

# The Covenants of God

A study of the covenants of promise  
made between God and His people.

Ephesians 2:11-13

PROVIDENCE REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

## Lesson 10 – The New Covenant – Part 2

Sunday School Series: The Covenants of God

Lesson 10 – The New Covenant – Patterns and Promises – Hebrews 8:1-13

References:

*Systematic Theology* – John Frame

*Covenant Theology* – Greg Nichols

*The Distinctives of Baptist Covenant Theology* – Pascal Denault

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Hebrews 8:1 Now the main point in what is being said is this: we have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a minister in the holy places and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. 4 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; 5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, “See,” He says, “that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.” 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. 8 For finding fault with them, He says,

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Hebrews 8:8 “Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, When I will complete a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; 9 Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds, and upon their hearts I will write them. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11 And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for all will know Me, from the least to the greatest of them. 12 For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” 13 When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

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Covenant Patterns – John Frame, pg. 83-85

1. The Name of the Lord – Lord Yahweh. In every decision and action we should take into account the fact of Who God is. Our life, as Calvin said, “Coram Deo”, is lived in in the presence of the living God. Christian ethics is profoundly personal – the outworking of our relationship with an Absolute Person.
2. The Historical Prologue – the redemptive history of God’s covenants speaks of grace. This is our motivation to obey God’s commands. We love because He loved first (1 John 4:19).

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Covenant Patterns – John Frame, pg. 83-85

3. The Stipulations – these are the laws of the covenant. They tell us what to do. Grace does not replace the law, rather grace motivates our obedience. God's laws vary somewhat from age to age. In the New Covenant for example, we do not bring sacrificial animals to worship as those were under the Old Covenant. But in every age, God's law is righteous, holy, and good (Romans 7:12), a delight to the wise (Psa. 1:2), and not a terror or threat except to one intending to rebel against God.

4. The Sanctions – blessing for obedience, curses for disobedience.

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5. Administration – God’s covenants function in the real world. In the covenants are roles for mediators, judges, elders, kings, priests, prophets, apostles, pastors, deacons, etc. Our life in the covenant is not merely between the individual and God. It is humble service within the covenant community in which we live, work, and worship with others, honor those who rule and lead, and accept the structures and procedures that govern our relationship with God and others.

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The Biblical Witness to the Promises of the New Covenant – Nichols, pg. 257

1. Prophetic Prediction – 10 texts
2. Christ's Testimony – 10 texts
3. Apostolic Teaching – 30 texts

1. The prediction of the prophets: ten texts: (1) Isa. 42:1–7; (2) Isa. 49:5–13; (3) Isa. 54:9, 10; (4) Isa. 59:20, 21; (5) Jer. 31:31–34; (6) Jer. 32:36–42; (7) Ezek. 16:60–63; (8) Ezek. 34:23–31; (9) Ezek. 36:24–28; (10) Ezek. 37:21–28.

2. The testimony of Christ: ten texts: (1) Matt. 16:18; (2) Matt. 21:42–44; (3) Matt. 26:26–29; (4) Matt. 28:18–20; (5) Mark 1:15; (6) Mark 14:22–24; (7) Luke 22:19, 20; (8) John 4:1; (9) John 8:37–44; (10) John 14:26.

3. The teaching of the apostles: thirty texts: (1) Acts 2:32, 33; (2) Acts 2:38–42; (3) Acts 3:22–26; (4) Acts 20:28; (5) Rom. 2:28, 29; (6) Rom. 8:3, 4; (7) Rom. 9:6, 7; (8) Rom. 11:5–7; (9) Rom. 11:19–23; (10) 1 Cor. 11:23–26; (11) 2 Cor. 3:6–8; (12) Gal. 4:4–9; (13) Gal. 6:14–16; (14) Eph. 1:3, 7; (15) Eph. 2:11–13, (16) Eph. 2:19–22; (17) Eph. 3:20, 21; (18) Phil. 3:3; (19) Heb. 7:20–22; (20) Heb. 8:6–13; (21) Heb. 9:1, 6–12; (22) Heb. 9:15–18; (23) Heb. 9:23, 24; (24) Heb. 10:14–25; (25) Heb. 10:26–31; (26) Heb. 12:22–24; (27) Heb. 13:15, 16; (28) Heb. 13:20; (29) 1 Pet. 1:3–5; (30) 1 Pet. 2:9, 10.



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The Biblical Foundations of the New Covenant – Nichols, pg. 257-258

“The prophets predict that God will make a New Covenant when He restores a remnant of Israel from captivity. He makes the New Covenant in fulfillment of His pledge to Abraham to bless the nations through his heir with spiritual blessing. To that end He sends Christ from heaven. John and Jesus reform Israel with the gospel. Jesus redeems Christian Israel from sin through His blood and gives them earnest of their Messianic inheritance. In this setting, God makes the New Covenant with His people.”

The Rescued Remnant – Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophecy the coming of Christ and the New Covenant. The remnant of Israel rescued from Babylon pictures the remnant of Hebrew Israel that Messiah rescues from sin. (Jer. 32:36-37; Ezek. 36:24; 37:21-22).

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The Biblical Foundations of the New Covenant – Nichols, pg. 258

Fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant – God fulfills His promises to Abraham through the Messianic posterity. Abraham’s spiritual children inherit the spiritual blessings of the gospel through the means of repentance and faith. God blesses the Gentile nations at Pentecost and beyond as the gospel spreads to the nations. (Luke 1:68-75; Acts 3:25-26; Gal. 3:6-9, 13-14, 29).

The Incarnation – In fulfilling the Covenant with Abraham, God also fulfills the Covenant with David. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel foretell that when the Messiah comes He will bring a New Covenant of peace with His people. Ezekiel calls the Messiah “David” because He is David’s descendant. (Isa. 59:20-21; Jer. 33:14-17; Ezek. 34:23-24; 27:24-26).

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The Biblical Foundations of the New Covenant – Nichols, pg. 258-259

The Gospel Reformation of Israel by John and Jesus – Isaiah tells us that the Redeemer will come unto “those that turn from transgression” (Isa. 59:20). Malachi adds that God will send Elijah to turn His people from their sin (Mal. 4:5-6). Jesus taught His disciples that John the Baptist was the promised “Elijah” (Matt. 11:12-15). John ministered in the “spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:16-17). The forerunner and the Messiah brought reformation to Israel by the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom. Out of this reformation, Jesus formed a visible society of disciples (John 4:1).

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The Biblical Foundations of the New Covenant – Nichols, pg. 259

Redemption Accomplished and Applied – Isaiah predicted that God would make a New Covenant when a Redeemer came to Zion. Jesus redeemed His people from their sins with the blood of His cross. As the Old Covenant was built upon the foundation of divine redemption from Egypt, the New Covenant rests on divine redemption from sin. (Isa. 59:20-21; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:12, 15; John 14:26; Acts 2:32-33; Gal. 3:13-14; Eph. 1:13-14).

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The Promises of the New Covenant – Nichols, pg. 264-268

Our text in Hebrews 8 quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34, giving us the substance of the New Covenant promises. The covenant pledges the root, substance, and fruit of comprehensive spiritual blessing.

The Root – “The foundational blessing of the New Covenant with heavenly Zion is the promise that the gospel Word will come in the saving power of the Spirit. This occurs when God couples the general and effectual call of the gospel. God creates faith and repentance in the hearts of sinners and imparts His Spirit to new believers. This is the root of every spiritual blessing that God lavishes on Christian Israel.”

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The Promises of the New Covenant – Nichols, pg. 264-268

The Substance of Comprehensive Spiritual Blessing

1. God promises moral blessing – “I will put My laws into their minds, and upon their hearts I will write them.” This fulfills the promise to circumcise our hearts (Deut. 30:6) as Ezekiel has described regeneration (“I will give you a new heart”), and sanctification (“I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes”) – Ezekiel 36:25-27.

2. God promises experiential blessing – “For all will know Me”. Those in the New Covenant will experience saving fellowship with God in Christ. They will love, fear, and serve the Lord throughout their lives. (Jer. 32:40; Ezek. 36:27).

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The Substance of Comprehensive Spiritual Blessing

3. God promises legal blessing – “For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” God justifies us by means of Christ’s righteousness. By means of their faith He accepts them as righteous and forgives all their sins on the ground of Christ’s obedience (active and passive) and blood (life).

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The Fruit of Comprehensive Spiritual Blessing – God promises that His favor will never depart from heavenly Zion. His church will always be the object of His redeeming love (Isa. 54:10). He promises to bless His gospel kingdom with spiritual children in every generation and by means of gospel success the church will endure until Christ returns (Isa. 59:21).

God promises to watch over His people, to bless them, and to do them good always. He promises to insure their perseverance as a society in faith and the fear of God. This is why the church will remain faithful to God in every generation (Jer. 32:40).



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God also promises to never remove His presence and fellowship from His people (Ezek. 37:26-27). They will live in a perpetual Messianic Theocracy (Ezek. 37:23-25).

The New Covenant is God's pledge of permanent redeeming grace, permanent gospel fellowship, and permanent theocracy.

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The Guarantee of the New Covenant – The New Covenant is superior over the Old Covenant. The promises of the Old Covenant were conditional and without guarantee. The promises of the New Covenant are guaranteed in Christ, or better stated, He is the guarantee.

Hebrews 7:22 so much more Jesus also has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

This means that we can never break the New Covenant!

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Next Week - Lesson 11 – The New Covenant (Part 3) – The Superiority of the New Covenant.