

**I. Introduction and review.**

**II. What was wrong with the Old Covenant? v. 7-9,13**

- A. Which covenant does the New Covenant replace? v. 7,9a
- B. Why was a New Covenant needed? v. 7 4:8 7:11 Ps. 95:7f 110:4
- C. Where does the fault lie? v. 8a Rom. 8:3 7:7f Gal. 3:21
  - 1. The people of Israel were at fault because they did not keep the Covenant. v. 9b 4:8 Isa. 5:1f Acts 7:51f 15:10 Ro. 7:21f
  - 2. The covenant itself was faulty, in that it was not able to bring men to God. v. 7
- D. Why did the Old Covenant fail? Ro. 3:20
  - 1. It was imperfect because it was external and temporal.
  - 2. It was impotent because it didn't convey the righteousness which it commanded.
  - 3. It was impermanent, on the way to obsolescence. v. 13
- E. At whose initiative was this New Covenant made? v. 9a

**III. Why is the New Covenant superior? v. 10-13**

- A. The New Covenant is spiritual and internal, meeting man's deepest need for inward holiness. v. 10a Jer. 31:33 Ezek. 11:19 36:26-27
  - 1. While the Old Covenant was written on stone tablets, the New Covenant is written on the hearts of God's people. Jer. 31:33 24:7 Ex. 31:18 Eze. 37:26f II Co. 3:3,6f
  - 2. While the Old Covenant was merely an external constraint, the New Covenant transforms us internally, enabling us to obey. II Co. 5:17 Rom. 6:11
- B. The New Covenant brings us into the closest possible union with God. v. 10b
  - 1. Under the Old Covenant, union with God was dependant upon the people's observance of the law.
  - 2. Under the New Covenant, we are united to God through the work of Christ.
- C. Each participant in the New Covenant will know the Lord. v. 11 Jer. 31:34a Jo. 17:3 Isa. 11:9 54:13 Joel. 2:28 Mt. 27:50-51 I Ti. 2:5
  - 1. Under the Old Covenant the knowledge of God was limited and mediated. 9:6-8
  - 2. Under the New Covenant, we can all draw near to God's holiest place. 6:19f 4:16
  - 3. Many who participated externally in the Old Covenant had no true knowledge of the Lord. Rom. 9:6 Isa. 1:2-3 Hos. 4:1,6
- D. The New Covenant offers full and final forgiveness of sins. v. 12 Jer. 31:34b 33:8
  - 1. The sacrifices of the Old Covenant could not procure forgiveness for sin. 10:3-4
  - 2. The sacrifices of the Old Covenant pointed towards the forgiveness of sins supplied by the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Christ. 7:27 1:3 2:17 9:14f
  - 3. What does it mean that God will remember our sins no more?
  - 4. This blessing is the foundation for all the other New Covenant blessings.
- E. The New Covenant is permanent. It cannot be broken and will not be replaced. v. 13 Jer. 31:32 32:40

#### IV. What is the relationship between the Old and New Covenants?

- A. There are many areas of continuity between the Old and New Covenants.
1. The Old Covenant also had promises, but they were conditional. Dt. 28:1f Le. 18:5
  2. The Old Covenant had similar goals, but was unable to bring them to fulfillment. Dt. 6:6f 30:6 Ps. 51:12 37:31 23 32 103 Ex. 29:45 6:7 34:6f Is. 43:25 Mic. 7:18-19
  3. The Old Covenant was redemptive in an earthly sense, pointing to the spiritual redemption provided by Christ. v. 9
  4. Believers under the Old Covenant were regenerated by God, had their hearts transformed, and their sins forgiven through faith. Gen. 15:6 Ps. 32:1f
  5. Old Covenant saints were looking ahead and enjoying, by anticipation, the blessings brought by Christ in the New Covenant.
- B. The greater New Covenant blessings are ours through Jesus' priestly mediation. 8:6
1. The Old Covenant law says, *do this and live*. The New Covenant gospel says *look to what Christ has done and live*. 10:5-7 34f Deut. 8:1 28:1f Ro. 10:5-11 Ps. 40:6-8
  2. He brings us into the closest possible fellowship with God. 6:18-19 4:14-16 Jo. 1:14
  3. Through Him our sins are forgiven. 7:27 1:3 2:27 9:11f
  4. Through Him the Holy Spirit is given – resulting in regeneration, illumination, and transformation. John 14:26 I Cor. 2:14 Acts 1:5 II Cor. 5:17 Gal. 5:22f
- C. In what sense has the Old Covenant been abrogated (abolished)?
1. The New Covenant supercedes and surpasses the Old Covenant. 8:8 7:18 Jo. 1:17
  2. Our author cannot be saying that the Old Testament Scriptures are irrelevant because he keeps quoting them as authoritative.
  3. The Old Covenant has been done away with as a means of approaching God.
  4. The New Covenant is not, however, anti-nomian (against law). v. 10b 13:1-6,16 10:24-34 John 14:15 Eph. 2:10 I Jo. 2:3f Ro. 13:8-10 Luke 10:26f
- D. With whom is the New Covenant made?
1. Dispensationalists say that the New Covenant is made literally with ethnic Israel and Judah (and not the Gentiles).
    - a. But: Believing Gentiles are children of Abraham and participants in the blessings of the New Covenant. Gal. 3:29 I Pe. 2:5 Ex. 19:6
    - b. Many dispensationalists teach that Gentiles are included through Abraham. Ge. 12:3 *Nations blessed*. John 4:22 Rom. 11:17f
  2. Presbyterian (covenant) theology says the New Covenant is made with the church, including the children of believers, which is why they baptize their infants.
    - a. But: This ignores the newness of the New Covenant whose participants have been inwardly transformed and forgiven.
    - b. An unregenerate infant does not yet enjoy New Covenant blessings. v. 11
  3. We enter into the New Covenant, and enjoy its blessings, through faith. Ga.3:7,29
  4. We don't give New Covenant ordinances to those who don't yet profess to participate in its blessings through faith. 10:23 3:1 4
- E. The New Covenant displays the unity of God's people. Eph. 2:11f Ga. 3:28f Ge. 12:3
1. Jeremiah foresees a day when all God's people will be reunited. Je. 37:22
  2. In Christ, believing Jews and Gentiles are one. Eph. 2:11f Ga. 3:28 Is. 42:6 19:24f

#### V. Concluding applications.

- A. Are you a participant in the New Covenant?
- B. Do you enjoy the fulness of the New Covenant blessings in your life? I Cor. 11:25
- C. We are called to forgive one another as God has forgiven us. v.12 Eph. 4:32 I Co. 13:5

### **Discussion questions**

- 1. Where is the longest quotation of the Old Testament found in the New Testament?**
- 2. How does Jeremiah 31 prove that the Old Covenant was temporary.**
- 3. Why did the Old Covenant fail?**
- 4. What makes the New Covenant better?**
- 5. What is the source of our New Covenant blessings?**
- 6. What are some areas of continuity between the Old and the New Covenants?**
- 7. In what sense has the Law of the Old Covenant been abolished?**
- 8. What place does God's moral law have under the Old Covenant?**
- 9. With whom is the New Covenant made?**
- 10. How can we enjoy a fuller experience of our New Covenant blessings?**
- 11. How does God's New Covenant forgiveness of us impact the way we treat each other?**