

"The Better Covenant"

Part 2

Hebrews 8:6-13

Introduction: Tonight in our study of the book of Hebrews we again return to the 8th chapter and we are currently looking at the "Better Covenant". Now last week we looked at the Old Covenant which is often referred to as The Law or The Mosaic Covenant. In our study we also looked at how the Old Covenant was a "conditional" covenant which means it was based upon Israel's obedience to the Law. The Old Covenant was given on Mount Sinai and when the Covenant was given it received and accepted by the people.

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.

Now it was shortly after this proclamation that Israel gave their gold to Aaron and he made the golden calf which they began to worship. So Israel found out quickly that they were unable to live up to their end of the Covenant and the Ten Commandments testified of their sinfulness. But in the Covenant God had given "The Ordinances" which included the Sacrificial System, therefore the people were able to bring their sacrifices to the priests who then would offer them to God for the atonement for sin. But under the Old Covenant the sins were never taken away.

Hebrews 10:4

⁴ For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Now because the sins were never taken away the people could never come into the presence of God. This is seen in 2 ways:

1. **They could never enter into the Holy of Holies.**
2. **After they died they went to Paradise and not heaven because their sins were never taken away.**

It was after Jesus died that He descended to Paradise and He then 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.

Those in Paradise were held CAPTIVE by their sin until Jesus died. When He died their sin was then taken away. They were saved on CREDIT and when Jesus died the DEBT was paid and they were then taken into the presence of the Father.

Now let me get you back to the thought: the Old Covenant could never do this.

I. The Better Covenant

Notice Hebrews 8:6

This verse introduces a contrast to the previous thought.

Notice Hebrews 8:3-5

In these verses the writer speaks of the Old Testament priests who served in an earthly tabernacle and who were but a shadow of the Great high Priest. Now getting back to 8:6 the writer points to Jesus in contrast to the Levitical priests and he points out several points here:

1. **Jesus has a more excellent ministry.**

Jesus has a more excellent ministry because:

- a. **He is seated at the right hand of the Father. This is the position of power and honor.**
- b. **He intercedes on our behalf constantly. When the accuser of the brethren comes to accuse us Jesus stands for us and points to His finished redemptive work.**
- c. **He ministers in the True Tabernacle in heaven.**

The writer is presenting this to the Hebrews because they were thinking of turning back to the Old Covenant. So the question to them would be, "Why would you ever want to go back to something that is inferior?"

Now the writer will go on in this verse and as he does he is going to introduce the subject of the New/Better Covenant.

Notice Hebrews 8:6 again.

The writer makes 2 statements here that are very important:

1. **Jesus is the Mediator of a better covenant.**

Moses was the "mediator" of the Old Covenant but Moses was limited because of own sinfulness. A mediator is a person who stands between 2 people and his job is to bring the 2 together. Moses was unable to bring God and Israel together because of his own sinfulness.

But Jesus is sinless and He was able to do what Moses could never do and that was to bring man into God's presence. So this New Covenant is better because there is a Better Mediator. But there is more. It is also better because:

2. **The better covenant is established upon better promises.**

This is what the writer is going to focus upon in the following verses. All covenants were built upon promises but the promises of the New Covenant are far better than the promises of the Old Covenant. This we shall see in a moment.

Notice Hebrews 8:7

The Mosaic Law had faults in the sense that it was not able to save anyone, it was NOT able to take away sin, and it was NOT able to bring one person into the presence of God. So in these 3 ways it was NOT faultless. So there needed to be a New Covenant that could do what the Old Covenant could not do. But let us also remember that the Old Covenant was never given for the purpose of saving anyone. Last week we looked at 3 reasons for the Old Covenant/The Law.

1. **To reveal the righteousness of God.**
2. **To reveal the sinfulness of man.**
3. **To bring men to Jesus Christ.**

Galatians 3:24-25

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 us get to the Better Promises.

a. The Better Promises

Notice Hebrews 8:8-12

These verses are all from the book of Jeremiah and this is very important. The Hebrews who received this letter may have pushed back against the writer and said, "What gives you the right to say there is a need for a New Covenant?" This section would have been in response to that very question. In this passage he is saying, "It has not come from me but it has come from your own prophet Jeremiah." You see the words of Hebrews 8:8-12 are taken from Jeremiah 31:31-34. God had foretold back in Jeremiah's day that He would make a New Covenant and it is here in Hebrews 8 that the writer is using the Old Testament to help the Hebrews see that this New Covenant was directly from the Lord.

Now let us see why it is better.

1. It is better because it is based upon the faithfulness of God.

This is seen in the word "COVENANT" which is used in this passage. Let me show you the definition from Vine's.

*In contradistinction to the English word "covenant" (lit., "a coming together"), which signifies a mutual undertaking between two parties or more, each binding himself to fulfill obligations, **it does not in itself contain the idea of joint obligation, it mostly signifies an obligation undertaken by a single person.***

Now let me explain what is being said here. When we think of entering into a covenant with someone we think of our responsibility of upholding our promises and the other person has the responsibility of upholding their promises. That is NOT the idea here! This word signifies the obligation of a single person. In other words the covenant depends not upon the faithfulness of 2 people but upon the faithfulness of one.

The best picture we could get of this today would be a last will and testament. Let's say that I was a multimillionaire and I wrote up a last will and testament and in that last will and testament I made it known to you that I wanted you each to have two million dollars. I would write it out something like this:

"The last will and testament of Keith Showalter. I, Pastor Keith Showalter, being of sound mind, leave to each person of the Claysburg Bible Church two million dollars."

If that was my will then there would be only two options for you after I died. You either receive it or you reject it. It would not be based upon anything but your choice.

Application: This is exactly how the New Covenant is. The Old Covenant was conditional. The people had to keep the commandments of the Lord to receive the blessings but they constantly fell short. The New Covenant is God's will and it is up to people to accept it or they can reject it. But it is His will that all would receive it.

2 Peter 3:9

⁹ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

John 1:12

¹² *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

Notice Hebrews 8:8 again.

I want you to see something here that is very important and that is who this covenant is made with. It is made with Israel and Judah which would include all 12 tribes of the Nation of Israel. I point this out for a very important reason. There are many Bible teachers today who teach the Church has replaced the Nation of Israel. This teaching is dead wrong! They will tell you that when Israel rejected their Messiah that God abandon them and he then replaced Israel with the Church. This is known as "Replacement Theology" and it is not accurate.

God made this New Covenant with the Nation of Israel and Judah. Now this raises a very important question, "If this New Covenant is made with all of Israel then how can it pertain to us?" I want to walk you through some verses and some thoughts and show you a beautiful picture.

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

² *And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:*

³ *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

Here we see the Abrahamic Covenant which was an UNCONDITIONAL covenant with Abraham in which God promised to bless him and make him a great nation through which all the world would be blessed. Abraham had to do nothing because this was an UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT. God later RATIFIED this Covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15 which we had looked at before. So here was the point; through the seed of Abraham all the families of the earth would be blessed. Now don't miss that the Abrahamic Covenant was a promise that through the Seed of Abraham the families of the earth would be blessed.

But there need to be moral guidelines for those who would receive the blessings. This is where the Mosaic Covenant comes in. God gave the Law to the Nation of Israel and told them that they needed to walk in obedience to His Commandments and they would receive the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. But they failed and were not able to keep the Commandments. But God did not cast away the Abrahamic promises. But instead He announced in Jeremiah 31:31-34 that He would make a New Covenant with Israel. God would send His Son to the earth and He would live in complete obedience to the Law and then He would die on the cross and His death would completely pay the penalty for their sins. God could then offer to them the gift of eternal life and it would be up to them to accept it or reject it. For those of Israel who would accept Jesus Christ they would receive the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.

But what about us who are Gentiles?

Galatians 3:6-9

⁶ *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*

⁷ *Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*

⁸ *And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.*

⁹ *So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*

Here is where we come in. When we accept Christ as our Savior we become the SPIRITUAL children of Abraham. Therefore, we receive the SPIRITUAL blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Galatians 3:13-14

¹³ *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*

¹⁴ That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Conclusion:

Now Israel has rejected the New Covenant but in the Tribulation Israel will turn to God and be saved.

Romans 11:25-27

²⁵ For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

²⁶ And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

²⁷ For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

The Church has not replaced Israel. God has set Israel aside until the Bride of Christ is completed and then in the Tribulation he will gather Israel together and they will be saved.