

Lesson 10: The New Covenant

The Good News of the new covenant is an essential part of the gospel message. The apostle Paul says that the confusion of the old covenant ideas “gives birth to bondage.”^[1] For many years these old covenant ideas have held the ascendancy while we have mostly been unaware of what they are. That widespread “bondage” is one reason why so many youth rebel against what they think is the gospel.

Long before the “old covenant” came into being, the Lord originally made the promise that constitutes the new covenant. This “everlasting covenant” was made before the foundation of the world, containing the same promise as the new covenant. It is God’s promise to make His people “complete in every good work to do His will . . . through Jesus Christ.”^[2] That is a big project, because not only have all mankind sinned, but they have fallen into a slavery to sin and *ego*-centeredness so deep that the roots penetrate to the depths of our psyche. The new covenant is the news of how God solves this problem and provides full healing.

The New Covenant does not consist of a “bargain” that God makes in agreement with His people; it consists of the Lord’s out and out promises to bless them. Of course, they respond, but their response is not “works,” it is faith—believing and appreciating His promises, being moved by them.

The 1888 messengers saw a beautiful garden of truth where others saw only a barren desert:

The covenant and promise of God are one and the same. . . . God’s covenants with men can be nothing else than promises to them. . . .

After the Flood God made a “covenant” with every beast of the earth, and with every fowl; but the beasts and the birds did not promise anything in return. Genesis 9:9-16. They simply received the favor at the hand of God. That is all we can do—receive. God promises us everything that we need, and more than we can ask or think, as a gift. We give Him ourselves, that is, nothing. And He gives us Himself, that is, everything. That which makes all the trouble is that even when men are willing to recognize the Lord at all they want to make bargains with Him. They want it to be an equal, “mutual” affair—a transaction in which they can consider themselves on a par with God. . . .

“The gospel was as full and complete in the days of Abraham as it has ever been or ever will be. No addition to it or change in its provisions or conditions could possibly be made after God’s oath to Abraham. Nothing can be taken away from it as it thus existed, and not one thing can ever be required from any man more than what was required of Abraham.”^[3]

What could be more difficult than making dead people come alive? But that’s what the One specializes in who promises us the new covenant. He “gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did.”^[4] In other words, He already counts blessings as reality that you have not yet even begun to see. When we learn to believe, we too will “call those things which do not exist as though they did,” because the Word of God declares that these apparently impossible blessings *will be*.

God's promises are all good news, but there is one that is in a special way precious to anyone who likes to think seriously:

It's the fourth of the seven that the Lord made to Abraham as being the New Covenant promises; they are found in Genesis 12:2, 3:

"You shall be a blessing."

Not only, I will bless you, etc., etc., so you will be enriched.

Better still, you yourself will be a blessing—no matter where you go in this dark world.

You will be a pipe through which will flow the "water of life" to soul-thirsty people.

You will be an oven with freshly baked "bread of life" for soul-starved people.

You will be the "new song" that only the 144,000 can learn and sing (cf. Rev. 14:3). It will cheer their hearts and save their souls.

The very fact that you are following "the Lamb wherever He goes" will show people the way for them to go; and some will choose to go because of you.

Your daily speech will be different and people will notice it; their cursing will die on their lips as they think about how you talk. In your mouth will be found no "guile" (the GNB says "they have never been known to tell lies," vs. 5).

Your face will be like Moses' face when it shone (Ex. 34:29); "the Father's name [will be] written on [your] forehead."

You will never want to fall away, or to apostatize, and all Satan's efforts to unsettle you and cause you to fall will be defeated, for because of your faith in the New Covenant promises, you will be "sealed." No longer will you envy the wicked their "fun."

You will deserve, by the grace of Christ, to have a palm branch in your hands.

Come to what the Lord has created you for—He has redeemed you, too. Come today.

^[1] Galatians 4:4.

^[2] Hebrews 13:20, 21; Genesis 17:7; Revelation 13:8.

^[3] Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings*, pp. 71-73.

^[4] Romans 4:13, 14, 16-18.