

THOUGHTS ON THE NEW COVENANT IN CHRIST

By
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God is a God of covenants. The Bible contains many references to covenants, and the predominance of these is related to God's statements concerning His relationship with His covenant people Israel. The salient feature of all covenants is the binding aspect of an agreement between two parties, whereby there exists the basic condition, "*if you will, then I will*". In other words, reciprocity between the two parties of the covenant is the norm, and performance is expected and required by the agreement. Such a covenant is, then, what we today would call a contract. Any covenant with an *if/then* provision is a *conditional covenant*, and most covenants in the Bible, as in today's world, are of this type.

A unilateral covenant is where one party binds himself to perform a promise, regardless of the behavior of the recipient of the promise. This is called an *unconditional covenant*, and there are not many of this type. Of God's covenants, the covenant He made with David is an example [See II Sam.7:11b-16.]. Some consider the Abramic Covenant unconditional, and in one sense it may be, because of its accomplishment by God in the face of all of Israel's disobedience to Him. However, the behavior of Israel certainly did affect its outworking [the 40 years of wandering due to Israel's refusal to obey God's command for them to enter the promised land, for example (Numbers, chapter 14)].

In my opinion, God's covenant with Abram [Abraham] is the 'parent' covenant to the Covenant of Law, the Palestinian Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant, because all of those were in God's plan for fulfillment of the promise of blessing to all the families of the earth [i.e., salvation in Christ] contained in the Abramic Covenant [Gen.12:3, 18:18, 22:18, Rom.4:11-12, Gal.3:16-18, &c.]. I include the Palestinian [land for nation Israel (Gen.15:18-21)] as part of the outworking of the Abramic Covenant, just as I do the Covenant of Law [not to minimize the importance of any covenant in its own right].

God, being merciful, gracious, longsuffering, and full of goodness (grace) and truth [Exod.34:6-7, John 1:14], has a great desire that all persons come to the knowledge of the truth, that they may be saved from their sins and from the wrath to come. He, therefore, has much to say about His New

Covenant. The New Testament, of course, is named for the New Covenant in Christ. Both O.T. and N.T. makes mention of and describes the New Covenant, and for a very valid reason: it is the expression and manifestation of God's intended grace and mercy for fallen mankind. The most well-known reference from the O.T. is found in Jer.31:31-34, and the writer of Hebrews quotes this, interpretively, in Heb.8:8-12. The most important part of the description of the New Covenant is "I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts". In Ezekiel this is 'a new heart and a new spirit'. Let us examine the New Covenant now, beginning with the Old Testament references.

Jeremiah 31:31-34: First we should observe that it is the determined will of God to bring salvation to the remnant of the nation of Israel, and to the Gentiles who will come to Him, as well. God said through Isaiah *"I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people [Israel], as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house."* (Isa.42:6-7). This is a general declaration that supports Gen.12:3, 18:18, and 22:18 [promise of blessing to all nations through the Seed of Abraham]. Now in Jer.31, God specifically promises a new covenant to the remnant of Israel after they have been gathered from the nations of the world where He scattered them for their disobedience (See Ezek.36:24-28.). This new covenant will not be like Israel's wrong perception of God's covenant at Sinai which they perverted to Judaism (v.32), but this covenant will be according to God. *He will put His law **in their minds** and write it **on their hearts*** (v.33), [*"and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more"* (Heb.8:12 interpretation of Jer.31:34b)] All of the remnant of Israel will know God then (v.34), they will see Christ Jesus for who He is, their Messiah [Deliverer, Savior] and they will be converted through repentance and belief (Zech.12:10, 13:1). Ezek.11:16-20 is very descriptive of the last days when God will deliver Israel from her sins. Verse 16—a little holy place for them where He has scattered them; verse 17—He will gather them and give them the land of Israel; verse 18—they will remove the detestable things from the land; verse 19—*"I will give them one heart [for Himself] and I will put a new spirit within them..."*; verse 20—*"that they may walk in my statutes and keep my judgment and do them; and they shall be My people and I will be their God."*

In Ezek.18:30b-32 we see the road to true conversion: “**Repent and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit, for why should you die...**” “... **Therefore turn and live!**”

In Ezek.36:24-28, God further developed the meaning of His new covenant, in that in v.27 the new spirit is said to be ‘My Spirit’ that is put ‘within you’. This is certainly salvation on an even footing with New Testament salvation of grace by faith, and one especially notes that it is to the intent of ‘walking in God’s statutes and keeping His judgments’. When one receives Jesus as Lord and Savior, he is asked to do the same thing (See John 14:15 and I John 5:2-3.). *It would appear that at this point we are very near the heart of the New Covenant. All persons who are saved by God’s grace through faith are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ Jesus [the Truth] (Rom.8:29); and He perfectly fulfilled the perfect law of God during His First Advent ministry in two ways: 1. He fulfilled its righteous requirements in His daily walk; and, 2. He totally satisfied its just demands for the punishment of transgressions [sins] when He died for all sin on the cross. **It is in this way that the Father can be “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”(Rom.3:26). [As a point of legal justice]**, God bases His acceptance or His rejection of a person into His presence and fellowship on the keeping of His law, since righteousness and unrighteousness are perfectly defined by God’s perfect moral law. Only Christ Jesus can meet such a standard by His own merit. Thus, the only way for a saved sinner to be justified before the Father is by having the perfect righteousness of Christ Jesus imputed to him by faith, for we are ‘accepted in the Beloved’ (Eph.1:6). This is God’s grace!*

*There is another aspect of our righteousness as Christians. As followers of Christ by faith, we may now have the righteous requirements of the law fulfilled in us as we live by the Spirit (Rom.8:3-4). In fact, this must occur in the Christian’s life, “for without holiness, no one will see the Lord.” (Heb.12:14). **Grace is the means and the power which conforms us to God’s moral law, since we fulfill all the moral law by love (Gal.5:14, Rom.13:8-10, Matt. 22:35-40, Gal.5:6).** See quote below from D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones.*

“The whole purpose of grace, in a sense, is just to enable us to keep the law. Let me put it in this way. The trouble with us is that we so often have a wrong view of holiness at this point. There is nothing more fatal

than to regard holiness and sanctification as experiences to be received. No; holiness means being righteous, **and being righteous means keeping the law**. Therefore, if your so-called grace (which you say you have received) does not make [or inspire and enable]* you [to]* keep the law, you have not received grace. You may have received a psychological experience, but you have never received the grace of God. What is grace? It is that marvelous gift of God which, having delivered man from the curse of the law, enables him to keep it and to be righteous as Christ was righteous, for He kept the law perfectly. Grace is that which brings me to love God; and if I love God, I long to keep His commandments. 'He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them,' Christ said, 'it is he that loveth Me.'

We must never separate these two things. Grace is not sentimental; holiness is not an experience. We must have this new mind and disposition which leads us to love the law and to desire to keep it; and by his power He enables us to fulfill the law.”

* *Emphasis added. Bracketed words added by this present writer.*

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By D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

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We have been seeing that the O.T. version of the New Covenant involves **turning to God from sin**, and therefore turning away from sin [**repentance**], *getting a new heart* [**regeneration**] *and a new spirit* [*God's Spirit*] *and a renewed mind* [*the mind of Christ*], *in which God's law is written* [**regeneration**], *and being made clean* [**justification and sanctification**] (See Ezek.36:25-27 and Zech.12:10, and compare to Titus3:5-8.).

Being made clean also pertains to acceptable righteousness, for the Lord Jesus used this same terminology ['clean'] in John 13:10 and 15:3 pertaining to His apostles' spiritual condition. His comments were made immediately after He instituted the Lord's Supper as a memorial to His sacrificial death. Without any doubt, the Lord had the salvation and justification of His

apostles in mind when He said they were clean. Being in Christ truly *clothes us in His righteousness* [and that is imputed or ‘forensic’ righteousness (righteousness as a judgment from the Father *because of Christ*)], but we are to live in *acceptable* righteousness of our own obtained through sanctification by the Spirit as we walk in this body of flesh (I Pet.1:15-16). By the same logic and analogy of faith, one can be sure that God did not forget about justice when he had His prophets speak of mercy regarding the cleansing and salvation of the remnant of the Jews. God knew full well that the remnant of Israel will repent and believe in His Christ when they see the One whom they pierced [was crucified by their ancestors] (Zech.12:10-14). I have absolutely no doubt that their ‘mourning’ indicates repentance and belief, and that true faith will be born in their hearts when their spiritual blindness is healed. Thus, *God will be both just and the Justifier of those who have faith in Jesus* (Rom.3:25-26).

Is this new covenant spoken of and described by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah the same as the New Covenant in the blood of Christ which is the reason for the name ‘New Testament’? There is no room for doubt; it is the same. Then, if the new covenant of Jer.31 is simply the fulfillment of God’s gracious promise to redeem the remnant of Israel, what of His promise to bless all the nations through Abraham’s Seed? It becomes apparent, does it not, that with the sacrificial shedding of the blood of the Christ and the carrying of the Gospel to the Gentiles, that God kept His promise seen in Isa.42:6-7. **Indeed, Christ Jesus was made ‘a covenant to the people [Israel] and a light to the Gentiles’**. Many have accepted [and will yet accept] that Covenant and many have seen [and will yet see] that Light and believe on Him in repentance.

The New Covenant in Christ

The new Covenant in the blood of Christ Jesus is, as we have said above, **the fulfillment of an ancient promise made to Abraham**, the father of all who live by faith (Rom.4:11-12). In his book, *The gospel according to Matthew*, p. 299, G. Campbell Morgan waxes eloquent regarding the covenant in Christ; “Jesus was at the Passover board, and He took the Passover bread, and the cup of *the old economy of anticipation**; but as His hand touched the Passover bread, He made all things new; as He took hold upon the Passover cup, He made it flush with a new dawn, a new age, a new dispensation...In the simplicity of this picture we see the establishment of

the Christian feast...The old Passover feast was the feast of the exodus, and was a feast of hope. The new is a feast of the exodus, *but the exodus that He has accomplished...the certainty of an already achieved victory.*” Thus, Paul could state confidently, in 2 Cor.5:7, “**For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.**” He fully understood the new covenant in Christ to be the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham. It was a fulfillment, not a change. The Lord Jesus, in the institution of the memorial to his sacrifice for sin, was the ‘Householder’ of Matt.13:52, bringing out of his treasure ‘things new and old’. He was making the old promise a new reality. *Emphasis added.

How, then, is the covenant in Christ new? One thing we can say is that *new* is a ‘flag’ for distinguishing things to come from past things. God said in Isa.42:9 that “*Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.*”

Looking back over biblical history to the time of Abraham, the promise of grace (in Gen.12:3) becomes apparent from our perspective. To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendants, however, the promise undoubtedly seemed rather obscure. Only those who lived by faith, being guided by God’s Spirit, could have perceived any of the significance of such a promise, and the vast majority of them did not live by faith. God sent His prophets to give them added light, but sin blinded most. Even in the fullness of time, when Jesus came, only a relative few believed and celebrated, praising God for His salvation. Then, when Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected from the grave, grace was finally made manifest, and many more believed. So the first great *new* thing that God did was to show His grace and love for mankind in a public and dramatic fashion.

The coming of the Holy Spirit to empower and direct the Church certainly qualifies as a powerful *new* thing being instituted as the Church was introduced to the world. The great things recorded in the book of Acts certainly made a large impact on world history, and these resulted from the New Covenant. For many centuries the effects of the New Covenant have made themselves felt in society as a whole, and although the witness of professed Christendom now grows weaker due to increasing apostasy, one might expect the witness of the faithful Church to strengthen with increasing Satanic opposition and persecution [as with the early Church (Acts 8:3&4ff)] as we near the end of the age.

From a theological perspective the New Covenant is new in several ways, and the Hebrew letter is a good platform for considering these. The writer of Hebrews obviously had a very good understanding of the ceremonial law and the priestly service under the Sinaitic covenant [actually, the priests taught and administered the law.]. Hebrews begins, however, by establishing the superiority of God the Son, Jesus, over the angels (Heb.1:4) and over Moses (Heb.3:1-6). God, in times past, communicated by His prophets, but His ultimate word to mankind came by the Son, who is the Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb.12:22-24).

First of all, the New Covenant offered *a better sacrifice*, a once-for-all sacrifice that will never have to be repeated (Heb.1:3b, 9:12, 10:10, 10:14). Secondly, the New Covenant has *a better priesthood*, because Jesus, the Mediator of this covenant, is a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek who is immortal (Heb.7:8, 16, Psa.110:4). ***This is new***, for the Aaronic priesthood was limited by age or death, and those earthly priests offered animal sacrifices that could not take away sins, but provided only a temporary covering for them until Christ came (Heb.9:6-10, Heb.9:11-15). So the blessing of salvation [which we may confidently label the Covenant of Grace], although promised to Abraham and implied even to Adam (Gen.3:15) was not ‘fleshed out’ as a covenant until the New Covenant was promised in the latter years of Israel’s biblical history prior to the breakup of the southern kingdom of Judah around 586 B.C. [See above discussion on Ezek., Jer., Zech., etc.]. Of course, we see many intimate glimpses of Christ Jesus and descriptions of His suffering and future glory in the Old Testament, particularly in Isaiah and Psalms.

Under old covenant law, Aaron [or any high priest after him] had very limited access to God’s Presence [mercy seat behind the veil of the tabernacle or temple], and that access was once per year on the Day of Atonement (Lev.16). Under the New Covenant, however, the individual worshiper now has *unlimited access to the actual throne of grace in heaven* because Christ, our Perfect Sacrifice and High Priest has purchased that privilege for us who are in Him by faith (Heb.4:16, 6:18b-20, 10:19-20). The New Covenant presents the worshiper to the True Mercy Seat in heaven in a ***‘new and living way’*** [that is, through Christ], with no need of an earthly priest to intercede for us, and this introduces another new aspect of this covenant.

Christ Jesus, as High Priest forever over His own sacrifice, *‘is able to save to the uttermost those who come to the Father through Him, **since He***

always lives to make intercession for them. This point is related to the one in the paragraph above, but with a significant additional revelation: ***continuous intercession.*** Not only does the New Covenant provide initial sanctification and justification for the person of faith, but the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice is continuous along with His Priesthood, and He provides *continuous intercession and advocacy* [defends the person who is in Him against the accusations of Satan that come if that one sins] (See Heb.7:24-25, I John 2:1-2.). Our Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous, responds to the saint's plea for forgiveness (I John 1:7-10) by intercession, thus protecting the standing, before the Father's bar of justice, of the one who pleads, making it consistent with the Father's just government [**by propitiation**] to pardon and bless that person. The sufficiency of the body and blood of Jesus is complete, but a Christian, when he sins, still needs the intercessory service of the great High Priest *who lives always to make intercession for us.*

This priestly service is, by no means, a license to sin. On the contrary, it is a means for the person of faith in God through Christ to participate in continuing sanctification by obeying the Holy Spirit of God who indwells him. [Remember that the one who loves God also obeys His commandment and walks in His ways.] Nevertheless, the most dedicated Christian will sometimes become defiled by the world and will need his spiritual 'feet washed'. However, he will never practice a habitual lifestyle of sin (I John 3:9-10), because he is clean by the 'washing of water by the word' (Eph.5:25b-27, John 15:3) and God's Seed [Holy Spirit] remains in him (1 John 3:9). For a Christian to live a continuous carnal lifestyle goes against these scriptures just mentioned. There are those who have a mental knowledge of Christ but have never come to heartfelt, legitimate salvation [regeneration through belief and repentance]. According to Jude 3-4, such persons are apostates and have never received salvation.

One needs to realize that the initial acts of repentance and confession of faith are only the beginning of one's new life in Christ [as the conception and birth of a baby is the beginning of physical life], not its accomplish end. The end comes after a life lived for God with the redemption of the purchased possession (Eph.1:14, I Pet.1:3-7). Those who truly believe in God through Christ have been given a living hope and a command to love and obey; God has said 'be holy, for I am holy', and we have His Spirit and His word to guide us. One day our redemption will be complete and we will be glorified at Christ's return. THEN we will see the completion of our

salvation [or, we will depart this life to be with Him in heaven awaiting His return to earth (Rev.19:11-16), our redemption being consummated.].

The Bible's revelation regarding the priestly function of our High Priest should not seem strange to us if we realize that the Aaronic priestly service and all that it involved was based upon the true items and service in heaven (Exod.25:40, Heb.8:5-6). God is always the same [completely holy, righteous, single-minded, and just], and He never is tolerant of sin. Nevertheless, God is merciful, gracious, longsuffering, full of goodness and truth, and He forgives sins and transgressions for thousands who love Him and call upon His name. God looks upon the heart. He knows the heart of every person, and He has provided the only way through our High Priest to maintain our forgiven status and fellowship with Him as His faithful children. Sin should become totally revolting, reprehensible, frightening, and hideous to the child of God, but sadly, we are prone to lapses where we step out of the light and we need Christ's advocacy before the Father to keep us acceptable to Him as we plead the blood of Jesus. ***We need to keep Heb. 7:24-25 and I John 2:1-2 firmly in mind to understand the Lord's priestly service on our behalf.***

The presence of an intercessor (priest) and the fact of intercession (blood atonement) are common to the O.T. and N.T. alike, ***but the thing that is new in this is that the intercession of our great High Priest is completely effective and it is continuous, without any interruption, because of His perfect sacrifice***. By contrast, the intercession of the earthly priests functioning under the Sinaitic covenant arranged only for a temporary covering of any sin and it was performed only at designated intervals. However, for the O.T. faithful, it was sufficient until the sacrifice of Christ Jesus, the actual Lamb of God. (See Heb.9:15.) I, for one, thank God for the continuous intercession of Christ Jesus on my behalf.

"I need Thee every hour, Most Holy One;

O make me Thine indeed, Thou blessed Son."

Annie S. Hawes

All persons who believe in God and have walked in faith before Him, believing the promise of a savior, regardless of the time in which they have lived, are under the New Covenant in Christ Jesus, for God has only one plan of salvation for all persons. The cross of Christ is the fulfillment of

promise and the focal point of God's manifestation of His grace and becomes the decision crisis and apex of all human experience.

God's New Covenant Demands

Some persons teach and preach an 'easy-believism, non-lordship salvation'. Their 'gospel' is an incomplete gospel that requires only that a person 'accept' Jesus [with no repentance involved] guaranteeing eternal security for such believers. The Bible declares "for without holiness [sanctification], no one will see the Lord." (Heb.12:14), and those who live in the works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal.5:19-21). The entire Bible teaches the pursuit of holiness for the child of God, *and this is not optional*. The New Covenant is not so different or changed that it changes the character and mind of God. God cannot be mocked (Gal.6:7-8). God's desire is to be merciful to every person, but if His mercy is scorned, His justice will prevail (**See Deut.7:9-10.**) *One cannot escape eternal condemnation if he lives a life of sin without repentance and regeneration and sanctification, regardless of any so-called act of faith sometime in his past experience. Such a life demonstrates an unregenerate heart. Sadly, he has embraced a false salvation and an empty security.* **See Ezek.18:20, Gal.5:19-21, 6:7-8, I John 3:4-10 and others.**

As stated above, the New Covenant is not radically different from the O.T. redemptive covenants. *Regarding its objectives* [saving those of faith from sin and the wrath of God to come upon those who reject God], *it is not different at all*. The real differences that pertain to the New Covenant have been pointed out above, but to briefly remind us, the major differences are *a better Sacrifice and a better Mediator* [These are means, not objectives].

Under the O.T. economy, a person who would belong to God had to believe, love, and obey God. It was said of Abraham that he believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness (Gen.15:6) these declarations pertaining to Abraham that, in essence and in truth, Abraham was under the New Covenant because he was of faith and he lived in obedience to God. Therefore Abraham is called our father (Rom.4:11-16). Not only did Abraham come under the New Covenant, but so did all the O.T. saints who died in faith (Gal.4:4-5 and Heb.9:15). The references just given make it plain that all of God's redemptive covenants were designed for the one purpose of reconciling fallen man to Himself, and this also includes God's

purpose in the Sinaitic Covenant (Law), for Jesus said that the real heart of the law is ***justice, mercy, and faith*** (Matt.23:23). The fact that the Israelites perverted the covenant made at Sinai to Judaism [a works religion] did not change God's purpose in it, as Matt.23:23 plainly shows. There are those who have perverted the New Covenant in the body and blood of Christ Jesus to a warped and stunted idea of grace that is without repentance or obedience [forcing it to stand alone and independent of all of God's former gracious covenants], but this perverted gospel does not change God's requirements for His great salvation. It does, tragically, confuse and mislead many who so desperately need God's saving grace.

Certainly, we cannot earn salvation by works, and such is not being suggested here. However, there needs to be a realization of what sin is [living life for self and not for God in total disobedience to Him]. Also, an act of human will to turn from such a life to a new life in God is essential [***“Repent and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. Cast away from you all of the transgressions you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die...therefore turn and live!” (Ezek.18:30-32). This is true conversion.*]** Romans 10:9-10 states clearly the initial requirements for salvation. Belief must be at the heart level, and that belief is ‘unto righteousness’. When the people of Jerusalem experienced the convicting power of the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost, many repented and were saved (Acts 2:36-38, 41).

There are divine purposes for God's salvation other than saving us from eternal hell. We are ***saved from sin*** and its crippling effects on our lives. We must die to sin in order to live to God (Rom.6:1-23). Also, often we hear Eph.2:8 and 9 quoted, but seldom do we hear Eph.2:10. Nor do we often hear Titus 2:11-14. Yet, these and other Scriptures strongly teach good works for the saints of God. Why are so many so afraid to mention good works in the same breath with salvation? The Spirit of God had no such aversion, but rather stressed the necessity for works that prove faith.

The New Covenant demands not only good works, but it requires steadfastness of faith. The writer of Hebrews stated, “For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.” (Heb.3:14). The Lord taught steadfastness also (See all His letters to the churches of Asia in Rev.2 & 3.). Paul taught that we must die to self and sin to live to God (Rom.6-8) and said people who live in sin will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal.5:19-21). Also, he advised the Philippian

Christians to ‘work out your own salvation in fear and trembling’ (Phil.3:12-13, 16). The Apostle Peter admonished believers to make sure of their salvation by their continuing sanctification in seeking to develop Christian virtues such as faith, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, kindness, and love (2 Pet.1:5-10). “Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.” (Heb.10:35-36, Eph.6:13-18).

From these teachings, it is clear that a believer’s progressive (or continuing) sanctification is part of God’s process of salvation in the sense of *‘I am being saved’*, because *I was saved when I submitted to God in repentance and confession of faith in Christ*. Eph.1:13-14 tells us that [***when Christ commits Himself to a person***] *the saved one is sealed by the Holy Spirit until redemption at Christ’s return, [I will be saved (See I Pet.1;3-5)]*. There is a qualifier for this essential sealing, however. Christ Jesus does not entrust Himself to the person of intellectual assent only (John 2:23-25), but only to those who believe in their hearts and confess Him as Lord (Rom.10:9-10), to those who show evidence of saving faith by continually remaining in His word (John 8:30-32).

Just as salvation is both an event and a process, so are God’s acts of sanctification. The original sanctification of a person is his setting apart as God’s possession and for his purpose (See Heb.10:10, 14 and I Cor.12:13.). This has been called positional sanctification. Progressive or continuing sanctification is the inevitable result of living by faith, meditating on the word of God, and obeying God’s Holy Spirit. It is required of every child of God who is born of his Spirit [No scriptural reference is required, because the entire Bible teaches this truth.]. Persons of faith before and since the cross of Christ have been required to live by faith in obedience to the light that God has given them. The term ‘OBEDIENCE OF FAITH’ is used to describe these requirements, and it is essential to recognize that the walk of faith is impossible without loving God with all of one’s heart, soul, mind and strength and loving one’s neighbor as one’s self (See Rom.1:5-6, 16:25-27.). Interestingly, the Apostle Paul began and ended his wonderful letter to the church at Rome with references to the obedience of the faith of Christ.

Summary Statement on the New Covenant

The term ‘New Covenant’ does not mean that the covenant in Christ is different from the ‘Old Covenant’ in its intent for mankind, since God’s

grace and mercy were intended by both, and Christ was in what is called the old covenant by promise [The people of faith B.C. were looking to the future coming of Messiah and His sacrifice, while we of faith in A.D. look back to His finished work on the cross.]. It does mean that God made some very special provisions in order to show His grace and mercy to the mass of humankind, and to fulfill His promise of grace to the whole world (Titus 2:11, 3:4) through Abraham's Seed. These provisions did not indicate any change in God's plans, but simply represent the outworking of them in His own time and will. As discussed above, there are new and better provisions in the New Covenant that the Old Covenant could not deliver [a better Sacrifice (Christ), a better Mediator and High Priest (Christ), etc.], since *the O.T. version of the covenant was simply a work in progress, whereas the N.T. version presents completion and fulfillment*. Thus, Jesus could call out from the cross, "IT IS FINISHED".

The greatest feature that the New Covenant [both O.T. and N.T. Scriptures make this very clear] is its explicit language concerning its requirement for a new heart and a new spirit [conversion by repentance and regeneration]. Although Moses stressed this truth in terms of love for God and obedience to Him, the Israelites did not realize it, nor did they claim God's promise by faith (Rom.9:31-32). It required the power and the offense of the cross of Christ to make clear that God desires and demands the newness of the spirit of the law [His Spirit] and not the oldness of the letter [works of the law by the strength of the flesh] (Rom.7:6). "Not by might, nor by power [of man], but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (Zech.4:6).

We have now discussed the fulfillment of the O.T. promise in Christ. In a very real way, this covenant becomes new to each person who realizes and claims the promise for himself (Please read Matt.13:52, Luke 1:67-79 and II Pet.1:19.). When one understands that the New Covenant in Christ is the culmination and complete fulfillment of all of God's redemptive covenants and His work for the spiritual benefit and salvation of lost mankind, then the unity and integrity of God and His revealed will and purpose [the Bible] become evident. There is no legitimacy in any claim that the New Covenant is separate from the ancient covenant promise of grace to Abraham, and the theologians who love to split and subdivide and force God's word to fit their own scheming models should realize that they 'twist it to their own destruction' and to the destruction of those whom they deceive (II Pet.3:14-18). The dividers of the word major upon what should be minor considerations of biblical topics [dispensations and the like], and, in doing

so, their machinations, sadly, have affected [and often distorted] major doctrinal teachings [salvation, repentance, sanctification, justification, law, grace, faith] for multitudes of sincere but gullible souls who consider themselves to be fundamental Bible believers. The Righteous Judge will settle such issues, and not too late for many, we pray.

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