

## Covenant Theology

### Week 8: The New Covenant

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#### A. The Biblical Foundation of the New Covenant

1. The New Covenant is the Application of the Eternal *Covenant of Redemption*
  - The Eternal Commitments Made in the Covenant of Redemption:
    - The Son: Perfect obedience and substitutionary death
    - The Father: Reward the Son with exalted glory, an eternal kingdom, and a redeemed people
  - What the Son obtained in the Covenant of Redemption is applied to us in the New Covenant
    - The Covenant of Redemption was a covenant of works perfectly fulfilled by the Son
    - Because He did the work, we receive the rewards freely in the New Covenant—not by *our* work
    - This is why the New Covenant is also referred to as "*The Covenant of Grace*"
2. The New Covenant is Revealed through the Promises and Types of the *Old Covenant*
  - Abrahamic Covenant: The promised Seed and the typology of the land/nation
  - Mosaic Covenant: The reminder of sin and the shadows of a better Sacrifice
  - Davidic Covenant: The promise of a righteous descendant would establish an everlasting kingdom
3. The New Covenant is Most Clearly Promised in the Prophets During Israel's Exile
  - Jeremiah 31:31-34 ["new covenant"]
  - Jeremiah 32:37-41; cf. 50:5 ["everlasting covenant"]
  - Ezekiel 47:24-28; cf. 16:60-63 ["covenant of peace" and "everlasting covenant"]
  - Ezekiel 34:23-25 ["covenant of peace"]
4. The New Covenant is Formally Inaugurated at the Death of Christ (Luke 22:20; cf. 1 Corinthians 11:25)
5. The New Covenant is Genuinely "New" and is Far Superior to the Old Covenant (Hebrews 8:6-13)

#### B. The Superior Mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:6; cf. 9:15)

- In the Old Testament, the three offices of mediator were:
  - Prophet — speaks God's word to the people
  - Priest — represents the people to God and makes intercession
  - King — rules over/leads the people of God according to God's law
- In the New Covenant, Christ fulfills all three offices in Himself (1 Timothy 2:5):
  - The True Prophet — He is God and speaks God's final word to His people (Heb 1:1-3; Jn 1:1-2, 14; )
  - The True Priest — He offered Himself to God for all the sins of His people (Heb 7:17, 26-28)
  - The True King — He rules over all with perfect righteousness on behalf of His people (Eph 1:19-23)

## C. The Superior Blessings/Promises of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:7-13)

### 1. The Location of the Law — i.e. on the heart (Hebrews 8:10)

- Old Covenant → Obedience to the Law was required, but the necessary grace was not given
  - The Law was written on stones and placed into the Ark of the Covenant (i.e. it was external)
  - The Old Covenant itself did nothing to change the hearts of the Israelites
  - They were told to “circumcise” their *own* hearts, which they could not do (Jeremiah 4:4)
- New Covenant → Everyone in the covenant has God’s laws written on their heart
  - The Law is written on their hearts and placed “into their minds” (i.e. it is internal)
  - The New Covenant gives the Spirit to cause us to walk in obedience (Ez 36:27; 2 Cor 3:5-6; Rm 8:1-4)
  - This is accomplished through regeneration and ongoing sanctification (John 3:3)

*“Run, John, run, the law commands, but gives me neither feet nor hands, far better news the gospel brings: it bids us fly and gives us wings.” — John Bunyan*

### 2. The Knowledge of God — i.e. all will know Him (Hebrews 8:11)

- Old Covenant → Many within the covenant did not actually know God
  - Membership was by physical birth in the line of Abraham (i.e. natural generation)
  - As a result, many were members of the covenant physically, but had no saving knowledge of God
  - “For they are not all Israel who are *descended* from Israel” (Romans 9:6)
- New Covenant → Everyone in the covenant has a personal knowledge of God
  - Membership in the new covenant is by re-birth into Christ (i.e. regeneration)
  - As a result, no one is a member of the covenant who does not have a saving knowledge of God
  - Therefore, there’s no need to tell a New Covenant member “know the Lord” (1 Jn 2:20,27)

### 3. The Forgiveness of Sins—i.e. He will never again remember sins (Hebrews 8:12)

- Old Covenant → Granted “cleansing of the flesh”, but could not accomplish true forgiveness
  - According to the Mosaic Covenant, sacrifices provided ceremonial cleansing (Leviticus 1-7; 16)
  - The sacrifices could “cleanse the flesh” but could not “cleanse the conscience” (Hebrews 9:13)
  - Their purpose was to be a perpetual reminder of sin and the need for a better sacrifice (Heb 10:1-4)
- New Covenant → Secures true forgiveness so that our conscience is forever cleansed
  - The blood of Christ grants true forgiveness of sins and cleanses the conscience (Heb 9:14)
  - The forgiveness of the New Covenant gives us access to the true holy of holies (Heb 10:19-22)

#### **4. Unbreakable and Everlasting (Heb 8:9; cf. Jeremiah 31:32)**

- Old Covenant → Conditional and could be broken
- New Covenant → Cannot be broken because it is based on conditions that have already been met in Christ
  - Christ has already accomplished all of the righteousness required for eternal life
  - Christ has already suffered all of the punishment required in the Covenant of Works
  - His finished work guarantees that the New Covenant is unbreakable and everlasting (Heb 13:20)
  - For this reason, eternal life for all His people is certain (Hebrews 9:11-12; John 6:39-40)

## **D. Who Belongs in the New Covenant?**

### **Membership in the New Covenant Depends on Union with the Federal Head**

- In any biblical covenant, membership depends on union with the federal head:
  - The Covenant of Works → Union with Adam (by birth)
  - The Abrahamic Covenant → Union with Abraham (by birth)
  - The Davidic Covenant → Union with David (by birth)
  - The New Covenant → Union with Christ (by faith)
- No one participates in the New Covenant apart from personal union (through faith) with Jesus Christ
  - The church is the visible representation on earth of the New Covenant community
  - Therefore, church membership should consist only of those who are in the covenant through faith
  - This is a major distinction between the Old and the New Covenants (i.e. it is not by birth but rebirth)
  - It is for this reason that we (i.e. Baptist) only baptize believers into membership, not infants