

Christian Study

Lesson 259

Be Light

Focusing on Church beyond Sunday

A Closer Look At the New Covenant

Have all our sins been forgiven? Can we truly know God personally? To answer these questions, this study explores a subject that covers every aspect of the Christian life: the New Covenant. An understanding of this vital subject will bring clarity to your knowledge of the Bible, confidence, assurance and freedom to your Christian life. In this series we will discover:

- Why the New Covenant is far superior to the Old Covenant
- Jesus meant it when He said: "It is Finished"
- Your eternal inheritance in Christ Jesus
- How to experience the fullness of God's grace

The New Covenant

Forgiveness, reconciliation, sanctification, righteousness, justification, identity, life—these new Testament words make up the very essence of the Gospel. For most people, these are just cloud doctrines dangling out in space somewhere, as if they do not belong or connect to each other. Historically, some groups have so focused on these "individual doctrines" that great division has resulted. New denominations and sects have been formed based on single doctrines. In the process, the true meaning of the doctrine has been totally confusing. As a result, the average Christian knows something about each piece that makes up the Gospel message, but is unsure how they all fit together.

God has given us a framework that holds the various elements of the Gospel in place: **this framework is called the New Covenant**. It involves everything that Christ has accomplished for us through His death, burial and resurrection. That is why it is of utmost importance for every believer to understand the New Covenant. With a proper

understanding, all the pieces of the puzzle fall into place. In order to fully understand this covenant, let us begin at the place where it began—at the cross.

The cross of Jesus Christ is the dividing line of all human history from God's point of view. Humanly speaking, we look at the birth of Christ as the dividing line. Even our calendars divide history into B.C.—before Christ was born, and A.D.—anno Domini, which is translated “the year of our Lord.” However, the most significant event from God's vantage point was not when Christ was born, but when He died. His death ushered in a New Covenant, a covenant in which God remembers our sins no more.

Key Verse: Hebrews 9:16-17

“In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, 17 because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living.”

Like a will that takes effect when someone dies, the new covenant was put into action at Jesus' death. His death marked the transition from the old plan to the new one, canceling the old obligations and accompanying sins, and summoning the heirs to receive the eternal inheritance that was promised them. He brought together God and his people in this new way. Believers are the beneficiaries of the New Covenant. We also read how Moses ratifies the Old Covenant in verses 18-22 of the same chapter in Hebrews. Even the first plan required a death to set it in motion. After Moses had read out all the terms of the plan of the law—God's “will”—he took the blood of sacrificed animals and, in a solemn ritual, sprinkled the document and the people who were its beneficiaries. And then he attested its validity with the words, “This is the blood of the covenant commanded by God.” He did the same thing with the place of worship and its furniture. Moses said to the people, “This is the blood of the covenant God has established with you.” Practically everything in a will hinges on a death. That's why blood, the evidence of death, is used so much in our tradition, especially regarding forgiveness of sins. Since forgiveness requires the shedding of blood, and Jesus shed His blood one time at the cross, we can conclude that the forgiveness Christ provided us as Children of God is total and permanent.

What the Old Covenant says about the new Covenant

The New Covenant is not something that happened as an afterthought in God's mind. He prophesied the event hundreds of years before it happened. Many of the Jewish people looked forward to the day when the New Covenant would become a reality.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 states: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, **32** not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. **33** for this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. **34** And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." The Bible cannot get any clearer, simpler and more straightforward than this on the difference between the Old and the New Covenant. The New would not be anything like the Old. At the time Jeremiah gave this prophesy the people of Israel did not know when this New Covenant would go into effect. They were not even expecting someone to come to the scene and shed his blood to bring in the New Covenant.

Moving forward many years later, we read in the gospel of Luke how the New Covenant prophecy made by Jeremiah is going to be established. **Luke 22:30** "Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." The cup represents the blood of Jesus Christ that will be shed for those who were in the upper room and for all who will believe in Him and put their trust in what He (Jesus) did following that statement. Please note that at this point, the New Covenant had not yet gone into effect because Jesus had not yet died in the cross, as the Bible said that Jesus taught under the law or the Old Covenant

The disciples were certainly familiar with Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the New Covenant. Suppose that you were one of the disciples and were at the last supper with Jesus, what thoughts and emotions would be racing through your mind in response to Jesus' words concerning the cup? Do you think the disciples understood that Jesus was prophesying His death or was there any way to usher in the New Covenant other than through the death of Jesus?

Jesus and the Old Covenant

"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." **Galatians 4:4-5** According to these verses, Jesus was born under the

law to bring believers under grace, because He is full of grace. When He lived on earth before His death He lived under the Old Covenant because His death was the one that brought in the New. If He had not died on the cross to redeem us we would be living under the Old Covenant today, and if salvation was dependent on our ability to live up to the Old Covenant, there would have been no hope to be saved.

The New Covenant began the only place it could—at the cross. Most Christians view the cross only in terms of forgiveness of sins, but Christ's death is so much bigger than that. His death ushered a New Covenant, the covenant in which we experience all that God has promised in Christ Jesus

It is no secret, what God can do. What He's done for others, He'll do for you.

Our mission is to help people find strength and security on the foundation that can never be shaken, cracked or shattered. This foundation is the remarkable truth of God's unconditional love and His indisputable grace experienced in a relationship with Jesus Christ. The critics of Christianity have launched a full attack to discredit the person and works of Jesus Christ and the reliability of His word. We cannot be silent anymore. Let us as children of light, stand firm in the faith, because He who has taken us this far will never forsake us. You are called Christians, be careful of that name. Let not our Lord Jesus Christ be blasphemed on your account

Believe this, "Jesus did not come to make bad people good, He came to make dead people live."

Keep It Simple

Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

If you have any questions, comments or you know anybody else who will benefit from this study please feel free to give us their email address and they will be added to our mailing list to receive weekly lessons. The email address is santigiemando1@yahoo.com,

Remember: A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle (Ephesians 5:8)

Let's go light another candle!