

"The New Covenant"

Did you know that our relationship with God is part of a new covenant? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. This is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." And today, we're exploring the new covenant that we have in Christ. Stay with us.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way. And we're here to search God's word for the Lord's will. God gave us word to reveal His promises and to instruct us in what He wants from us. God wants us to enter into a relationship with Him that will last forever. God made a covenant through the blood of Christ, a covenant that is open to all who will come to Him. And we hope that you'll come to the Lord. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to hear from you and be part of your life each week.

Through the centuries the Lord God has maintained His relationship with His people through covenants. Sometimes God's covenants were one-sided, where God made promises to His people without thought of their response. For instance, the Lord God told Noah in Genesis 9:12 to 15, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, (to) for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh."

Other covenants, however, were two-sided. Now covenants are legal, binding, and permanent relationships. They are far more than contracts. Marriage, for instance, is called a covenant in Malachi 2 verse 14. Now God as a ruler made just such a covenant with Israel at Sinai. The New Testament calls this covenant at Sinai the old or first covenant. But God promised to bless His people to care for His people, and Israel promised to love and to serve Him exclusively. Now today God invites you to enter into a new covenant with Him in Christ.

Now if you want to know more about this new covenant, we offer the information on this program free. If you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Corinthians 11:23 to 26, and examine the new covenant.

Our reading today comes from 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verses 23 to 26 and discuss the new covenant that we observe when we partake of the Lord's supper.

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

That's an important reading from the word of God. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that we can remember each Lord's day the Lord's supper. That is the eating of the bread and the drinking of the fruit of the vine. We pray that we'll remember the body and blood each Lord's day and that we will love You for what You have done for us. And serve You always. In Jesus name, Amen.

When you open your Bible to the table of contents, you'll notice that there are two testaments. The Old Testament has 39 books and the New Testament has 27. The word "testament" usually brings to mind a last will and testament, but the word "testament" as it is used to refer to sections of the Bible is better translated as "covenant." The Old Testament contains God's covenant uniquely made with Israel, while the New Testament contains God's covenant with all men through Christ.

Now some people view what the Old Testament says to Christians in extreme ways. First, some think the Old Testament binds every one of its laws on Christians with as much force as the New Testament; and then there's the second, the second in that group, some say that we have no practical need for the Old Testament at all. Well the truth is that while God gave the covenant laws of the Old Testament specifically to Israel, God gave Christians the Old Testament for our learning and instruction. While God does not expect Christians to obey the laws that He gave to Israel, there are inspired truths and principles in the Old Testament that help us to draw near to God.

God gave the Law of Moses in the form of a covenant that a Ruler would establish with His people. The Law detailed God's promises and Israel's obligations. The individual laws are details of the covenant, rules that govern the relationship. Now this Law spoke to those who were in the covenant and under the law of the covenant. Romans 3:19 says, "Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law." Specifically, the Old Testament was addressed only to the nation of Israel or the Jews. The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus, chapter 20. The first two verses clearly show the Ten Commandments, in Deuteronomy 5, were given specifically to Israel. "And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

Now in Exodus 34:27 to 28 the LORD said to Moses, "Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments." And Moses said in Deuteronomy 4 and verse 13, "And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone." Again, in Deuteronomy 9:11 Moses said, "And at the end of forty days and forty nights the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant." The Ten Commandments were certainly part of the covenant God made with Israel on Sinai. According to Deuteronomy 5 and verse 3 the Lord's covenant with Israel began with those at Mt. Sinai and was not binding earlier than that.

Sadly, Israel didn't remain faithful to the Lord. They didn't continue in the covenant with God. Consequently, the Lord made promised in Jeremiah 31:31 to 34: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant (He says) that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

The book of Hebrews quotes Jeremiah 31 and identifies the new covenant as the better covenant made by Jesus Christ. Hebrews 8:6 to 7 says, "But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better

promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second." Now since Israel broke the first covenant, as Jeremiah said, there was a need for a second covenant, a new covenant that was different from the first. Hebrews 8 and verse 13 says, "In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away." God determined to make a new covenant with His people, a covenant established by the blood of Jesus Christ. Now this covenant was for all people, Jew and Gentile alike.

Unlike the first covenant, all the people in the new covenant would know the Lord. People came under the first covenant by being born as an Israelite; and they had to be taught from birth to know the Lord. But the new covenant is not that way; people first learn about the Lord and then by faith choose to follow the Lord. The Lord Jesus said in John 6:44 to 45 that, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me." Now, this is why preaching always preceded baptism in the New Testament. People first had to believe the truth before they could be united with Christ in baptism.

Paul asked in Galatians 3:19, "What, then, was the purpose of the law? (well) It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come." In the following verses Paul described the Law as a schoolmaster or guardian that watched over the Jewish people until faith in Christ was to come. Verse 24 says, "So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now faith has come, and we're no longer under the supervision of the law." Just as children need a guardian when they are young, so Israel needed the Law; but when a child grows up, he no longer needs a guardian. When faith in Christ came, Israel no longer needed the supervision of the Law. They had Christ!

The Old Testament Law did not offer a complete salvation from sins. Hebrews 10 and verse 1 reveals that the "law is only a shadow of the good things that are to come." Paul told the Jews in Antioch in Acts 13:38 to 39, "Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man (that is Christ) forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses." Hebrews 10 and verse 4 says, "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." It was necessary for Jesus to die on the cross to take away our sins.

Romans 10 and verse 4 says "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." Now in Christ there is something better than the Law. Paul explained in Ephesians 2:13 to 16, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off (you Gentiles) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, (between Jew and Gentile) and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility." Now as long as the Law was in force, there would be hostility between Jew and Gentile, but now in Christ's new covenant, there is peace.

Paul wrote in Romans 7:4 to 6, "Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code."

Now we should not think that because we do not live under the covenant found in the Old Testament that the Old Testament has no value. The Old Testament is God's Word and valuable to us as Christians. Paul wrote in Romans 15 verse 4, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Now you can see Paul saw the great value of the Old Testament. On another occasion Paul recalled a number of events as Israel wandered in the wilderness in 1 Corinthians 10 verse 11 and he said this, "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come." We must know these important lessons from God are real, by studying the Old Testament.

The Old Testament contains God's promise to redeem mankind by sending the Messiah into the world. Peter said about the death of Jesus in Acts 3:18, "this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer." Now these prophecies provide a foundation for our faith in Christ. And only God could predict the future, and the Old Testament contains these faith-building predictions. We know Christ to be the Messiah because He alone fulfills these prophecies of His birth, His life, His death, and the prophecies of His resurrection.

Now many important truths revealed in the New Testament are based upon events recorded in the Old Testament. Without a knowledge of the Old Testament we couldn't understand many things written in the New Testament. When Jesus speaks of "Solomon in all his glory," we know that He is speaking, what He's speaking about because His glory is described in passages like 1 Kings, chapter ten. When Jesus said, "Remember Lot's wife," in Luke 17:32, we wouldn't understand unless we had read in Genesis 19 how God turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt when she disobeyed the Lord. Were it not for Genesis chapters 1 and 2, we would not know the details of the creation; and were it not for chapter three, we would not know about Adam and Eve's sin.

While the laws of the Old Testament, and details of the covenant, are now obsolete, that doesn't mean the truths of the Old Testament are any less true. We must surely believe many principles taught in the Old Testament such as the infinite nature of God, the creation of the universe, the accountability of man to God, and the prophecies of the Messiah, that is the Christ. We need the Old Testament to help us understand the New.

Now why is this important? Because we must handle God's Word correctly. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." Now we today live under the new covenant, not the old. We draw near to God through the blood of Christ keeping His commandments not through keeping the Law of Moses.

Let's keep this in mind. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful for Your love and we're thankful for the covenant that we have that we ratified by the blood of Jesus. And Father we're thankful that we can live in this new covenant and be Your children. And Father help us to be obedient to Your will that we might show You our love. In Jesus name, Amen.

Each Lord's day Christians take the Lord's supper remembering how Jesus shed His blood to make our covenant with God. Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 11:23 to 26, "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

When we become Christians, we enter a covenant relationship with God through the blood of Christ. The church is His bride. God's promise in Christ is this: "For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." Hebrews 8:12. The Lord has made great promises to us in Christ, and we're obligated to serve and to love Him. We no longer belong to ourselves but we belong to Him. We're redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus. And redemption touches our thoughts, our decisions, our morals, and every aspect of our lives. It's our greatest treasure and blessing to be in a covenant with God.

Now to enter the new covenant with Christ, we must place our trust in Christ. We must turn from sin in repentance and follow in His steps by living righteous lives. To become a Christian we must confess Jesus as the Christ and be united with Him in baptism. We're baptized into Christ and into His death. According to Romans 6:3-7 we are crucified and raised with Him in baptism, so that our body of sin might be done away with.

We hope that today's study about the new covenant has stirred your heart. We offer a free printed copy of this message. And if you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org.

Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now there's a schedule of our programs and a map of churches that are in your area at www.searchtv.org. Now you can watch SEARCH on YouTube! We ask that you subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry", that's one word, and then like the programs. That helps us spread it. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. And there are three different ones. Now if you get a hold of us, don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that you show God your love by worshiping at church. I know that some of you because of your health many of you are shut in and get around, you can't go to church the way you use to. But if you can go church. We do ask that you show your love by attending worship at church. I tell you, you need a church family. You need people around you to support you and help you. If you can attend, don't neglect worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ that's near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We want you to be a part of a family that loves the Lord and loves the truth, so you can be a part of their lives. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. As always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.