

THE NEW COVENANT

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah."
– Jeremiah 31:31.

THE New Covenant is the Scriptural name for the new arrangement between God and man, by which God purposes to receive mankind into harmony again with Himself. Harmony with God was the covenant relationship which Adam originally enjoyed, but which he lost by His disobedience, and which was renewed typically at Mt. Sinai with Israel, although they could not get the blessing of life out of it.

The mediation of the Law Covenant was effected through Moses. (Exodus 19:3-9; 24:3-8.) God agreed that if Israel would keep His Law they should have everlasting life. The inauguration of that Law Covenant was effected by the mediator, Moses, through the sacrifices which he offered. In the typical arrangement of the old Law Covenant, these Atonement Day sacrifices were repeated year by year continually.

While the mediation of the *old* Law Covenant brought Israel into *typical* relationship to God, the mediation of the *New* Law Covenant will bring all mankind into *actual* Covenant relationship, into a position of Divine favor, provided that they will continue to keep the Divine Law. God will introduce this New Law Covenant through the Mediator of the New Covenant, in whom the whole arrangement centers, and through whom it will be carried out. For a period of one thousand years this Mediator will do a work for mankind. As a Priest, He will uplift humanity; as a King, He will rule them in righteousness. It will take a full thousand years to bring the people out of their degradation, and restore them to the image and likeness of God, lost by Adam in Eden.

The basis of mediation on the part of the better Mediator will be the *better sacrifices* of this Gospel Age. In the antitypical arrangement these sacrifices will never be repeated. Through the better sacrifices, the antitypical Mediator will have the power to start the people with a *clean slate*, as it were. So it is written, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Hebrews 8:12.) Again, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." – Ezekiel 36:26.

Thus Adam's sin and condemnation, which came to mankind [R5292 : page 246] by heredity, will no more be remembered by anybody. But the work of taking away the stony heart will be gradual. The disciplinary processes of the Kingdom will gradually relieve mankind of hard-heartedness, and make them tender-hearted and affectionate. All who enter that new condition of things will no longer be held accountable for Adam's sin. We read in Ezekiel 18:2-4, "The *fathers* have eaten sour grapes, and the children's *teeth* are set on edge." Under the new order of things he who dies will die for *his own sin*.

Since all mankind are in a condition of imperfection, all will still be liable to sin. The only arrangement by which they can attain everlasting life will be by their adoption into the family of the Mediator – The Christ. He will quicken their mortal bodies. No Divine condemnation will hold over against them from the past. Only such as come into this relationship will receive the Divine blessings. Under the New Covenant, the special favors of the Lord will be only for the obedient. Whoever rejects the opportunities for upbuilding will be destroyed from among the people. – Acts 3:23.

SEALING THE NEW COVENANT

God cannot enter into a covenant with people who are under His own sentence of death. Therefore, under the typical arrangement of the Law Covenant, the death of bulls and goats was accepted as a sacrifice to God. This did not mean that the blood of bulls and goats

was sufficient to take away sin; but the it was a typical representation of the real sacrifices, under the real Covenant.

If the New Covenant were *now sealed*, then all the blood of the Covenant must have been *previously* prepared. If this were *already shed*, then we could have no chance of sharing in the death of Christ. It is evident, then, that the New Covenant is *not sealed*. The antitypical Bullock has been slain, and His blood taken into the Most Holy. The antitypical goat is in process of being slain. When its sacrifice shall have been completed, all of the blood will be in the hands of the great High Priest. Then will come the application of the blood as an offset to Adam's sin. At the end of this Gospel Age the great Mediator will be ready to do the work assigned to Him.

The first work of the New Dispensation will be the antitypical application of the blood in the antitypical Most Holy, upon the Mercy-Seat, to make a reconciliation for the sins of all the people. Until that shall have been done, the New Covenant cannot be inaugurated. Our High Priest has been commissioned to inaugurate the New Covenant. The application of the blood will be the sealing – the making valid.

The New Covenant has been promised for centuries, but it has not yet gone into effect. As soon as this Blood of Atonement shall have been applied for the sins of all the people, the New Covenant will be inaugurated. We see, then, that the blood is to be applied in cancelation of the sins of the *whole world* as an offset for the sin of Adam – **[R5293 : page 246]** which includes his race.

At the beginning of the New Dispensation the world begins life anew, so to speak – not individually, not personally, but collectively, through the Mediator. The merit of the Mediator is to be applied. It is the Mediator who makes satisfaction for the sins of the world; and all the resulting blessings come through the Mediator's hands. Throughout the Millennial Age whoever would have life must get it through the Lifegiver, who will give it under the terms of the New

Covenant. (I John 5:12.) None can get his share of the blessing except by acceptance of the terms of the New Covenant, and by endeavor to live up to them. All who do so will be helped, and granted grace sufficient through the Mediator.

While the sprinkling of the blood upon the Mercy-Seat on behalf of all the people takes place before Restitution begins, or before the right to live can be given to any of the Ancient Worthies, nevertheless, those who would get God's blessing, His uplifting influence, must become Israelites – that is, become believers in God, by believing in the Mediator, who will be God's Representative. This Law will be applicable to the whole world. If mankind would get everlasting life, they must accept Christ and join themselves to this earthly Kingdom class. Christ's Kingdom must rule the earth until all the wicked are destroyed. – I Corinthians 15:24-26.

NEW COVENANT BENEFITS WORLD-WIDE

All mankind will receive some benefit from the New Covenant, irrespective of acceptance of Christ. That benefit will be that they will be awakened from the tomb. As the Scriptures tell us, as by one man condemnation passed upon all, so likewise through one man justification to life is to pass upon all. (Romans 5:12,18.) Therefore, we would say that the benefits of the New Covenant will be applicable to everybody. If God had foreseen that nobody would adopt this arrangement, that fact no doubt would have altered His Plan.

All of the accounts against humanity having been canceled by Justice, mankind will be turned over to the Mediator. If man were not put under the Mediator, if he were kept under Divine Justice, he would immediately be condemned, because of his inability to do right. Therefore the Father will not take cognizance of sinners. They will be left to the Mediator. All who will be obedient will receive the blessings of the Kingdom, and those who do not become obedient under those conditions will go into the Second Death.

THE SIN UNTO DEATH

During the Gospel Age, the only ones who can commit the sin unto death, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, are those who have been enlightened of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul says, "As touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the Age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance." (Hebrews 6:4-6. R.V.) Their sin would be *wilful*, otherwise called "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit."

Therefore only the Church are on trial now. We who have been begotten of the Holy Spirit are on trial for life or death. Those who now die the Second Death will have no opportunity in the future. If these begotten of the Holy Spirit are faithful, they will be granted to be of the Little Flock class. Those of the spirit-begotten class who fail to attain a place in the Little Flock, will, if overcomers eventually, receive life on a lower plane. They will be the Great Company. But if they fail to attain either of these positions, the only thing remaining for them is the Second Death.

As for the world, their Day of Judgment has not yet come. The world is still in condemnation through Father Adam – not recognized as having any rights at all. Some of the world are excellent people; but even these have neither part nor lot in the salvation of the present time. The blessed arrangement for them is in the Millennial Age, when all of their sins and iniquities will be forgotten.

Just as our sins are now canceled, so likewise will the whole world go free from the condemnation of sin absolutely, **[R5293 : page 247]** when the world shall have accepted of Christ, the great Mediator.

But they will, nevertheless, suffer certain judgments, or punishments, or stripes, for the deeds of this present life. This will not be because Justice will hold over anything against them, but because the weaknesses of human nature will have left wounds in their flesh. With them also it will be true that if they shall sin against the spirit of holiness, the Holy Spirit, knowingly and wilfully, the penalty will be condemnation to the Second Death.

Our Lord Jesus said that all manner of sin should be forgiven except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. But the Pharisees, to whom these words were addressed, could not commit this sin, because they had not the fulness of knowledge. – Matthew 12:31,32.

FORGIVENESS OF SIN ABSOLUTE

When God recognizes the satisfaction of Divine Justice and cleans the slate so far as sinners are concerned, this does not mean that He has merely transferred the account to Jesus, who will hold it against them. Our Lord Jesus will not hold against mankind the things which the Father has forgotten. On the contrary, as the Representative of the Father, the Lord will be glad to give mankind the benefit of that forgiveness, merely holding them at a distance from the Father – standing between as Mediator – to give them time for restoration, development of character, etc., taking away the stoniness of their hearts.

The Lord says through the Prophet, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The Apostle Paul calls attention to this statement. He points out that under the Law Covenant this was not done, but that the sins remained; for atonement was made afresh for them year by year. The inferior sacrifices could not take away sin, but the original sins remained. (Hebrews 10:1-4.) This New Covenant in Christ, however, will absolutely take away sins. See Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-29.

FUTURE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

The Scriptures tell us that "out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:3.) The Ancient Worthies are to be made princes in all the earth. (Psalm 45:16.) This, of course, would appeal first and primarily to the Jew, who would naturally be the first to come under the new regulations. We may not say that all of the Jews will do so, but we believe that a considerable number of them will. In time others will join them. There are many good people who have not taken the vow of consecration to the Lord, but who would like to help rather than to hinder others. Such will in due time attach themselves to the Kingdom, which shall be "the desire of all nations."

In the case of the Ancient Worthies their freedom from imperfection will make them conspicuous. As the world comes to know about these, they will say, Are not these God's people? Mankind will perceive that God has rewarded the Ancient Worthies by giving them a better resurrection, and will learn that their better resurrection was given because of faithfulness in the past.

COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD CONDITIONAL

Christ, having laid down the price of the sins of the whole world, will eventually hand that price over to Justice. The price having been accepted by Justice, the sins of the whole world will be remitted; and everything will be turned over to the great Mediator. After the inauguration of the New Covenant, it will be the part of the people to strive to come up to the requirements of that Covenant; although if they then unwittingly violate God's Law, they will not be amenable to that Law, during the Mediatorial Reign; for the Mediator will stand between them and the Law.

The Mediator will not hold against any one the transgressions of this present life. This does not mean that mankind will have

bodies which will give them no trouble; but that under the arrangements of the New Covenant, this better Mediator purposes to help them out of the difficulties that are theirs by reason of their fallen condition. He will help the people to understand the requirements of the New Covenant.

The satisfaction of Justice is necessary before any one can experience Restitution. Even the Ancient Worthies cannot be blessed without this satisfaction of Justice. After the Mediator has made satisfaction to Divine Justice, and has been privileged to inaugurate the New Covenant, the Ancient Worthies will be the first to be blessed under it. They will have in their resurrection complete Restitution to human perfection; for during their lifetime they had this testimony, that they pleased God. – Heb. 11:5.

The Ancient Worthies cannot, of course, enter into the New Covenant arrangement until they shall have been awakened from the sleep of death; therefore, as stated in the foregoing, the claims of Justice must be met before they are awakened. As soon as God will have made the New Covenant with them, these Ancient Worthies will form the nucleus of the earthly phase of the Kingdom. The earthly seed of Abraham will be added to, from all the different families, or nations, of the world.

Covenant relationship with God means perfection. Mankind will be *reaching* this perfection during the thousand years of Christ's Kingdom. But they will not *enter into it* until the end of the thousand years, when the Mediator will turn them over to God. At the close of that time, they will be privileged to enter into this Covenant [R5294 : page 247] relationship with Jehovah. Then they must stand or fall individually. As we read, at the end of the thousand years Satan shall be loosed for a little season; and all that *love unrighteousness* will be deceived by him. The remainder of mankind, having passed their test successfully, will be received into everlasting life. Then they will be in covenant relationship with

God – without a Mediator – just as Adam was in covenant relationship with his Creator before sin entered into the world.

THE CHURCH NOT UNDER THE NEW COVENANT

The Church is not under the New Covenant; therefore it is not proper to speak of the Church as being *blessed by* the New Covenant. But the Church receives a great blessing and privilege *in respect to* the New Covenant. If there were to be no New Covenant, there would be no need of a Mediator, or of the Better Sacrifices whereby it is to be instituted.

St. Paul states that God has made us able ministers of the New Covenant, thus indicating that we have something to do with the *preparation for it*. (2 Corinthians 3:6.) Unless there were Better Sacrifices, there would be *no basis* for that New Covenant. The sufferings which the Church undergo at this present time are a blessed privilege to us; for we are ministers of that New Covenant, in the sense that we are serving it by *training* for *future service* – after it shall have been inaugurated.

Suppose that there was a great building in process of erection. The men working upon the construction of that building might be said to be greatly benefited by that building – not that they would be benefited in the *future*, [R5294 : page 248] when the building is in use, but they are being benefited *during its construction*. So now the Church class receives certain blessings and privileges in connection with the New Covenant. Later, the entire world will be blessed thereby, in a very different way.

During this Gospel Age, God is dealing merely with the Church, not with the world. There is, however, some resemblance between the blessings of God now coming upon the Church and those coming upon the world by and by. *Then* the Lord will rewrite His Law in the hearts of mankind, as it was originally written in Adam's heart. At the end of the thousand years, all mankind will be

fleshly images of God, except those found unworthy and destroyed in the Second Death.

The Church are said to have new hearts *now* – right views of things. In the case of the Church, however, there is not a taking away of the stoniness of heart, but there is a new nature, a *new heart*. This, of course, has something to do with the flesh, since the flesh has something to do with the New Creature. The Law of God is recognized in the flesh, under the compulsion of the New Creature.

TYPICAL DISTRIBUTION OF BLESSINGS

The New Covenant is the blessing which the Church gives to mankind. It is God's Covenant, of course. God promised to arrange this matter; and He has so arranged that it shall go to the world through Christ the Head and the Church, His Body. It is by the Better Sacrifices that the giving to the world of this New Covenant blessing is possible.

If, then, the Church are to *give* these things, they must *first* have *had them*. No man can *give away* what he did not first *possess*. This thought that the New Covenant is a testament, or gift, of Christ to the world is made very prominent in the Scriptures. It is a gift in which the Church shares; for "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we be dead with Him, we shall live with Him"; and all things are ours because we are His.

These things are clearly set forth in the Old Testament types. St. Paul explains that Isaac was the heir of Abraham, and was typical of The Christ. Isaac did not receive his inheritance by a New Covenant, but by the primary, or original, Covenant. This Covenant was not the Law Covenant.

In Micah 4:1-4 we read that in the last days, "the mountain [Kingdom] of the House of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains [kingdoms], and many people shall flow unto it.

And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, and to the House of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths."

The succeeding verses of the chapter show the influence that will be exerted. The blessings and prosperity will then be with those who will be in harmony with God. But now it is different. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12.) They "shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My name's sake." (Matthew 5:11.) These things indicate that those faithful to God during this Age will have more hardship than have those who are unfaithful.

Many of the worldly, even the wicked of the world, have great prosperity at the present time. (The world thinks that we are making our lives miserable by the course which we pursue. But we are not doing this; on the contrary, we are enjoying ourselves and are having a good time. We have much advantage every way.) In the future, God tells us, it will be different. Then, whoever does wickedly shall suffer; and whoever does righteously shall receive blessing. When that time comes, the blessing of Restitution will be of God; and the only way to gain that blessing will be by coming into harmony with the new order of things in the Kingdom of Messiah.

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