

The New and Better Covenant of Christ Part 2

a sermon in the series
Hebrews: An Epistle of Encouragement

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Hebrews 8:6-13

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. 7For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Two weeks ago we began a message entitled, “The New and Better Covenant of Christ.” Today I want to continue that message by the same title, part two. We from the text of Hebrews 8:6-13 was enlightened to see that the Old Covenant was less than perfect when it regarded salvation. It’s Weakness and Liability was twofold. Number one, it was a shadow of the reality.

Hebrews 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, [and] not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

Number two, its liability was its weakness to deal with the sin nature of men.

Hebrews 8:8-9 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

The Law could not ensure obedience. Then what was the purpose of God's holy law? To show us our hearts. To reveal to us our rebellion. To demonstrate our desire to disobey.

Romans 7:13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

The purpose of God's law was to pronounce all in need of a savior and lead us to that one who could save us from sin. I told you two weeks ago that the Ten Commandments, which were the centerpiece of the Old Covenant, was simply shadows of the reality. The reality is Christ. Those ten laws were giving to help us understand the nature and moral character of God but they were hollow in form, hard in following, and helpless in freeing the soul from sin. Does this mean that we are not to obey them? No, but obedience to them under the New Covenant is not the means of salvation but the evidence of salvation. By the way nine of the Ten Commandments are reiterated in the New Covenant. The fourth commandment was giving to the people of Israel as God said, "I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them." (Ezekiel 20:12)

In our text we are told that this law, which did nothing but condemn us and branded us guilty has been repealed for a new law. This law, as the first, comes in the form of a covenant. Our text says it is a better covenant than the Old and that Christ is the Mediator of it. This would be sufficient for me to explain why it is better. If anything is worth our Lord Jesus ascribing His name to it then it must be excellent. I cannot find one to whom I could compare to Christ therefore how can we argue that His covenant is not superior to the old which was mediated by angels and preached by Moses? I would today present Jesus the Christ to you all. He by far is vastly superior to any of us here today. He can do infinite worlds more for you than I can so I humbly refer your attention to Him.

This New Covenant has not be instituted and initiated by the blood of animals but has been sealed with the blood of Heaven's lamb who is Christ the Lord. Surely, this New Covenant is far greater than the first for this reason. And I don't want you to think that the New Covenant is merely an extension of the Old Covenant. Although we find some elements of the First in the New they are two separate and distinct covenants. That is why we can sing the words of Philip Bliss:

*Free from the law, O happy condition,
Jesus hath bled and there is re-mission,
Cursed by the Law, and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us, once for all.*

A BETTER COVENANT BECAUSE OF ITS PERFECTION

The Old Covenant Was Not Perfect in Regards To Salvation

The New Covenant is Perfect in Regards to Salvation

Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

The New Covenant is not lawless.

We see grace and law as being on opposite sides.

I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts”

But according to this verse there is law in the New Covenant that is to be obeyed.

In many respects the New Covenant’s law is much more stringent.

* Under the Old Covenant you could kill your enemies but under the New Covenant you must love your enemies.

* Under the Old Covenant you were not to murder but under the New Covenant having hatred in your heart is equal to committing murder.

We are under a new law.

Romans 8:1-4 [There is] therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

This is not lawlessness. Let me illustrate with the law of gravity and the law of aerodynamics. The law of gravity restricts us from leaping off the ground and flying like a bird. Jump off a tall building and you will receive the penalty of trying to violate the law of gravity. But let’s introduce another law, called the law of aerodynamics. You can take a jet weighing over 200,000 pounds; think of it, that’s over 100 tons and with the law of aerodynamics lift that plane to over 35,000 feet in the air at nearly 600 miles an hour. It has broken the bonds of the law of gravity and as long as there is fuel it will fly free of gravity’s claim. But violate any part of the law of aerodynamics and that plane is coming down.

The Old Covenant Law restricted us from being able to fly to God. He kept us on the ground condemned. There is absolutely no freedom in the law to have communion with God. We are without freedom to soar in righteousness. But God introduces a new law, the new covenant and

we are able to get off the ground and live righteous. We are free from the condemnation and certain death the Old Law brought. But don't think for a moment that you can violate this new law without consequences or penalty. You violate the law that Christ has instituted and your coming down. Living by grace under the New Covenant is not lawlessness.

The New Covenant guarantees obedience

I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts"

Ezekiel 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do [them].

Go back to my illustration using the laws of gravity and aerodynamics. I said as long as there is fuel in the plane it can fly. There is in the New Covenant a fuel supplied by God that allows us to live righteously, to fly with God. This fuel is in constant supply; it is called grace.

Freedom in Christ is not the liberty to do whatever one likes, but the power of doing whatever one sees ought to be done, even in the very face of otherwise overwhelming impulse. There is where the freedom is.

The New Covenant guarantees relationship with God.

Hebrews 8:10b-11 "and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: I I And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."

The New Covenant guarantees forgiveness of sin.

Hebrews 8:12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

Psalms 103:8 The LORD [is] merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

Psalms 117:2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us . . .

Psalms 86:5 For thou, Lord, [art] good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Psalms 103:11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, [so] great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

If God were not willing to forgive sin, heaven would be empty.

A Better Covenant Because It is the Last Covenant

Hebrews 8:13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

The New Covenant Makes the Old Covenant Obsolete

The New Covenant Will Not be Replaced

We are people of the New Covenant and not the Old. We are to walk in the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. There is no power in living by external rules except the power of death! Live outside of Christ and you will die. Salvation comes by no other and His salvation is in His New Covenant.

The question is how do you experience this New Covenant salvation? How do you become a recipient of this wonderful covenant? The promise of the New Covenant answer this. Once again I direct your attention to the promise of our text.

Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Notice the pronoun “I”. Salvation is a work of God. Oh hallelujah! I am not fit for this kind of work. I cannot save you or myself. My hands are not strong enough to write the laws of God on your minds and hearts. When men begin to do the work of salvation and try to enter the hearts of people they only break the heart in condemnation or puff up the heart in pride. Salvation is a work of a sovereign God. Be glad in this fact. Sinner find hope in this fact that only a sovereign God can do the work of salvation. Sin is too strong an enemy for any of us to vanquish. Never has there been a mortal man nor will there be who could conquer sin. You cannot bring yourself to destroy that which you love the most. Every man, woman and child are born with a love for sin against God and this love is so strong it rules them. A man will destroy his body before he will raise a hand against sin. If you are to be saved today it is only because a God who is stronger than sin’s might will take mercy upon you. If salvation is to come to your house it is only because God wills it so. The Bible says, “So then [it is] not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” (Romans 9:16) How then might you have any hope that He would do this for you? How can you have assurance this day that God would show you mercy? The answer is simple, if there is a desire in your heart to be free from sin and to know Christ as Lord then God is at work in your heart. Even should that desire seem small and trembling, be encouraged to seek God right now and call on His goodness. Cry to Him who saves that to you also would He show such mercy.

And should you have no such desire then be afraid. Be afraid of the terror that shall come upon you swiftly. The Bible says that upon you the “wrath of God already abides.” The judgment of

God is being dispensed upon you in that you do not have any desire to love Him. The judgment of God that is the worst that any living person can know is for God to abandon that person to the sin that he or she loves. I too bid you to cry out. Cry for God to show you mercy. Ah! But this too is the work of God. Some saved out of love, some out of fear. But no matter the way in which the sinner comes they all come by the work of God and not their own.