



February 26, 2021

An Old or New Covenant Believer?

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

We are a month away from the Passover service. Time seems to pass so quickly and we will soon be celebrating the Spring Holy Days. At this time of year, I often reflect back on questions and conversations I have had with others during this season.

I recall once while having lunch with a longtime friend, I was asked a question. "Remind me again, are you an Old or New Covenant Believer?"

That's a fair and honest question. Let's examine part of this in my letter this evening.

Over the years I've covered portions of the book of Hebrews in sermon messages and I have talked about the New Covenant. Both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant have been ratified (or entered into) by the shedding of blood.

The setting involving ancient Israel entering into the covenant is described in Exodus 24. "*And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient." And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."* (vs 4-8)

This is quite an event.

It would take a lot of blood to have even a few drops sprinkled on every Israelite or at least on all the males. I've pondered, did they all line up in some organized and orderly way to be able to accomplish this?

Jesus referred to His blood that would be shed in relation to the new covenant. "*For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*" (Matthew 26:28)

In Hebrews 9 the apostle Paul refers to the event we just read about in Exodus 24. He compares this to the new covenant. "*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death...*(Hebrews 9:14-15)

He also makes an interesting comment about Abel. "*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God...to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.*" (Hebrews 12:22, 24) The words "that of" are in *italics* and were supplied by the translators.

Here is a comment from Albert Barnes' NT Commentary on verse 24.

"The words "that of" being supplied by the translators. In the original there is no reference to the blood of Abel shed by Cain, as our translators seem to have supposed; but the allusion is to the faith of Abel, or to the testimony which he bore to a great and vital truth of religion. The meaning here is, that the blood of Jesus speaks better things than Abel did; that is, that the blood of Jesus is the reality of which the offering of Abel was a type. Abel proclaimed by the sacrifice which he made the great truth, that salvation could be only by a bloody offering--but he did this only in a typical and obscure manner; Jesus proclaimed it in a more distinct and better manner by the reality. . .

"There were other points of resemblance between Abel and the Redeemer, but on them the apostle does not insist. Abel was a martyr, and so was Christ; Abel was cruelly murdered, and so was Christ; there was aggravated guilt in the murder of Abel by his brother, and so there was in that of Jesus by his brethren--his own countrymen; the blood of Abel called for vengeance, and was followed by a fearful penalty on Cain, and so was the death of the Redeemer on his murderers--for they said, "his blood be on us and on our children," and are yet suffering under the fearful malediction then invoked;--but the point of contrast here is, that the blood of Jesus makes a more full, distinct, and clear proclamation of the truth, that salvation is by blood, than the offering made by Abel did. The apostle alludes here to what he had said in Hebrews 11:4, By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks."

Whether or not Barnes' is correct in claiming the additional words "that of" are incorrect, he makes some points we might consider.

God states to Cain "*the voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the earth.*" (Genesis

4:10) The voices of the dead martyrs are also symbolically speaking from the grave, "*How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?*" (Revelation 6:9-10)

For those who accept the terms of the new covenant and demonstrate faith in Christ and His shed blood, there is forgiveness of sin and reconciliation, even for those who have committed horrible sins.

The apostle John speaks of the role of the Lamb of God. "*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. John 3:18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned . . ."*" (John 3:17-18)

By entering this covenant one can have the record of sins removed and be empowered to repent and live by the laws of God. "*This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."*" (Hebrews 10:16-17)

This new covenant includes a better high priest and better promises. We'll focus on and review more of this next time.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

-Scott Hoefker

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