

## “JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO...” SERIES

### A NEW COVENANT

#### HEBREWS 8:8-13

*7For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.*

*8For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:*

*9Not 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 continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.*

*10For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:*

*11And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.*

*12For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

*13In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. ESV*

---

#### Introduction

For continuities sake, I have included the 7<sup>th</sup> verse in this study. What the author is implying is that the first covenant had fault. As we discussed, the writer did not mean that God made a mistake by creating the first covenant, but that the first covenant did not contain the ability for all sin to be pardoned and therefore salvation to be granted. Albert Barnes notes: The first covenant made under Moses “was merely *preparatory* to the gospel.”

From verse eight, we have the longest New Testament quote from the Old Testament. Of course there is a reason that the Holy Spirit is inspiring the writer of Hebrews to go back to the scrolls containing the prophecies of Jeremiah.

31Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

32Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

33But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

*8For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:*

*For finding fault with them* – the problem with the first covenant could be found in both the people and the covenant itself. The covenant keeper was God Himself. His covenant was handed down from Abraham and ultimately to the Children of Israel.

The Old Covenant was flawed, not in what was spelled out in the Law's requirements, for the Law was good (cf. Romans 7:12), but it was "weakened by the sinful nature" of the people (Romans 8:3), because "the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so" (Romans 8:7, 8). (Hughes, 1993)

*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah* – The New Covenant was promised to the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, by the prophet Jeremiah. The twelve tribes had by this time evolved into two houses; Israel, the Northern Kingdom and Judah, the Southern Kingdom.

*9Not 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 continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

*And they shall not teach every man his neighbor* - The rabbinical schools will not be needed to impart teaching to mankind. Those that seek the Lord will have God's laws written in their minds and hearts. This knowledge will give the believer the relationship that was missing in the first covenant. The Lord will become their God and they will be His people.

Believers will be taught respecting the nature and character of God that will not come from man, but by the Holy Spirit. The opposite was true of the old covenant.

Their religion consisted much in outward observances.

It was not to such an extent as the new system a dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

There were not as many means as now for learning the true character of God.

The fullest revelations had not been made to them of God's character. That was reserved for the coming of the Saviour, and under him it was intended that there should be communicated the full knowledge of the character of God.<sup>1</sup>

*13In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

The writer of Hebrews has painstakingly taken the Hebrew believers through a set of truths:

God's Son is superior to angels.

God's Son is the "captain of their salvation"

God's Son is faithful

God's Son is the believer's High Priest

God's Son is a Priest forever

A better estate awaits the believer through Jesus Christ

God's Son initiates a new priestly service

And now, God's Son brings a New Covenant

Conclusion

Jeremiah 31:31–34, quoted here, supports several arguments in Hebrews:

(1) this "second" covenant (Heb. 8:7) comes after the Mosaic covenant (the days are coming, v. 8);

---

<sup>1</sup> Albert Barnes, Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible, digital, SwordSearcher7.1

(2) it is established by the Lord (vv. 8, 13);

(3) it is a new covenant (vv. 8, 13);

(4) it is unlike the former covenant of the exodus (vv. 9, 13);

(5) the former covenant failed because of the fault of Israel (for they did not continue in my covenant, v. 9; see v. 8);

(6) this new covenant involves a transformation of the inner life of its recipients by writing God's laws into their minds and hearts so that all know him (vv. 10–11; see 10:14–17; cf. 9:9); and (7) it brings true, final forgiveness of sins (8:12; see 9:15; 10:12–18).<sup>2</sup>

The New Covenant was promised which would replace the Old Covenant that was still in effect. This assumes that there is a problem in the Old Covenant which needs to be remedied by the New Covenant.

The days of the Old Covenant are gone. We are to live by the Spirit, trusting in His power and walking in the light of His teaching. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law and has brought us into a New Covenant relationship with Himself. And therefore we are called to hold onto Jesus.

*Bob Crowder*

---

<sup>2</sup> Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (p. 2373). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.