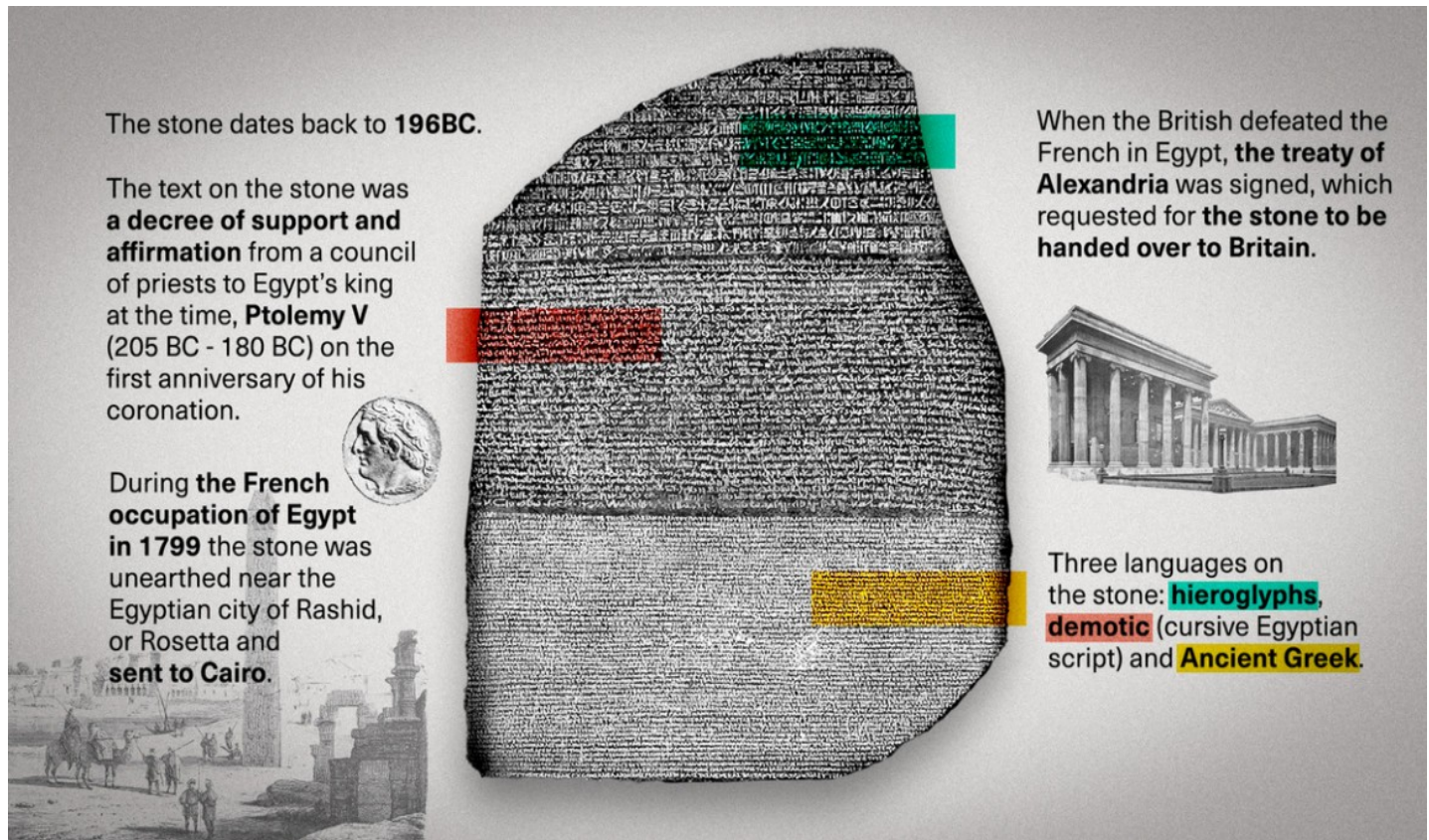


## THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IS OUR ROSETTA STONE, 6 pgs

The Rosetta stone is a coffee table sized fragment of a free-standing stone that had writing on it in two languages (Egyptian and Greek), using three scripts (hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek). Egyptian governmental or religious records are inscribed on the stone in three horizontal columns, each relaying the same message. It's made of black basalt and weighs about three-quarters of a ton. It was discovered at Raschid, Egypt in 1799, by Napoleon's army. No one could read hieroglyphs at the time of its discovery. The Rosetta Stone proved the key to deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphs. Scholars used the parallel inscriptions as a translation device to rediscover and make sense of the hieroglyphic alphabet.



The Term Rosetta stone has been used **idiomatically** to represent a crucial key in the process of decryption of **encoded information**, especially when a small but representative sample is recognized as **the clue to understanding a larger whole**. The term has been widely **used in other contexts**. For example the spectrum of the hydrogen atoms has proven to be the Rosetta stone of modern physics: once this pattern of spectral lines had been deciphered much else could also be understood. Fully understanding the key set of genes to the human leucocyte antigen has been described as the Rosetta Stone of immunology. A **Gamma ray burst** (GRB) found in conjunction with a **supernova** has been called a Rosetta Stone for understanding the origin of GRBs. The name has also become used in various forms of **linguistic translation software**.

The OT is an account of God's dealing with mankind. It contains detailed historical information, warnings, judgments (curses), blessings, promises, prophecies, laws, regulations, instructions, pictures,

and illustrations. One of the most important events in Israel's calendar was the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur, aka the Sabbath of Sabbaths). Though Lev.16 details the order and events, **it is the NT that acts as a Rosetta Stone to explain its significance.**

### the Day of Atonement

*only the high priest ever entered the Most Holy Place, and only once a year [on the Day of Atonement]. And he always offered blood for his own sins and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. By these regulations the Holy Spirit revealed that the entrance to the Most Holy Place was not freely open as long as the Tabernacle and the system it represented were still in use , Heb. 9:7-8*

The overriding theme of the Day of Atonement is that **sinners cannot approach God in their own way or on their own terms**. The 5 chapters preceding Lev.16 provide the background for this by detailing the laws of cleanness and uncleanness – what contaminated a person so as to exclude him from the congregation and how such a person could be cleansed in order to rejoin the community of God's people. Detailed descriptions, pictures (like the ceremony and sacrifice performed once every year on the Day of Atonement), illustrations (like the layout, construction, materials, artwork, contents, and procedures connected with the tabernacle and later Solomon's temple) given in the OT were meant to be carefully reproduced. **Their true meaning was unknown until the NT reveled it.**

### The Pattern and its Meaning

*<sup>1</sup> Here is the main point: We have a High Priest who sat down in the place of honor beside the throne of the majestic God in heaven. <sup>2</sup>There he ministers in the heavenly Tabernacle, the true place of worship that was built by the Lord and not by human hands. <sup>3</sup>And since every high priest is required to offer gifts and sacrifices, our High Priest must make an offering too. <sup>4</sup>If he were here on earth, he would not even be a priest, since there already are priests [anointed from the tribe of Levi] who offer the gifts required by the law. <sup>5</sup> They serve in a system of worship that is only a copy, a shadow of the real one in heaven. For when Moses was getting ready to build the Tabernacle, God gave him this warning: **Be sure that you make everything according to the pattern I have shown you here on the mountain, [Ex.25:9, 40; Num.8:4], Heb.8:***

*<sup>6</sup>But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given **a ministry that is far superior** to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us **a far better covenant** with God, based on **better promises**. <sup>7</sup>If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. <sup>8</sup>But when God found fault with the people, he said: The day is coming when **I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.** <sup>9</sup>This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. They did not remain faithful to my covenant, so I turned my back on them, **Heb.8:***

*<sup>10</sup>But **this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day**, I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. <sup>11</sup> ... they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest. <sup>12</sup>For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more. <sup>13</sup>**In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete.** And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away, **Heb.8:***

This was graphically illustrated at the death of Jesus by the ripping of the heavy veil [without hands, see **Dan.2:34**] that separated the most holy place [representing God's presence] from the rest of the temple sanctuary [signifying that the way to God had been opened]. *And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom, **Mt.27:51***. This transition to the New Covenant was publicly **finalized** in 70<sup>AD</sup> when Titus sacked Jerusalem and burned the temple (**Mt.24:1-2**) [portending the end of the age with the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ in judgment, **Mt.24:29-51**].

The Old Covenant in the context of the OT together with many prophecies move us toward the climactic events inaugurated by the incarnation of the Messiah. *It is absorbed and reinterpreted by the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the church*. The Gospel acts as a Rosetta Stone that reveals the true and ultimate understanding of the OT words and images as they served throughout history to point to Christ and his work. *The law of the OC has been converted by the NC in the context of the NT and reapplied to the church via the lens of the Gospel*. Hebrews refers to that revision as **better, superior**.

### Principles for Organizing, Interpreting, and Understanding Scripture

Historically there have been 3 organizing principles for theology. Dispensational & Covenant Theologies are both founded on real Scriptural categories, dispensations and covenants. Scholars used them as convenient or ready-made templates, methods for organizing theological systems, but neither of them has a real scriptural tie-in to the New Testament. Both schemes are artificial constructs [See Abraham's Four Seeds below.] with many followers. The third theological system, **New Covenant Theology** [see book below], has also been around a long time as **promise/fulfilled theology** [see my essay **New Covenant Church**].

The events and explanations that unfold in the Gospels and letters to the churches as *the New Covenant* (**Jer.31:31; Heb.8:8, 13; 9:15; 12:24; 2 Cor.3:6**) *in My blood* (**Lk.22:20; 1 Cor.11:25**) are **definitive**. A number of factors illustrate this such as the fading into the background of John the Baptist (*he must increase, but I must decrease, **Jn.3:30***) after he introduces Jesus. *John himself served as the demarcation between the two eras*, the Old and New Testaments. After some 400 yrs of silence where no prophets of God were seen in the land (since the time of Malachi), John appeared out of the desert (*my messenger, **Mal.3:1-3; Elijah 4:5; Mt.11:14***) calling for repentance and announcing the coming of *the great and awesome day of the Lord [judgment]*. *The age of fulfillment prophesied in the OT was introduced with the coming of John, **Mt.11:13***.

*<sup>11</sup>... of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist [he was the last of the OT prophets]. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is! <sup>12</sup>from the time John the Baptist began preaching until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing, and violent people are attacking it. <sup>13</sup>before John came, all the prophets and the law of Moses looked forward to this present time. **Mt.11:11-13***. The Gospel writers have been preparing their readers for transition into the New Covenant by illustrating the relationship and incompatibility of the Old Covenant with the New.

The same retreat into the background can be seen for Moses and Elijah as representatives of the law and the prophets respectively on the mount of transfiguration so that *Jesus only remains as the one to listen to, **Mt.17:1-8; Mk.9:2-8***. The Gospel writers have been preparing their readers for this by contrasting the two ages.



<sup>16</sup>No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth [NC] on an old garment [OC] , for [when it is washed it will shrink as it dries and] the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. <sup>17</sup>Neither do people pour new wine [NC ] into old wineskins [OC]. If they do, the skins will burst [because the wine will continue to ferment and build up pressure]; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins [that can expand to accommodate the pressure of fermentation], and both are preserved, **Mt.9:16-17** (see **v.14-15** for context).

Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new [NC] and what is old [OC], **Mt.13:52** (see context, **v.47-51**). One interpretation is that the wise scribe explains how the OC relates to the NC and is fulfilled in it. The Gospel of Jesus is a grid through which everything Old Covenant is filtered revealing better promises for the church of Jesus Christ.

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... **what an incalculable amount of evil** has been wrought by Catholics and by Protestants, from a mistaken belief in the perpetual validity of the Mosaic civil legislation, and from a confounding of the spirit of the old dispensation with that of the new, [historian George Fisher, Reformation **p.223-224**, **NCT p.27-28** ].

Spiritualist Sebastian Franck (1499-1543) bringing a charge against both the church fathers and “their descendants” [Catholics and Reformers] wrote: **They mix the NT with the Old, as also today their descendants do.** And when they have nothing with which to defend their purposes, they run at once to the empty quiver [OT] and from it prove [the legitimacy of] war, oath, government, power of magistracy, tithes, priesthood; [paedobaptism,] and praise everything and ascribe this all forcibly to Christ without his will.

The Anabaptist, Pilgrim Marpeck, (?-1556) along with other Anabaptists held to the Bible as the Word of God, but made the New Testament **alone normative for the Christian life**: Marpeck’s interpretation of the Bible ... was **Christocentric**. **Revelation was viewed as progressive and partial before Christ. Only in Christ is the revelation of God complete.** Thus, **the NT alone became the rule of faith and practice** for the Anabaptists. Marpeck saw all sorts of dire consequences for Christendom in the failure to interpret the OT properly. The Munsterites as well as Calvin were to be blamed in this regard. They had mistaken [confused] the foundation of the house for the house itself. They had based their theocracies on a revelation which was only preparatory and never intended to be final, **NCT p.28-29**.

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... think carefully about this **Jesus** whom we declare to be God’s messenger and High Priest. For he was faithful to God, who appointed him, just as **Moses** served faithfully when he was entrusted with God’s entire house [under the OC]. But **Jesus deserves far more glory than Moses**, just as a person who builds a house deserves more praise than the house itself. For every house has a builder, but the one who built everything is God. Moses was certainly faithful in God’s house as a servant. **His work was an illustration of the truths God would reveal later.** But Christ, as the Son, is in charge of God’s entire [NC] house. And **we are God’s house** if we keep our courage and remain confident in our hope in Christ [an **implication** whether stated outright or not is a **condition**], **Heb. 3:1-6**

... *For this good news—that God has prepared this rest—has been announced to us just as it was to them.* But it did them no good because they didn't share the faith of those who listened to God. **For only we who believe can enter his rest ...** *We know it is ready because of the place in the Scriptures where it mentions the seventh day: On the seventh day God rested from all his work ... So God's rest is there for people to enter,* but those who first heard this good news failed to enter because they disobeyed God. <sup>7</sup>So **God set another time for entering his rest, and that time is today ...** So **there is a special rest [lit, sabbath keeping] still waiting for the people of God.** For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labors [**Rev.14:13**], just as God did after creating the world [**Gen.2:2**], **Heb.4:2-10**.

**So let us do our best [make every effort – work out your own salvation, Phil.2:12] to enter that rest.** But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall ... So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold firmly to what we believe.** This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin. *So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most,* **11-16**

Today **God's people are not marked by physical circumcision**; there are no animal sacrifices or foods that God's people are forbidden to eat (**Mk.7:15-20; Acts 10:10-16**); and it is clear that there are no other gods (**1 Cor.8:4**) so that meat sacrificed to an idol is not rendered unfit for consumption. **The Mosaic law (all of it) has been reprocessed by the New Covenant in Christ's blood.** The promises and prophecies are being and have been fulfilled in the church and its Lord. The NC has retranslated everything in order to get at the meaning intended by the OT authors who wrote it in the common, every-day language of their times under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In other words the Spirit had the NT authors **spiritualize** the OT prophases, etc. by the Gospel. It has converted the land promises to Israel into the vision of heaven for the church. **There are no more Sabbath regulations because Christ himself is our rest, Col.2:16-17.** see **Christ Our Sabbath – The Year of the Lord's Favor**

Now we understand that the command, *muzzle not the ox that treads the grain (Dt.25:4; 1 Cor.9:9-11; 1 Tim.5: 17-18)* states a principle that is applied to the church under the New Covenant rather than a command about oxen. Jesus exercised **kingdom authority** when he said, *you have heard it said, but I say unto you, Mt.5:21-48.* The promises spoken to Israel under the OC belong to the church (composed of believing Jews and Gentiles) under the NC. **In Christ God is restoring the fortunes of his people from all nations** including Israel, **Jer.48:47; 49:6, 39; Ez.16:53; Joel 3:1; Rev.5:9; 7:9.**

**The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy, Rev.19:10.** *The essence of prophecy [what prophecy is all about] is to give a clear witness for Jesus. This witness to Jesus inspires all prophecy.* The whole OT points us to Jesus and finds its ultimate fulfillment in him, **Lk.24:27, 44.**

### **OT Record & NT Translation**

Many NT passages substantially differ from the corresponding events recorded in the OT. For example, **Heb.11:24-27** interprets the events of **Ex.2:11-15** through grid of the NT.

... *the covenant of which Jesus is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is*

established on **better** promises ... But God found fault with the people and said: [**Jer.31:31-34**] By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete ... **Heb.8:6-13**

**Old and NT saints constitute a single united body of the redeemed** [see **RPCD**, **chap.7**].

All [the saints of old] were commended for their faith, yet they did not receive what was promised. For God had provided something better for us, so that they would be made perfect together with us, **Heb.11:39-40** [**Schreiner p.862, note 4d**]. The fulfillment of God's promises to them have been upgraded as they join NT believers in Christ [see **Second Coming Charts**].