



March 12, 2021

Some Final Comments on the New Covenant

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.

When most of you will receive or read this letter my wife and I will already be in east Texas as we begin our almost 2 weeks of travels in the state. We'll visit various brethren in various parts of Texas, and are really looking forward to the time with them and the congregations we'll visit.

As many of you know, in March of 2015, I was diagnosed with diabetes mellitus. I sometimes refer to it, although try not to dwell on it.

Since that time, due to God's intervention, and a change of diet and exercise, (although I still must watch carefully daily what I eat and exercise a lot) I am now feeling better a good part of the time. This does make it a bit of a challenge on our visits, as I am not able to eat many of things I did before...so I ask your patience and understanding in this regard.

I also thank you for your continued prayers over the last years concerning this challenge. You do learn to have more compassion for others when you go through pain and health challenges.

Going through this has often reminded me of what God promised ancient Israel. That they would have blessings of good health as they were faithful to the terms of the old covenant. *"Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks."* (Deuteronomy 28:4)

However, if they failed to obey the LORD and His covenant laws, *"all these curses will come upon you and overtake you . . . "The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever . . . with inflammation, with severe burning fever, "The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed."* (Deuteronomy 28:15, 22, 27)

Unfortunately we live in a land that has disregarded many of God's laws, including laws relating to the health of the land, animals, and humans. We are all subject to the effects of a deteriorated quality of food and the results of toxins in our soil, water, and air.

Ancient Israel was promised to be blessed in the rural and urban areas of the land. (v.3) The LORD promised ancient Israel protection from their enemies and to have confidence in their power as they trusted in the LORD. (v.7) As long as they lived by God's laws and commandments, they would enjoy a most blessed physical life in their homeland of Canaan.

Let's take a brief look and compare these promises with those associated with the New Covenant.

What was one of the main defects associated with the old covenant?

The answer is revealed in another statement found in Deuteronomy. "*Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!*" (Deuteronomy 5:29) Ancient Israel for the most part did not have access to that right heart with the working of God's Holy Spirit.

Under the new covenant, those participating in it have access to God's spirit and access to the power to overcome sin and practice righteousness. "*But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. . . Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."* (Hebrews 8:6, 8)

The people were at fault (or the problem) in that they did not have a heart to obey. Also, they did not have access to the forgiveness available under the new covenant. "*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 in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*" (v.10)

Ezekiel describes that time of the second resurrection along with the time of regathering of Israel and Judah at the end of the age. "*I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land.*" (Ezekiel 37:14) Judah and Joseph will be combined into one nation and ancient king David will be resurrection to rule over them. (vs.16-25) They will enter the new and everlasting covenant. "*Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them.*" (v.26)

This will truly be a time of peace, practicing righteousness, and living by God's laws even in the physical and national realm. We sure do not see that at this present time in history.

The apostle Paul puts it this way: "*that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*" (Romans 8:4) Under the

new covenant we are described as sons and children of God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." (vv.14-16)

This is an important distinction that applies to those who have entered the new covenant now before Christ returns to set up the kingdom of God over Israel, Judah and all nations. We are begotten children of God, awaiting our birth into the kingdom and family of God. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" (John 3:6-7)* This new literal birth experience will accompany receiving one of the greatest promises of the new covenant relationship. *"And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." (Hebrews 9:15)*

Paul contrasted the consequences of being under the old covenant with being under the new covenant. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)*

Under the old covenant there was no real forgiveness of sin, but, there is under the new one and an erasing of the record of sins. *"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." (Hebrews 8:12)* Receiving complete forgiveness of our sins and receiving eternal life in an eternal kingdom are promises way above a good life in the land of Canaan!

As you and I approach the Passover, it is vital to understand that Christ's sacrifice and death offers to us the blessing of truly to be forgiven, and under the new covenant once baptized.

Some wonderful thoughts to reflect on as we begin this Sabbath...

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

-Scott Hoefker

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