

A BETTER COVENANT

Jon Macon

In Jeremiah 31:31-34, we find a great prophecy of the coming of the New Testament: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: *Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers* in the days that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every many his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Through the prophet Jeremiah, God clearly stated that the new covenant would not be according to the old one (Jer 31:32; Heb 8:9). The new covenant is “*a better covenant, which was established upon better promises*” (Heb 8:6). These passages give three major ways in which the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant.

Written in the inner man

The Old Covenant was “written and engraven in stones” (2 Cor 3:7; Exod 24:12; 31:18; Deut 9:10). But concerning the New Covenant, God said, “*I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people*” (Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10; 10:16). The nature and purpose of the New Covenant is to purify the hearts of the believers (Acts 15:9) and perfect God’s love in them (1 John 2:5). The Old Covenant could not do that (Heb 7:19).

Knowing God

The token of the Old Covenant was circumcision (Gen 17:11-14; Acts 7:8). Males entered this covenant with God when they were only 8 days old (Gen 17:12; 21:4; Lev 12:2-3; Lk 1:59; 2:21; Acts 7:8). Therefore, those under the Old Covenant had to be taught to know God. But all of those under the New Covenant would have to know God even to be a part of the covenant (Mark 16:16; John 8:24; Gal 3:27) and would not have to be taught to know Him.

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(continued)

Concerning the New Covenant, God said, “*And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord*” (Jer 31:31-34; Heb 8:8-11).

The forgiveness of sins

There was forgiveness of sins under the law of Moses (Lev 4:35; 5:11,13,16,18; 6:7; 19:22; Num 15:25-28), but the forgiveness did not come through the blood of bulls and goats every year (Heb 10:1-4). The sins could only be taken away by Christ (Heb 10:11-18). Jesus died also for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant (Heb 9:15). Concerning the New Covenant, God said, “*I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more*” (Jer 31:34; Heb 8:12; 10:17). There is complete forgiveness of sins under the New Covenant (Mt 26:28; Lk 24:46-47; Acts 2:38; 3:25-26; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38-39; 26:15-18; Rom 3:24-25; 11:26-27; Eph 1:7; Col 1:13-14; 1 Jn 1:9).

Take heed

Having been given such a great Covenant, the mediator being God’s own Son Jesus Christ (Heb 8:6), we have a great responsibility to obey his gospel. Hebrews 1:1-2 reminds us that “*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.*” Hebrews 2:1-3 emphasizes the importance of this fact: “*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*” Hebrews 12:25 says, “*See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.*” As the Father spoke from heaven when Christ was transfigured on the mount, “*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him*” (Matt 17:5).