Question: How will the people who died before Jesus came that is, those under the Old Covenant be saved? We know from Scripture that salvation comes only through the blood of Jesus Christ. So how could those who lived before Christ's sacrificial death be saved when His blood had not yet been shed?

Answer: It is indeed true that salvation is obtained only through the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 9:22). However, the relationship between the Old and New Covenants clarifies how those before Christ were made righteous.

1. The New Covenant fulfills, not abolishes, the Old Covenant.

> *Jesus Himself said in Matthew 5:17 (NIV):*
> "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

This means the Old Covenant was not invalid or false, but incomplete it pointed forward to the coming Messiah and the ultimate sacrifice He would offer.

2. An analogy of changing systems:
Consider an institution that originally admitted students through paper applications. Later, it switches to an electronic system for admissions. Students admitted by the old system remain valid alumni, but new students must use the updated process. The old system becomes obsolete but does not nullify past valid admissions.

Similarly, the Old Covenant was God's initial way to relate to His people, but it had limitations, especially in dealing with sin (Hebrews 10:1–4). The sacrifices under the Old Covenant bulls, goats, and lambs could not permanently remove sin, as Hebrews 10:4 (ESV) states:

> "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."

3. The New Covenant introduces the perfect sacrifice:
When Jesus died and shed His blood, He inaugurated a New Covenant, fulfilling the promises made in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Luke 22:20). This New Covenant offers

complete forgiveness and direct access to God, which the Old Covenant could only foreshadow.

> *Hebrews 8:13 (NIV) explains:*
> "By calling this covenant 'new,' he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear."

The word "obsolete" (Greek: *palaios*) means "old" or "worn out," indicating that the Old Covenant's system was temporary and would pass away when the New Covenant arrived.

4. Salvation of the Old Testament saints:
Those who lived under the Old Covenant Moses, Elijah, Abraham, David, Daniel, and others were declared righteous by faith in God's promises, anticipating the coming Messiah (Hebrews 11). They were justified by trusting in God's provision, not by their own works or sacrifices.

The writer of Hebrews makes it clear that they were part of God's covenant people and considered holy, even though they did not

see Christ in His earthly ministry or receive baptism (Hebrews 11:4–40). Their faith was credited as righteousness (Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:3).

5. After Christ’s sacrifice:
Once Jesus’ blood was shed, the New Covenant became the only valid means of salvation. Those born afterward must enter through this covenant, embracing faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross.

Anyone who tries to rely on the Old Covenant’s laws or sacrifices for salvation today is missing the essential truth of the gospel and cannot be saved (Galatians 3:10–14).

6. Practical implications:
It’s vital for believers today to understand the New Covenant’s principles. While we can learn from Old Testament heroes like David his faith and humility we cannot follow all their cultural or legal practices (such as polygamy or revenge). Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15; 12:24), clearly taught a higher standard:

- Marriage is between one man and one woman (Matthew 19:4–6).

- Divorce and remarriage without cause is adultery (Matthew 19:9).

- Believers must not seek personal revenge (Matthew 5:38–39).

- Salvation is only through Jesus’ blood (Hebrews 9:22).

- The Old Covenant was a foreshadowing, fulfilled by Jesus (Matthew 5:17; Hebrews 8:13).

- Old Testament saints were saved by faith in God’s promises (Hebrews 11).

- After Christ, only the New Covenant offers true salvation.

May God bless you richly.

Maranatha!

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