks and valleys. The overall mood is serene and ethereal.

Life AFTER THE
CROSS

CREFLO DOLLAR

Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are taken from the *Kings James Version* of the Bible.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the *Holy Bible, New International Version* ®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Life After the Cross

Copyright © 2015 by Creflo Dollar

Published by:

Creflo Dollar Ministries

PO Box 95

Nerang QLD 4211

Printed in Australia. All rights reserved under International Copyright Law. Contents and/or cover may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the express written consent of the publisher.

Life AFTER THE **CROSS**

LESSON 1

LIFE AFTER THE CROSS.....5

LESSON 2

**THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITHES
AND OFFERINGS.....11**

LESSON 1

LIFE AFTER THE CROSS

Misunderstanding and misinterpreting the Bible is not only prevalent among Believers, but it is also dangerous. We can read the Bible all we want, but if we are not picking up the true meaning of what God is trying to convey to us in the Scriptures, we might as well be reading a fairy tale. And that is exactly what many people think the Bible is—a fairy tale. In order to really be able to properly apply the Bible to our lives, we must understand that there is a sharp contrast between the Old and New Testaments. The best way to look at it is as “before the cross” and “after the cross.” The old covenant, which was based on the Law, required that we first follow the letter of the Law in order to be blessed by God. Under the new covenant, we now live under grace. Because of what Jesus did when He shed His blood for us on the cross, we no longer have to fulfill the requirements of the Law in order for God to bless us. Knowing what life “after the cross” looks like is vital for a healthy, thriving Christian life.

How we understand the Scriptures profoundly impacts how we live our lives and the results we experience. So often Christians incorrectly interpret the Word of God, and they don’t understand the proper context in which something is being said. We must learn how to rightly “divide” the Word by analyzing and earnestly studying the Bible.

The truth is that we cannot preach the old covenant and the Law as the rules by which we are to live because we are no longer under the old covenant. Jesus shed His blood on the cross, becoming the perfect sacrifice for all time. With this in mind, we must ask ourselves if we are living “pre-cross” or “post-cross” realities. This will affect everything from how we see ourselves and others to how we see God and His dealings with us today.

During Jesus’ earthly ministry, the old covenant was still in effect. The new covenant did not actually start until He shed His blood on the cross. The Law, as described in the old covenant, was what the Jews of Jesus’ day adhered to and understood. So when Jesus came on the scene, He was presenting new covenant concepts to a people who were not yet enlightened to what would come after He died. But that was okay! Jesus introduced the kingdom of God way of doing things to the world, even though they weren’t ready for it. He paved the way for the new covenant through which all people would have the opportunity to receive salvation.

The Law: A Performance-based System

The Law, which was the moral and religious standard of the old covenant, was a performance-based system that reflected the “do good, get good” principle (Deuteronomy 28:1-4, 15, *AMP*). In fact, to overlook even one small area or instruction from the Law brought a curse. For this reason, the Jews had to continually offer sacrifices every year to cover their sin.

Thankfully, the new covenant means that we no longer have to continually offer sacrifices for our sin. Through Jesus' one-time, perfect blood sacrifice, we have been delivered from the curse of the Law. Galatians 3:13, 14 says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Jesus took the curse on Himself when He was hung on the cross. Because of this, we do not have to worry about becoming cursed when we sin or miss the mark. The price has already been paid for us through Jesus.

Because of Jesus, we are no longer required to earn our salvation through our good works. We are blessed because of Jesus' obedience, not our own (Romans 5:19). Our obedience is our response to what Jesus has already done, not an action we take to get God to bless us. Of course there are blessings involved with obeying God, but our motivation is not to try to earn our way into God's good graces. Grace and righteousness are gifts from God, gifts we receive because of Jesus.

Because the new covenant is all about what Jesus did, we can't boast about ourselves or how good we are or how wonderful our actions have been. Jesus' redemptive work was the great equalizer because it put all of us on a level playing field. It also relieved us from having to perform in order to get God to accept us. How wonderful it is to

know that we no longer have to bear the burden of trying to perform for God's acceptance! Jesus paid the ultimate price, and when we are in Him, it is as if we have never sinned. The Father now views all Believers through the eyes of love and acceptance when they accept His Son. Through Him we have righteousness, wisdom, redemption, sanctification, and holiness. We have spiritual blessings that will result in the fruit of the Spirit being made manifest in our lives. When Jesus takes root in our lives, we begin to see this fruit grow, and displayed, similar to how fruit grows on a tree.

Remember, everything about the old covenant was based on performance. For example, we were required to forgive others before God could forgive us (Mark 11:25, 26; Matthew 6:14, 15). However, after the cross, we are taught that we are forgiven through accepting Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13). Under the old covenant, we are commanded to show perfect love to God and others (Mark 12:30, 31), but under the new covenant we see that God loved us first. Therefore, we can show that love to others (1 John 4:19). God will never require anything from us that He has not already put in us. We have the ability to love and forgive others because God's love lives in us through Jesus living in us. We are empowered through this new covenant to walk as Jesus did. Because He has fulfilled the entire Law, even becoming a sacrifice for sin on man's behalf, we are free in Him from the bondage of the Law's consequences.

The Requirements of Faith

Keep in mind that before Jesus came the people did not have the faith that we have today; they only had the Law. But because Jesus is the Source of our faith, we can lay hold of everything God offers us. Even the concept of faith under the old covenant was based on the people having faith first before they could be blessed. Before the cross, none of Jesus' disciples were born again, and Jesus constantly referred to them as having "little faith." But in the New Testament, after Jesus' death, people's lack of faith wasn't mentioned. This is because, as Believers, the fact that we have received Christ demonstrates that we have saving faith, which is necessary for us to access the grace of God. This gives us another clear indication of pre- and post-Cross spiritual life.

When your faith seems to waver, always remind yourself that Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-3). Just like Peter when He walked on the water, we should keep our eyes on Jesus and focus only on Him at all times. Before faith came through Jesus, everyone was under the Law. But now faith has come, and we are no longer subject to the penalties and requirements of the Law. Faith is a person, and that person is Jesus. We are saved through faith in Him, and, as a result, we are now partakers of every benefit of salvation. This is what life after the Cross truly looks like for the Believer who has an understanding of the new covenant.

LESSON 2

THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Financial giving is an area that tends to cause significant confusion in the body of Christ, particularly when it is tied to a performance-based way of doing things. As we have learned, the old covenant, before the cross, was based on what people had to do first before receiving a blessing from God. Simply put, they had to obey God in order to be blessed. After the cross, however, the order was changed. Now the focus is on what Jesus has already done. Truthfully, we are blessed because of our belief in His perfect obedience, not ours. Under the new covenant, our obedience is not the same type of requirement as described in the Old Testament. This is not to say that we should not obey God or that God takes disobedience lightly. His instructions to us, for Christian living, are for our benefit. But the motive behind obedience should not be fearing that if we don't obey we won't experience God's goodness or blessing in our lives. Obedience is our response to the finished work of Christ, just like faith, love, and forgiveness are responses. Similarly, giving a tenth of our income, and offerings, to God is a response to what Jesus has obtained for us.

When we study God's Word, we learn to trust Him enough

to become givers. However, money is the smallest way we can possibly demonstrate our trust in God. When we sow financially, we prove to ourselves that our faith and trust in God is strong, and it builds our faith even more (Luke 12:24).

Jesus is ever faithful to give seed to the sower and bread to the hungry. He gives money to those who give, and He takes care of His own. After the cross, financial blessings are now a result of what Jesus has already done for us, not what we think we are required to do according to the old covenant. Giving under the new covenant is more about our heart attitude in response to God's goodness in our lives than it is about trying to secure His blessings in our lives. In other words, we give because we love Him, not because we are required to do so. This shift in perspective releases us from the fear of running out or the fear that we will be punished if we don't give. Giving to God only sets us up for good because of the principle of seedtime and harvest. But even more than that, it is an active demonstration of our love for Him.

Jesus bled and died for us so that we can lay claim to the financial inheritance that rightfully belongs to us as sons of God. He took our sins upon Himself and exchanged them for His righteousness so that we can be enriched and live abundantly supplied lives (2 Corinthians 8:9). We have a blood-bought right to financial provision because of what Jesus did. When we give, we are expressing our faith in this truth.

God promises to take care of us even better than the birds of the air, which neither sow nor reap yet still enjoy

the benefits of God's provision. How much more does God care for those Jesus died for who have become a part of His family? When we trust Him with our finances and give tithes and offerings, we are releasing our faith, which pleases God.

In the book of Malachi, there was a clear consequence for those who did not tithe (Malachi 3:8-11). The people were required to give first before receiving God's favor, and in failing to tithe and give offerings they incurred a curse. God referred to it as robbery. However, that was under the old covenant, which means the concept of being cursed for not giving tithes and offerings is no longer in effect. Under the new covenant, we give because we want to, not because we are afraid that if we don't give God won't bless us. This is the foundation of giving under the new covenant of grace. If we give to avoid being cursed, it is fear-based and produces no positive harvest. However, when we give out of appreciation, love, and thanksgiving to God, we are sure to not only experience the joy that comes from engaging in God's system of seedtime and harvest, but we are also free from the fear that plagues those with a Law-based mindset.



Creflo Dollar Ministries • PO Box 95 • Nerang QLD 4211
+61 7 5556 0022 • crefodollarministries.org
© & © 2015 by Creflo Dollar. All rights reserved.