

“The New Covenant – Part 2”  
Hebrews 8  
(Preached at Trinity, June 23, 2024)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citation will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In the Book of Hebrews the author has been systematically teaching the infinite superiority of Christ. He is superior to the Old Covenant prophets, superior to the angels, to Moses, Joshua, and Aaron. In **Chapter 7** the author stressed the superiority of Christ to Melchizedek and the Levitical priesthood. He is our Great High Priest.  
**Hebrews 7:25 NAU** - "He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."  
And He is the Mediator of a better covenant.  
**Hebrews 7:22 NAU** - "so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant."
  2. **Chapter 8:1** opens with a grand statement of the glory of Jesus Christ as our High Priest, seated upon His throne of Majesty.
  3. Jesus has ushered in the New Covenant which the author describes as a better covenant.  
**Hebrews 8:6-7 NAU** - "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. <sup>7</sup> For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second."
  4. Last time we began by looking at God's covenants. God interacts with fallen man by way of covenant. Each of the covenants have progressively revealed God's promise fulfilled in Christ. Last time we began looking at the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant and why it matters.
  5. This afternoon I want us to zero in on the New Covenant as it stands distinct from the Old Covenant.  
**How is the New Covenant new? Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-12**  
This is this passage that gives the New Testament its name.
- I. The New Covenant was a future covenant. Future in terms of the day in which this promise was made, but not future in terms of our present day.
    - A. Jeremiah 31 pointed forward to the fulfillment of the Old Covenant through our new Covenant Head.  
"Behold the days are coming" – the days when the Old Covenant will be swallowed up by the New.
      1. The New Covenant was given in the context of a broken covenant. Jeremiah is referring to the Mosaic Covenant which Israel did not keep.
      2. The New Covenant is not a restored Old Covenant but a new covenant that fulfills the old. We should remember again that the second part of our Bibles is the "New Testament."

3. The Church is the people to whom the New Covenant is directed. But we must not miss how it is directed. How is the church related to Israel?  
**Jeremiah 31:31 NAU** - "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,"

B. It is a New Covenant. This newness is significant.

**Jeremiah 31:32 NAU** - "not like the covenant which I made with their fathers"

It is new and distinctly different from the Old Covenant.

1. It promises a New Covenant to a particular people, "The House of Israel." This is a phrase used 150 times to refer to the physical nation of Israel. Hebrews 8-10 identifies this New Covenant people as those purchased by the blood of Christ—the church—the true house of God.  
**Hebrews 10:19-22 NAU** - "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, <sup>21</sup> and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith"
2. In the New Covenant the church is the fulfillment of God's promises to national Israel—there is an organic continuity of Israel and the church. The church hasn't replaced Israel. The church is the fullness of Israel.
3. Dispensationalists sometimes accuses Covenant Theology as being "Replacement Theology." The church hasn't replaced Israel. The church IS Israel—the fullness of God's promises to Israel.
  1. Sam Waldron says it well: "The church as the New Israel surpasses the Old Israel. As the butterfly surpasses the caterpillar from which it emerges, so the Church as the New Israel surpasses the Old Israel. The butterfly does not exactly replace the caterpillar. It is the caterpillar in a new phase of existence."<sup>1</sup>
  2. The Church is God's one covenant people. There is only one New Covenant people of God—Those who are in Christ. Jesus is the promised seed of Abraham, the one to whom the promises belong.  
**Galatians 3:28-29 NAU** - "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."
  3. This New Covenant in Christ has been working in the background since Genesis 3:15. God has been saving His elect people through Christ. There has never been another way of salvation.

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<sup>1</sup> Sam Waldron, *MacArthur's Millennial Manifesto: A Friendly Response* (Owensboro, KY: RBAP, 2008), 7.

II. In the New Covenant there is also newness of administration.

- A. There is no more physical temple. Levitical priesthood sacrifices have ended. Jesus Christ is now our High Priest and Holy Temple. We now live in the presence of Christ.
1. When we gather on the Lord's Day we have entered into His ecclesiastical temple, into His holy presence.  
**Hebrews 10:19-20 NAU** - "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,"
  2. In addition, we are indwelt with His Holy Spirit, thus we have become His holy temple.  
**2 Corinthians 6:16 NAU** - "Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people."
- B. In the New Covenant God deals with His Covenant people differently.
1. In the Old Covenant, if the father was a member of the covenant so were the children.
  2. Ezekiel declared a new way of God dealing with children. In the New Covenant the covenant standing of the father would no longer be brought to bear upon the children. Each child is treated individually according to his own faith.  
**Ezekiel 18:2-4 NAU** - "What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel saying, 'The fathers eat the sour grapes, But the children's teeth are set on edge ' ? <sup>3</sup> "As I live," declares the Lord God, "you are surely not going to use this proverb in Israel anymore. <sup>4</sup> "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die."  
**Ezekiel 18:30 NAU** - "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct," declares the Lord God. "Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you."
  3. Paedobaptists deny this aspect of the New Covenant by insisting that the children of covenant members are themselves covenant members—that the promises given to Abraham and his seed are transferred to believers and their seed.
- C. In the Old Covenant the Law was given externally on stone tablets. The Law demanded absolute obedience, yet it provided no means of keeping it. In this way it was an impossible taskmaster. It was an impossible yoke to bear.
1. In the New Covenant the Law is written upon the minds and hearts of God's covenant people—in contrast to the Law being written upon stone tablets. This is the fruit of regeneration or the new birth. The Christian has a sweet disposition towards the Law of God.
  2. This is a promise of a new heart. Instead of outward circumcision of the flesh, the New Covenant promises circumcision of the heart. It gives us the contrast between the Law and Gospel—an external command and an internal willingness.

3. In the New Covenant the Law is no longer a yoke to bear. Jesus Christ has fulfilled the demands of the Law and taken away its curse.  
We have entered into a new relationship with the Law through Jesus Christ.  
**Matthew 11:29-30 NAU** - "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
4. Dispensationalism errs in denying a proper place for the Law of God as God's standard for righteousness.  
In the Gospel, the Law forever remains the standard, and yet, Christ has met the Law's demands. The Law remains God's standard of obedience, yet through Jesus Christ the curse has been removed.  
**Romans 8:1-3 NAU** - "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. <sup>3</sup> For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as *an offering* for sin. . ."
5. In the Gospel Christ makes our burden light.  
Samuel Bolton writes in his great work *The True Bounds of Christian Freedom* – "Instead of universal actual obedience, God is pleased to accept of universal habitual obedience. In the Gospel God accepts affections for actions, endeavours for performance, desire for ability. A Christian is made up of desires, of mournings, of thirstings and bewailings: O that my ways were directed! O miserable man that I am! God has mercy for can-nots, but none for will-nots. God can distinguish between weakness and wickedness." <sup>2</sup>

### III. The New Covenant cannot be broken –

- A. The elect of the New Covenant are God's permanent possession. The New Covenant is unconditional. You find no "if" in the New Covenant.  
**Jeremiah 31:33 NAU** - "I will be their God, and they shall be My people."
  1. In the Old Covenant covenant members could and often did apostatize and be removed from among God's covenant people. We often read of an individual being cut off from among the people of the covenant.  
**Numbers 15:30-31 NAU** - "But the person who does *anything* defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. <sup>31</sup> 'Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt *will be* on him."
  2. The New Covenant is a fulfillment of the eternal Covenant of Redemption. It is the fulfillment of the Covenant between the Father and the Son. The Son has accomplished our redemption.

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<sup>2</sup> Bolton, Samuel, *The True Bounds of Christian Freedom*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2001 – pages 42-43.

- B. All in the New Covenant are in a saving relationship with God. All know Him.
1. Not all of the covenant members in the Old Covenant were of God's elect. Their hearts were not drawn to God. They did not trust Him. They did not have a right understanding of Him nor a right relationship with Him.
  2. This was clearly revealed in the wilderness. Most did not enter into God's promised possession. Only a remnant knew the Lord.  
**Numbers 14:29-32 NAU** - "your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.  
<sup>30</sup> 'Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. <sup>31</sup> 'Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey-- I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. <sup>32</sup> 'But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness."
  3. All in the New Covenant savingly know God. All have entered into a relationship with God.  
**Jeremiah 31:34 NAU** - "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,"
    - a. Abraham's spiritual children possess the spiritual blessings of the Gospel through faith and repentance.
    - b. Again, this is a strong argument against the paedobaptist who include their infant children in the covenant, yet with the possibility of losing their covenant position.
    - c. **Sam Waldron** writes: "Unless we are willing to say that life and righteousness are the assured and inalienable possession of all the children of believers, we cannot say that the New Covenant is made with believers *and their physical seed*. This is so because the only alternative would be to teach that New Covenant status, though once possessed, may be lost. This is not only contrary to the clear and pervasive biblical evidence; it is Arminianism."<sup>3</sup>
  4. The visible church upon the earth must give due diligence to receive only those who know the Lord, who give a credible testimony to their faith. We may potentially receive hypocrites and apostates, but we must guard carefully against it. The New Covenant church remains God's organized society of redeemed people, with regenerate hearts who have been saved from sin. The New Covenant does not depend upon the church but upon the fulfillment of the Covenant of Grace.

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<sup>3</sup> Sam Waldron, *Exposition of the 1689 Confession*, Webster: Evangelical Press, 1989 – pages 120-121.

- C. The New Covenant brings forgiveness of sin  
**Jeremiah 31:34 NAU** - "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."
1. This points to the lasting sacrifice by our great High Priest who has shed His own blood for all who are included in the Covenant of Redemption.
  2. The New Covenant is founded and established upon the blood of Christ.  
**Luke 22:20 NAU** - "And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood."
  3. The NC contains the elements of regeneration, justification, and reconciliation. Each covenant member must be born again, justified by faith alone, and effectually reconciled to God. Admission into the New Covenant local church is prerequisite upon faith and repentance as evidence of the regeneration of the New Covenant.
  4. Both OT and NT saints are saved by the New Covenant's accomplishment of the eternal Covenant of Redemption. Jesus Christ has fulfilled the Covenant of Works so that we might inherit the promises of the Covenant of Grace.

**Conclusion:**

1. So how can you enter into so glorious a Covenant? What does God require of you to become a partaker of these precious promises? You merely receive them.
2. This is the nature of grace. Grace is something you do not deserve and you cannot earn. The Gospel promise is for all who will receive it.