



Gospel Highway

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Talks given at Reformed Ministers' Conference 2016, Kuala Lumpur, by Pastor Steve Clevenger of Covenant Reformed Baptist Church, Warrenton, Virginia, USA.

5. Title: The New Covenant (Part 2)

Text – Hebrews 8:6-13

Hebrews 8:6–13 (NKJV)

6 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.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.

8 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—

9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.

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 in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

13 In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Introduction: Let's return to our study of the New Covenant.

In our previous message, we observed forward progression, unity, and continuity in the development of the Divine Covenants. But as we come

to the New Covenant we will notice that there is unity, and continuity, however, there is also discontinuity.

The language used by the writer of Hebrews is that the God will **“make a new covenant”** and it will not be like the Old Covenant. The New will be a better covenant, which is established on better promises.

1. The Better Covenant vv.6
 - a. The Need of a Better Covenant vv.7-9
2. The Better Promises vv.10-13

In our last study, we began to see the superiority of the new covenant over the old covenant. What is better about the new when compared to the old?

The first great blessing of the New Covenant is the promise of spiritual regeneration.

1. The Promise of Regeneration v.10

Hebrews 8:10 (NKJV)

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 in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

That which was lacking under the Old Covenant has been remedied by the inner transformation of the Spirit of God. This is the promise of regeneration. This is the Holy Spirit giving new life. God will put His law in the minds and hearts of His people.

Listen how A.W. Pink describes this work of God in the inward man.

Regeneration consists in a radical change of heart, for there is implanted a new disposition as the foundation of all holy exercises; the mind being renovated, the affections elevated, and the will emancipated from the bondage of sin.¹

According to **verse 9**, Israel “*did not continue in God’s covenant*” and because of their disobedience “*God disregarded them.*” But by the transforming work of the Spirit, every member of the New Covenant the Law of God is imbedded inwardly. Consequently, new desires and affections are enabled, and now it is the delight of the Christian to walk in the ways of God. The New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant because of this work of regeneration in every covenant member.

2. The Promise of a Personal Knowledge of God vv.10b-11

Hebrews 8:10–11 (NKJV)

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 in their mind and write them on their hearts; ***and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.***

11 ***None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.***

God would be their God, and they would be His treasured people.

Verse 10b “*and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*”

This statement is a repeated covenantal theme in both the Old and New Testaments. While in both testaments the people of God are His treasured people, the superiority of the New Covenant is that now God and His people are eternally, and inseparably united because of the mediation of Jesus Christ.

¹ Pink, Arthur Walkington. *The Holy Spirit*.

Hebrews 9:15 (NKJV)

15 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.***

And verse 12,

Hebrews 9:12 (NKJV)

12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, ***but with His own blood*** He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, ***having obtained eternal redemption.***

The death of Christ secured a permanent relationship between God and His people.

Because of the inward work of the Spirit in regeneration and the permanent relationship secured by the death of Christ, there is now a universal knowledge of God with every covenant member. Notice the words of the text.

Hebrews 8:11 (NKJV)

11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

What is promised here is personal, intimate, and universal knowledge of God with every covenant member. The same language is used by Jeremiah in 24:7

Jeremiah 24:7 (NKJV)

7 Then 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 to Me with their whole heart.

And it was used by Jesus as He taught about the effectual grace of God in salvation.

John 6:45 (NKJV)

45 It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

Leon Morris commenting on the words of Jesus,

*God will teach his people himself, that is he will teach them within their hearts.*¹¹⁹²

So, here we have the promise that every covenant member will have a personal knowledge of God.

3. The Promise of Forgiveness of Sins v.12

Hebrews 8:12 (NKJV)

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

¹¹⁹ Cf. Paul’s statement that the Thessalonian Christians were θεοδιδάκτοι (1 Thess. 4:9). Odeberg maintains that this term “points to the fact that no real knowledge exists of the Divine world, that does not proceed from God, it points to the internality versus the externality; διδάκτοὶ θεοῦ is to be subsumed under the general γεννηθέντες ἐκ θεοῦ” (FG, p. 258).

² Morris, Leon. *The Gospel according to John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995. Print. The New International Commentary on the New Testament.

Lastly, we have in verse 12 the promise of forgiveness of sins. This is the great redemptive promise that was accomplished by Jesus Christ and the shedding of His blood on the cross.

The Old Covenant provided animal sacrifices for sin. But those sacrifices were only typical, or shadows and could never take away sins. The animal sacrifices under the Law only pointed to the one true sacrifice of Christ.

Only in the death of Christ are sins forgiven.

The writer of Hebrews would say this way,

Hebrews 10:1–4 (NKJV)

1 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

And,

Hebrews 9:11–15 (NKJV)

11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,
14 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?
15 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.

Well, let's close and consider some of the applications of this truth.

Application: I hope we have heard the main point that the writer of the book of Hebrews is presenting to us. The point is that Jesus Christ and the New Covenant are much better, they are superior to the Old Covenant.

In this passage, the superiority of the New Covenant has been stressed. Now, let's recall how the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant.

- 1. The New Covenant, is made only with those who are born-again by the Holy Spirit. God by His sovereign grace has promised to inwardly transform every covenant member.**

Hebrews 8:10 (NKJV)

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 in their mind and write them on their hearts***; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

There were born-again believers that were members of the old covenant. But there also were unregenerate members of the old covenant. As the Apostle Paul teaches,

Romans 9:6 (NKJV)

6 But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. ***For they are not all Israel who are of Israel,***

Romans 9:11–13 (NKJV)

11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),

12 it was said to her, “The older shall serve the younger.”

13 As it is written, “***Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.***”

The great contrast is that all or every member of the New Covenant has received the blessing of regeneration. Every member has the law of God written in their mind and on their heart. Every member has been born from above. This is one way the new covenant is “not according to the covenant that God made with their fathers.” This blessing is universal among the new covenant members, and it demonstrates the superiority of the new covenant over the old.

Now this is in contrast to what some might teach about new covenant membership. For instance, paedobaptists, those who baptize the infant children of Christians typically believe that there are members of the new covenant who are not born-again, who do not have the law written on their minds and hearts. However, such a position is contrary to the teaching of the Bible.

The Words of Jesus are quite clear, “*You must be born again.*” (John 3:7)

2. In the New Covenant, every member of the covenant has a personal knowledge of God.

Hebrews 8:11 (NKJV)

11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

- 3. In the New Covenant every member of the covenant has a has received the promise of the forgiveness of sins.**

Hebrews 8:12 (NKJV)

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

- 4. If the blessings of the New Covenant are universal among every member of the covenant, then this truth has a vital role for us in determining membership in the covenant community, the church. Furthermore, the proper candidates for participation in the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.**

You cannot be in the New Covenant without the internal realities. The internal realities are universal among the New Covenant members. There are no external members only, as there were under the Old Covenant.

- 5. If the blessings of the New Covenant are universal among every member of the covenant, then there is a great assurance that every member receives.**

There is the sovereign word of God, and the gracious work in the heart that causes the believe to persevere.

First, The Promise of Perseverance.

Jeremiah 32:40 (NKJV)

40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; ***but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.***

Secondly, great assurance under the New Covenant by the “***I will***” statements of God. An unbreakable covenant “***not like the covenant they broke***”.

Finally, the better covenant is assured. The old covenant was naturally limited, temporary and partial, but the new covenant is unrestricted in its power, eternal in its duration and complete in its effects. God makes definite promises to his people and binds himself in honour to blot out their transgressions. Here are the better promises. The ‘I wills’ of God rob uncertain, doubting man of his timidity, reticence and fear. God says, ‘*I will* make this covenant’, ‘*I will* engrave my laws in their hearts’, ‘*I will* be their God’, ‘*I will* manifest myself to them all’, ‘*I will* make myself known to the least as well as the greatest’, ‘*I will* be merciful’, ‘*I will* forget their sins.’ All the tentativeness and hesitancy of the earlier days have gone. Man can now be sure: *All shall know me.*³

³Brown, R., & Brown, R. (1988, c1982). *The message of Hebrews : Christ above all*. Originally published under title: Christ above all. The Bible speaks today (151). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., U.S.A.: Inter-Varsity Press.