

"The Better Covenant"

Part 1

Hebrews 8:6-13

Introduction: Tonight as we return to our study of the book of Hebrews we are approaching a new section which will focus upon the New Covenant. In this section we shall see a contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. There are many covenants in the Bible but in the text we are about to look at there are only 2 that are presented to the reader. Now before we get into the text which is before us we need to look at some Old Testament Truth. What we need to do is to define the Old Covenant because if we do not understand the Old Covenant then we cannot fully appreciate the New Covenant.

I. The Old Covenant

The Old Covenant was given to the Nation of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt.

Exodus 19:1-7

In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.

² *For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.*

³ *And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;*

⁴ *Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.*

⁵ *Now therefore, **if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant,** then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:*

⁶ *And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

⁷ *And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.*

The Covenant was given by God through Moses and therefore Moses was the mediator. The Covenant offered blessings to those who kept the covenant:

Deuteronomy 28:1-2

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

² *And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.*

It also warned of judgment to those who did not keep it:

Deuteronomy 28:15

¹⁵ *But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:*

So the Mosaic Covenant contained the promise of blessings and the warnings of judgment.

Now within the Mosaic Covenant there were also the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20:3-17

³ *Thou shalt have no other gods before me. (Commandment #1)*

⁴ *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.*

⁵ *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; (Commandment #2)*

⁶ *And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

⁷ *Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. (Commandment #3)*

⁸ *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. (Commandment #4)*

⁹ *Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:*

¹⁰ *But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:*

¹¹ *For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

¹² *Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. (Commandment #5)*

¹³ *Thou shalt not kill. (Commandment #6)*

¹⁴ *Thou shalt not commit adultery. (Commandment #7)*

¹⁵ *Thou shalt not steal. (Commandment #8)*

¹⁶ *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. (Commandment #9)*

¹⁷ *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. (Commandment #10)*

Now let me pull some of this together so that you can get your mind wrapped around this Mosaic Covenant. It was a covenant given by God to the Nation of Israel and it contained great promises of blessings and great warnings of judgment. The condition of the blessings all depended upon the people's ability to live up to the commands. Now the people of Israel had good intentions and this we can see in Exodus 19.

Exodus 19:8

⁸ *And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.*

But shortly after this proclamation Aaron made the golden calf and they turned to worship the calf instead of God. The bottom line was the people failed in every area of the Old Covenant and for that reason the Old Covenant was not able to save them. But what we must understand was that the "Law" which is the Mosaic Covenant was never given to save anyone but it was given for 3 purposes:

1. **To reveal the righteousness of God.**

It is in the Law that we can see the righteousness of God. The Law reveals that God requires perfection from us.

James 2:10

¹⁰ *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*

2. **To reveal the sinfulness of man.**

Romans 3:19-20

¹⁹ *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

²⁰ *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

3. **To bring men to Jesus Christ.**

I want to show you a passage in the book of Ruth which we will study in the am services as we move through the book of Ruth. I am going to step you into the story of Ruth in the 4th chapter. Boaz has agreed to perform the duty of the Kinsman Redeemer but it has been revealed that there is a kinsman who is closer in relation and so Boaz must give the nearer kinsman the first opportunity.

Ruth 4:1-6

Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.

² *And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.*

³ *And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's:*

⁴ *And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it.*

⁵ *Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.*

⁶ *And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; **for I cannot redeem it.***

Here in this text Boaz is a picture of our Kinsman Redeemer who is Jesus Christ. But with that said then I must ask the question, "Who is the nearer kinsman who was not able to redeem Elimelech's family?"

This "nearer kinsman" is "The Law" or the Old Covenant". Now don't miss something else very important here, Boaz gathered 10 witnesses to testify that the nearer kinsman was not able to do the work of the kinsman redeemer. Who are the 10 witnesses? They represent the Ten Commandments!!

The Law was never given to save one person because it CANNOT save one person. The reason is because man is sinful and the Ten Commandments testify that the Law cannot save and that testimony of the Ten Commandments is seen in the fact that we cannot keep the Commandments.

So let me get back to the purpose of the Law again.

Galatians 3:21-25

²¹ *Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*

²² *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*

²³ *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*

²⁴ *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

²⁵ *But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

Now let me take a few minutes and place us back in the days of Moses under the Old Covenant. Let us pretend we are Hebrews listening to Moses deliver to us the Words of God.

We were given Law/Old Covenant at Mount Sinai and when we heard Moses speak the Words of the Covenant we agreed we would keep every WORD of the Covenant. But it would not be long before we failed and the more we tried to keep the Law the more we realize that it is impossible. This is where the ORDINANCES of the Law come in. The ordinances were given for our religious life. With the Law came the offices of the priests because God knew we would never be able to keep the Law. Our sin/failure to keep the Law had separated us from God and so God gave us priests from the tribe of Levi and of the family of Aaron. They would be our representatives before God in order to make atonement for our sins. Because we are not able to keep the Law we would need to bring sacrifices for our sins and present them to the priests. So year after year, throughout the year we would need to bring the animals as the sacrifices for our sins. The blood of the sacrifices was required to make atonement for our sin but the blood of the sacrifice could not take away our sins nor could the blood of the animals remove the guilt. Because the blood of the animals could never take away our sin we would never be able to enter into the presence of God.

But the New Covenant would be different. Under the New Covenant Jesus Christ would be THE SACRIFICE for sin. He would go to the cross and He would die ONCE FOR ALL and by one sacrifice He would perfect us FOREVER.

Hebrews 10:14

¹⁴ *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

With His one sacrifice He would provide a way for us to come into the presence of God.

Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ *Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

¹⁵ *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

¹⁶ *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

But there is more. He not only provided a way for us to enter into the presence of God but He has guaranteed that as our Great High Priest:

1. **We have an anchor of hope.**

Hebrews 6:18-20

¹⁸ *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:*

¹⁹ *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;*

²⁰ *Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

2. **We will one day be presented to our Heavenly Father faultless.**

Hebrews 7:22, 25

²² *By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.*

²⁵ *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

Conclusion:

Let me use the Bible to illustrate the difference between the Old and the New Covenants. Remember when the Old Testaments saints died they went to Paradise and not into heaven? Did you ever wonder why they did not enter into heaven? It was because the blood of bulls and goats could not take away their sin.

When Jesus died He emptied Paradise and He led all the Old Testament believers into the presence of the Father. Paul tells us in Ephesians that Jesus LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE.

Ephesians 4:8

⁸ *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, **he led captivity captive**, and gave gifts unto men.*

These Old Testament saints were held captive by their sins because their sins were never paid for and taken away until Jesus died and for that reason they could not enter into the presence of the Father. They were saved but they were kept in Paradise until the PAYMENT was made. In Ephesians 4 Jesus is presented as the Victor in a battle and that is exactly what He was. He defeated death, Satan and sin and therefore He is able to present every believer to the Father in sinless PERFECTION. The Old Covenant could never do this that is why God gave the New Covenant.