

A REFRESHER ON THE NEW COVENANT

As we know, the true believer in Jesus has entered into a “new covenant” with the living God. I have discussed this previously. However, I believe we should always be reminded of the new covenant that we are now able to be a part of. We must remember that it is only in and

through what Jesus did that we are now able to be in that New Covenant with the one and only true and living God.

Unfortunately, there are many who are taking the truth of the “new covenant” we have with our God that comes only in and through Jesus and are maligning it with untruths. The “new covenant” that we have in and through Jesus, was declared in the writings of our “Old Testament.” It was then brought forth and established in the events that took place and will take place as written in the “New Testament.” All of this is through through Jesus Christ.

Yes, we have the “new covenant” with all of its promises. However, the biggest difference from the “Old Testament” is that the “New Testament” now gives us eternal life with our God. The Old Testament only gives blessings, if fully followed, upon this earth. The New Testament gives us not just blessings upon this earth, but most importantly, it shows us and gives us “eternal life” forever and ever with our God.

As we discuss the term covenant, we must first get the proper working definition of that term. So, what is a “covenant?” Basically, the term covenant is a binding agreement between two parties. It is a legal contract which extends for the entire lives of those two parties making the agreement. It is not just a contract but it is a “life long” agreement.

We must note that the word “testament” is really another word for covenant. “Covenant” was a well-known concept in ancient times, and covenants could be made between two equal parties or between a king or higher authority and a subject. The king would promise certain protections, and the subject would promise total loyalty to the king. The agreement would last their lifetime.

The term “covenant” defined in the Old Testament is from the Hebrew word, *bʿrīt* (*ber-eeth*), which means to create a totally new agreement with new conditions between two parties. It

involves the aspect of being transformed. This literally refers to the fact that the two parties now become as one. It is a binding agreement that cannot be broken nor ended until death. It involves the cutting of flesh to make a mark that can not be hidden or taken away – therefore it is forever.

In the New Testament the word covenant comes from the Greek word, *diathēkē*, which refers to a contract that is to be unbreakable. Jesus gave His blood to establish a “new and better covenant.” He didn’t do away with the old covenant but He established a new and better covenant that now gives us eternal life through Him without the works of the Law. That is the difference.

We do not earn it, we are to simply accept it - if we want it. The old covenant has never ended but now a new and better covenant has now been established. Covenants are to be life lasting. The Old Covenant is still intact, however, there is also now a new and better covenant that we can enter into with God. The difference is that the “New Covenant” is a free gift – we just need to accept and receive it and then walk in it.

We see that there are several “covenants” that are found in the Old Testament in which God promises to do something.

- After the flood, God made a covenant with Noah that He would never again destroy the world by a flood, and He also gave some basic principles for humanity to live by (Genesis 8:20—9:17). Although humanity soon descended into rampant disobedience once again, the promise not to destroy the earth by another flood was an unconditional promise of God.

- God made a covenant with Abraham in which He promised, “*I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse, and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you*” This was also an unconditional covenant.

- God made a covenant with Israel regarding their use of the Promised Land (Exodus 19-24).

- God made a covenant with David that he would have a descendant who would sit on his throne “forever” (2 Samuel 7) – This covenant is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of God.

However, in Jeremiah 31, God promised a **New Covenant** with Israel. Israel repeatedly violated the terms of all the previous covenants, but God promised this would be different because it would deal with the **hearts** of the people. It depended on who would accept God's covenant by changing their hearts and simply trusting in God and in who He is. Those who accept God's New Covenant need to simply desire to become faithful to God and His ways.

We must note that "everyone" now included the dreaded Gentiles who would also be able to be enter into this covenant. All anyone had to and still needs to do is to accept all that Jesus did for us by dying on the cross, taking our punishment in hell for us and then resurrecting (rising from the dead). If we will believe and accept what Jesus did for us, we will be saved.

Let's read Malachi 3:1 - *"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."*

This scripture, the way it is written and presented could be a little misleading and confusing and then, ultimately, be misunderstood. Malachi 3:1 is actually two separate and distinct parts. The first part (Malachi 3:1a) reads, *"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me..."* This is actually speaking of John the Baptist who will "prepare the way for the Lord."

That is why we read in the Gospel accounts, such as Mark 1:2-4, *"As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall **prepare thy way before thee**. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."* It was John the Baptist who would "prepare the way" for Jesus.

The second part of this scripture (Malachi 3:1b) then reads *"... and the **Lord**, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."* This speaks of Jesus who is the **Lord** – the absolute, supreme and final authority – of the covenant. It declares that the "messenger" (John) in the first part will "prepare the way" for the true "messenger of the covenant" which is actually Jesus.

Acts 3:5 Peter expressed that the covenant with Abraham would be extended one day to not only the Hebrew people but to the world. “*Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall **all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.***”

Acts 3:26 - “*Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*” – it was to the “Jew first” but then it was extended to anyone and everyone who would believe and accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

God promises that He “***will be our God and that we will be His people.***” That is the covenant in a nut shell and it is expressed over and over again throughout the Word of God. Let’s take a look at that very aspect within the entirety of the scriptures.

- ▶ Exodus 6:7 - “*And I will take you to me for a people, and **I will be to you a God:** and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.”*
- ▶ Exodus 29:45 - “*And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and **will be their God.***”
- ▶ Leviticus 26:12 - “*And I will walk among you, and **will be your God, and ye shall be my people.***”
- ▶ Leviticus 26:45 - “*But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that **I might be their God: I am the LORD.***”
- ▶ Jeremiah 7:23 - “*But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and **I will be your God, and ye shall be my people:** and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.”*
- ▶ Jeremiah 11:4 - “*Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: **so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God.***”

- ▶ Jeremiah 24:7 - *“And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and **they shall be my people, and I will be their God:** for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.”*
- ▶ Jeremiah 30:22 - *“And ye **shall be my people, and I will be your God.**”*
- ▶ Jeremiah 31:1 - *“At the same time, saith the LORD, **will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.**”*
- ▶ Jeremiah 31:33 - *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and **“will be their God, and they shall be my people.”***
- ▶ Jeremiah 32:38 - *“**And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:**”*
- ▶ Ezekiel 11:20 - *“That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and **they shall be my people, and I will be their God.**”*
- ▶ Ezekiel 34:24 - *“**And I the LORD will be their God,** and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.”*
- ▶ Ezekiel 36:28 - *“And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and **ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.**”*
- ▶ Ezekiel 37:23 - *“Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall **they be my people, and I will be their God.**”*
- ▶ Ezekiel 37:27 - *“My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, **I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**”*
- ▶ Zechariah 8:8 - *“And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and **they shall be my people, and I will be their God,** in truth and in righteousness.”*

In Hosea 1:9 we see that because of the people's sinful ways and rejection of God we see that God declared - *"Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God."* We must never forget that regardless of how unfaithful people may be, God will never be unfaithful to His covenant promises. The Word of God shows us this.

In Hosea 1:9 it may seem like God had "divorced" or ended His covenant with the Jewish people because of their disobedience and rejection of God. However, if we read Romans 9:26 where this is referenced, we see that the relationship was never abandoned by God but rather God would ultimately, restore and make a better relationship and a better covenant through all that Jesus did – the New Covenant/ the New Testament.

Romans 9:26 tells us, *"And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God."* Notice, it changes from the "**people** of God" to now they shall be called "the **children** of God." We see in 1Peter 2:10 where it also expresses God's mercy and grace in continuing the covenant. It tells us, *"Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, **but now have obtained mercy.**"* These scriptures deal with Hosea 1:9.

Even though the people rejected their God, God remembered His forever promise even though we were not worthy of Him keeping His promises. This is where the New Covenant comes into play. We do not earn our salvation. We humbly accept God's grace, mercy and peace through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus and simply say "thank you."

In the New Testament it continues in a greater way. We now can enter into a covenant that has not just been renewed but now there is a new and better covenant that God has made, through the blood of Jesus. The following scriptures reveal this:

- ▶ 2Corinthians 6:16 - *"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, **I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**"*

- ▶ Hebrews 8:10 - *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and **I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people...**"*

Then we see what will be the total fulfillment of this New Covenant, forever and ever.

Revelation 21:3 - ***“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”***

We see that here it states that **it has happened** – God **shall be** our God and we **shall be** His people. It does not state that it is going to simply come to pass but rather it states that it has come to pass. The word “shall” declares this. This is what will happen when we are with the Lord in heaven and then the New Jerusalem. The covenant is fulfilled to its fullest.

God promised that He will always be our God. He is everyone’s God. The only difference is that we must allow Him to be our God. He has promised in His Word, over and over, that **He will be our God**. However, we must first realize there is a caveat in this whole understanding of God’s covenant. You see the term covenant is a two way street.

Yes, there are covenants that may have one side performing or doing more than the other side. This is the type of covenant we have with our God. In actuality, it is a lopsided covenant. God will do everything and all things for us...**if**...we will choose to be one of His people. “If” we choose to follow after His ways and thoughts. And, most importantly, “if” we allow Jesus to be the absolute supreme and final authority within our lives...”if” we choose to let Him be the Lord of our life.

Genesis 17:7,8 tells us - ***“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God”***

If we read Genesis 17:1-8, we see something very interesting. It declares what God will do as long as Abram “lets Him be His God.” The phrase that I used “lets Him be his God” is inferred by the statement made by God in verses 7 and 8, ***“I will be your God.”*** It refers to the implication that Abram needed to simply allow God to be his one and only God.

This is apt to everyone today. Each of us, personally, must choose to allow the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit to be our only God. It is as if God was pleading with Abram and then

ultimately all of man today, “If you let me be your God; just let me be your God; **please**, let me be your God.”

This points us to Jesus. We cannot do this in our own strength and in our own ability. No one could and no one can. If we receive Jesus and believe in who He is and all that He has done and let Him be our “Lord” (the absolute, supreme and final authority in our lives) then God will be our God and we will be His people. This will enable us to receive all the promises and benefits of being a “child of God.”

Ultimately, that is the definition of being in covenant, the New Covenant, with our one and only true and living God. God will take care of us. When I say that, I am not simply speaking of our life on this earth. No, I am speaking of eternal life with our God in heaven and then the New Jerusalem, forever and ever.

We must remember that, This new covenant that we are now in with our God is a covenant that was meant to last as long as the two parties are alive. This is so vital for the true believer in Jesus. If you believe and have accepted Jesus as your Savior and your Lord, yes, you are born again, but you also now have **eternal life**. Remember, a covenant is an agreement that lasts the **entire life time** of the two parties involved. Hmmm.....

Let’s see.... God is eternal. Now, through Jesus, we have eternal life. This means that we now live forever. We are eternal beings. Being that this is so, we can then say that our relationship and the covenant we now have with our God through Jesus, is eternal. It is forever and ever and ever!!!

As children of God, we are just “passing through” as we live our lives here upon this earth. Through the covenant we now have with the Living God through the blood of Jesus, we will someday go, be and then live in our true homeland - for eternity!!!

Thank you Father for your New Covenant that is available to every one who will receive it!!!

Thank you Jesus, who died and rose again to give us this New Covenant!!!

Holy Spirit teach us to grow in this understanding!!!