

**Text: Heb 8.10**

Last week we talked through the New Covenant, explaining each aspect of its teaching verse by verse. We will stay with the same passage today to emphasize the primary feature of the New Covenant, as compared to the primary failure of the Old Covenant.

The central verse of the New Covenant in Hebrews 8 is verse 10, but let's read the whole passage:

Read: Heb 8.8b-12, text 10

In verse 10 we have a point of contact between the New Covenant and the Old Covenant:

And I will be their God,  
And they shall be My people

This was the goal of the Old Covenant as well — “I will be their God, they shall be my people.”

The whole phrase speaks of relationship, of one-to-one companionship, very much like what Adam had with God in the garden.

When we look back at the Old Covenant, we talk about “Old Testament saints”

— there were *some* people in Israel (and proselytes) who truly were God's people, and he was their God.

— but we also know that many Israelites had no relationship with God throughout the Old Testament

How is the New Covenant different on this one point of contact?

*Everyone* who is in the New Covenant is in a “your God/my people” relationship.

*Everyone.*

Heb 8.10 “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 I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND **I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.**”

**Proposition:** Everyone in the New Covenant is in a personal relationship with God: a “your God/my people” relationship.

## I. The goal of the Old Covenant

- A. The permanent relationship in the Abrahamic covenant (Ex 3.7, 10)
1. The term “my people” applied to Israel first occurs in Exodus
  2. There is a sense that Israel is always (and still) “my people” in God’s eyes
  3. This is rooted in the Abrahamic Covenant, not the Mosaic Covenant (Old Covenant)
- B. The potential relationship of the Old Covenant (Mosaic Covenant) (Ex 6)
1. After Pharaoh’s initial rebuff (Ex 5), Moses announced to the people that God would establish a covenant with them (Ex 6.2-9)
    - a. God recalls the Abrahamic covenant (3-4)
    - b. God promises to deliver Israel from bondage (5-6)
    - c. God swears to *then* make them “my people” (7)
      - 1) The “taking” is a selection of the whole nation Israel as God’s people
 

“By these words God assured Israel of a special status: they were, corporately, his own people in a way that no other people were.”<sup>1</sup>
      - 2) When would this “taking” occur? At Sinai
 

“Only at Sinai, with its occasion of full ratification of the covenant, would God fully *take* Israel as his own people.”<sup>2</sup>
    - d. God’s plan rested on God’s oath on himself, it was independent of Israel’s reaction (8)

<sup>1</sup> Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, The New American Commentary 2 (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 172.

<sup>2</sup> Stuart, 172.

2. Nevertheless, the people did not listen due to Pharaoh's increased oppression (9)

"Faith is often diminished by hardship because emotions play a powerful part in most human thinking, and thinking can become increasingly pessimistic when any sort of pain continues unabated."<sup>3</sup>

### C. The goal of the Old Covenant (Lev 26)

1. Obedience to the covenant establishes the spiritual relationship (3, 12)
2. Disobedience to the covenant will result in discipline against the nation (14, 16 et al)
3. Repentance after discipline will result in restoration (40, 42, 45)

The goal of the Old Covenant is this relationship

## II. The successes and failures of the Old Covenant

### A. The spiritual success of the Old Covenant urged upon Israel

1. By Moses (Dt 32.45-47)
2. By Joshua (Josh 22.5)

### B. The spiritual relationship of the Old Covenant testified in the Psalms

1. David (Ps 37.31)
2. David [prophetically giving voice to the Messiah, see Heb 10.7 (Ps 40.7-8)]
3. Probably David (Ps 119.34, 70)

### C. The spiritual success of the Old Covenant sparingly achieved among Israel's kings

1. Hezekiah (2 Chr 31.20-21)
2. Josiah (2 Ki 23.24-25)

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<sup>3</sup> Stuart, 173.

## D. Josiah's revival: a case study in relating to God through the Old Covenant

1. In 2 Kings 22, Hilkiah the priest discovered a scroll of the Law in the temple (probably Deuteronomy)
2. Josiah responded in faith, with a tender heart towards the Lord
3. In 2 Kings 23, Josiah organized a revival of the OT religion in Judah
  - a. The renewal of the covenant (1-3)
    - 1) All the people gathered with him to hear the Law read
    - 2) Josiah stands by the pillar and enters a covenant with God (a renewal of the Old C.)
    - 3) And "all the people entered into the covenant" (3)
  - b. The cleansing of the temple and Jerusalem (4-14)
  - c. The cleansing of the Northern territory (15-20)
  - d. The passover celebrated (21-23) — None like it since the days of the Judges

### 4. Josiah's epitaph:

2 Ki 23.25 Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.

### 5. Josiah's sons quickly turned from Josiah's ways (31ff.)

- a. Jehoahaz did evil in the sight of the Lord (32)
- b. Jehoiakim did evil in the sight of the Lord (37)

It seems that the leaders of Israel who made their pledges to the covenant with Josiah did not pledge with a whole heart — they went along with Josiah's enthusiasm. They stand in a long line of Old Covenant failures — they did not take to the Covenant with a whole heart.

## E. An evaluation of the Spiritual life of the Old Covenant

1. The goal is the same as the New Covenant
2. The Old Covenant called for men to respond in order to reach the goal: obedience from the heart

## F. Jeremiah on the hearts of Old Testament Israel (Jer 17.1-2)

Jer 17.1-2 ¶ The sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus; With a diamond point it is engraved upon the tablet of their heart And on the horns of their altars,<sup>2</sup> As they remember their children, So they *remember* their altars and their Asherim By green trees on the high hills.

## III. Our struggle in the New Covenant

### A. The New Covenant achieves the Spiritual goal by God's action (Heb 8.10)

1. I will put my laws into their minds
2. I will write them in their hearts

God effects the change of heart in those who enter the New Covenant

### B. The new heart comes by the indwelling Spirit

#### 1. Jn 7.37-39

Jn 7.37-39 ¶ Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink."<sup>38</sup> "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"<sup>39</sup> But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

#### 2. Rm 8.9

Rm 8.9 ¶ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

## 3. 1 Co 2.12

1 Co 2.12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

## 4. 1 Co 3.16

1 Co 3.16 ¶ Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?

## C. Our struggle with sin after the indwelling (after entering the New Covenant)

1. The 1 Co 3.16 passage comes to us amid describing a man's work being "burned up" in judgement (1 Co 3.15)
2. The experience of every believer is the experience of struggle: no believer *never* sins again

## D. The spiritual reality of the New Covenant before the resurrection

1. Spiritual relationship of the New Covenant isn't dependent on our obedience but Christ's obedience (key difference with OC)
2. Spiritual power in the New Covenant is imparted by the indwelling Spirit
  - a. With a spiritual mind that responds to God's law
  - b. With a spiritual heart that loves God's word
3. Spiritual consciousness witnesses to the relationship
  - a. Heb 8.11

Heb 8.11 "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.

## b. Rm 8.15-16

Rm 8.15-16 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"<sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

4. The way to victory is by faith
  - a. Consider the internal working of faith through love that builds our spiritual life (Gal 5.6)
  - b. Compare the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5.19ff. vs. Gal 5.22ff.)

We live this life by faith: we bear this fruit by faith — when we get our eyes off the cross and on the world, we walk by sight and fail. Victory is in looking to Christ.

### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** Everyone in the New Covenant is in a personal relationship with God: a “your God/my people” relationship.

When we fail, we can always go back to God and confess our sin. He is faithful and just – righteous – to forgive us.

May we truly learn to live by faith and not by sight, may we truly walk with God each day.