

A Better Covenant Described

Michael Woody | Hebrews 8:6–10

WHY THIS PASSAGE?

1. We have in this book a series of betters:
 - a. Jesus is better than the angels (1:4)
 - b. Those who are truly saved are sure of a better hope in not falling away (6:9)
 - c. We have a better High Priest (7:7)
 - d. We have a better hope (7:19)
 - e. We have a better covenant with better promises (8:6)
 - f. The sacrifice of Christ was a better sacrifice (9:23)
 - g. Believers have a better and enduring possession in Heaven (10:34)
 - h. Believers have a better, heavenly country (11:16)
 - i. Believers have a better resurrection (11:35-40)
 - j. Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of* Abel (12:24)
2. This Messianic Age is the Last Days (per Hebrews 1) and the Old Covenant, its pictures and types were now set aside.
3. Verses 6-10, the focus today is how is the New Covenant described. Next week we will look at how the New Covenant is defined.

WHAT IS THE NEW COVENANT?

DEFINITION OF A COVENANT

1. The Greek word is διαθήκην and it means making of a covenant; testament
2. This word is defined as the verbal content of an agreement between two persons specifying reciprocal benefits and responsibilities, it was often ratified by blood.
3. When the LXX was translated the translators employed διαθήκη, literally 'a final will or testament,' in place of συνθήκη 'contract, agreement,' since they evidently wished to emphasize the fact that the initiative for such a covenantal relationship existed with one person rather than being the result of negotiation and compromise.
 - a. There were unconditional covenants (Genesis 15) and the work was done by God alone - Abraham owed nothing in this covenant promise.
 - b. The covenant on Sinai was a conditional covenant, and the nation failed to keep it again and again.

SURVEY OF SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:24-25; Hebrews 7:22; 8:6-13; 9:8-15; 10:9; 12:22-24

TRUTHS OF THESE PASSAGES

1. It is a covenant made by Jesus Christ as the Mediator of the New Covenant
2. It is a covenant that is distinct from the Old Covenant
3. It is a covenant made with the people of God

IT IS A COVENANT MADE BY JESUS CHRIST AS THE MEDIATOR

1. What is a mediator? I could spend a lot of time here but I will need to be brief. A mediator is different than an attorney - an attorney represents one party while a mediator is more like an arbitrator.
 - a. However, here exists the problem, the Father demands perfect obedience (Romans 3)
 - b. The other side of the problem is man cannot meet God's standard, it doesn't matter who you are (Romans 1-2).

2. Jesus as our mediator represents both sides of the covenant demands: with Christ as our mediator we have satisfaction in the fullest sense.

IT IS A COVENANT THAT IS DISTINCT AND SUPERIOR FROM THE OLD COVENANT

1. Why is this covenant superior, God initiated both covenants? Did God fail?
 - a. The Old Covenant did not save - the Old Covenant was never to save.
 - b. The Old Covenant exposed our sins to the Law and showed us we are sinners - all of those who are not in the New Covenant are in the Old.
 - c. In the Old Covenant we are one with Adam but in the New Covenant we are one with Christ.
 - d. Israel showed what the Old Covenant lacked - it lacked power!
2. The Old Covenant accomplished a purpose - the faultiness was not in the covenant but it had no power.
 - a. Blame is laid on the covenant (v. 7)
 - b. Blame is laid on the people (v. 8-9)
3. In spite of these blessings and promises, and in spite of the faithfulness of God, and in spite of cycles of repentance and restoration the people continue to prostitute themselves to other gods.
 - a. They showed they were slaves to sin
 - b. The Old Covenant made no effort to compensate for the weakness of the people
4. Why is the New Covenant superior?
 - a. The New Covenant is not about commitment, it is not about a decision, it is not about best efforts - what we need is the law written on our heart.
 - b. This is not the Old Covenant refurbished, he says, it is not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors (v. 8)

- c. The New Covenant changes people - the Law is written on their heart; the love God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit and they want to obey because they are different! God has regenerated them and changed them according to 2 Cor. 5:17

IT IS A COVENANT MADE WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD

1. A serious question you must ask, is this covenant for you? Isn't it just for Israel? There are those who believe this!
2. This verse says it is with Israel, so does Jeremiah 31, how can we say we are beneficiaries of the New Covenant?
3. Jesus tells us that He is instituting the New Covenant at His Last Supper, and Paul is clearly stating that Jesus inaugurated a New Covenant to Gentiles living in Corinth.
 - a. How can we have a new covenant with those part of it who are not ethnic Jews?
 - b. Israel is no more and they will not be again; they ended in captivity.
4. This is where progressive revelation is absolutely seen with epic clarity: do not worry about someone accusing you of reading the New Testament into the Old Testament, as if a different God inspired those writings!
 - a. Read this book as one author, with one purpose and, as in anything written, there is greater clarity as the writing progresses.
 - b. The New Testament tells us how to understand the Old Testament - I should not read the Old Testament and remain in ignorance when God has told me what He wants me to know
5. This is all about Hebrews and one of its purposes - we are taught how to understand the Old Covenant
 - a. Melchisedek had a purpose way beyond what we see in Genesis.
 - b. Jesus' and His sacrifice was far superior to the sacrifices we see in Leviticus, their purpose was to picture His sacrifice.
6. You suddenly fear replacement theology? I tell you that it is not about replacement - it is about original intent! Consider Galatians 3

- a. The Abrahamic Covenant was all about the Gospel: Galatians 3:6-9
 - b. Paul says the blessing of Abraham has come upon the Gentiles: Galatians 3:13-14
 - c. There is no Jew or Greek Paul says - we are one body: 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 3:28
 - d. We are Abraham's seed - not Israel, Gentile believers: Galatians 3:29
7. God had a purpose - He was going to make a body of one people who would celebrate and rejoice in the New Covenant together!
- a. This body would be comprised of Jews and Gentiles
 - b. This body would be comprised of rich and poor
 - c. This body would be of many tongues, many nations, and people who look and sound different.
8. Who are the beneficiaries of this New Covenant? It is not Israel who ceased to exist, it is not Judah, it is every person from every tribe and every tongue who proclaims with Spirit endued power that Jesus is their righteousness and who believe that Jesus is their Lord and their God.