

Adult Sunday School Class

Objective: Review and contrast the old and new covenants. An agreement made perfect!

Opening Prayer: Thank you Father, we pause now to acknowledge your presence..... I thank you that you always hear me. That you never leave me or forsake me and that you are an ever present help. I ask for a special anointing on this lesson plan and the time we will spend together. Bless both speaker and listener. Open our hearts to receive a fresh revelation from your Spirit. I bind forces that would hinder and welcome the Holy Spirit as our teacher today. In Jesus name!

Introduction: I would like to change the format we normally follow for this session. Instead of covering one chapter this week we will cover 3. Also, we will begin with a high level review of our understanding of the old covenant prior to reading the scriptures for this session.

Q – What does the word covenant mean? - An agreement, usually formal, solemn, and binding between two or more persons to do or NOT do something specific. (BTW) A clause in a covenant is generally considered to be legally binding or a law.

Q – What is a common example of a covenant used by most of us in this present day and age? - A will.

Q – Can you give me another example of a covenant used today by some of the more wealthy in our society when they enter into a new relationship? - A prenuptial agreement.

Q – What caused God to conclude a covenant was required?

- The sin of mankind and the resulting effect of separation from a holy God.
- A holy God can **Not** tolerate sin in His presence.
- God so loved His creation.
 - “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16,17)

Q – Has anyone studied the old covenant? - I haven't so this will not be a class about the details of the law of Moses or the covenant between God and the Jewish peoples prior to the crucifixion of Christ.

Q – At a high level, what do you recall about the concepts of the old covenant?

- A series of laws governing behaviors.
- Wrong behaviors equaled sin.
- The blood sacrifice became a covering for sin.
- Only the high priest could enter the holy of holies.
- Once a year the high priest went into the holy of holies with a sin offering for both himself and the sins of the people.
- Without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin.

Q – What was wrong or incomplete with the old covenant? -

- Mankind couldn't keep it or hold up their end of the agreement.
- Frequently, when they were able to keep elements of the law, it became a basis for human pride, self-righteousness or achievement.
- Aspects of it were not permanent. It required an annual event of sin offering for both the high priest and the people.
- It required a human mediator, the High Priest, a filter of sorts, between God and man.

Read: Hebrews 8, 9 &10.

- As we read these passages of scripture, please note the verses or concepts that strike a note of accord or agreement with your heart
- Or those that you would like to discuss further.
- The specific verses that speak to my heart are:

Chapter 8:

- 10) This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.
- 11) No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.
- 12) For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

Chapter 9:

- 7) But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.
- 9) This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.
- 14) How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!
- 24) For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence.
- 26b) He has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.
- 28) So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Chapter 10:

- 12) But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13) and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool.
- 14) For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.
- 17) Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.”
- 22) Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
- 23) Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.
- 24) And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25) not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
- 26) If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, **no sacrifice for sins is left**, 27) but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.
- 28) Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29) How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has **insulted the Spirit of grace**?
- 31) It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
- 34b) Because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.
- 38a) And, “But my righteous one will live by faith!

Q – What does he stress as the main point at the beginning of chapter 8?

- We do have such a high priest.
- One that came after the pattern of Melchizedek.

Q – What are the key aspects of the pattern or order of Melchizedek?

- No beginning or end.
- No father or mother, without genealogy.
- He remains a priest forever,

Q – What is characteristic of His manner of serving as our high priest?

- He ever lives to make intercession for us.
- He is our advocate, one that speaks to the Father on our behalf.

Q – Why was the law of Moses so detailed in regard to the tabernacle and duties and responsibilities of the priesthood?

- Because it was copy or shadow of what is in heaven.
- A model and pattern if you will, of the more perfect provision for the sins of mankind.

Q – The new covenant is founded on _____? - Better promises.

Q – Why was a new covenant required? - God found fault with the people.

Q – Didn't God know in advance that mankind would not be able to keep the law and therefore He would need to replace it with a more perfect one? - He did.

Q – So why the old covenant in the first place at all. Why not start with the perfect one?

- Mankind needed a demonstration of their inability to keep up their end of a covenant with God.
- God knew we would have to learn the hard way.

Q – What are the significant provisions of God's new covenant with us?

- The sacrifice for sin only had to occur once for all of the sins of all of mankind.
- The law is written on the hearts of all who are willing to accept it.
- No inter-mediator is required.
- We have direct access to God, from the least to the greatest.
- They will know me says the Lord!
- I will remember their sins no more.

Q – How is it that God accomplishes the writing of His laws on our hearts and minds?

- Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. (John:14 – 16)
- He will live with you and be in you.
- He will guide you into all truth, teach you and remind you of all things.

Q – What scriptures do you recall that describe God's “record retention policy” for the sins of believers?

- Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.” (Hebrews 10:17)
- For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (Psalms 103:11,12)

Q – What is the significance of Christ sitting down at the right hand of the God?

- His work, the sacrifice for all the sins of mankind, has been completed.
- He ever lives to make intercession for us. He is our advocate with God.

Q – What is your view of why the sacrifices of the old covenant did not clear the conscience?

- Humans have the capacity to retain images of significant events and relive them for years and perhaps a life time, even to their own detriment and destruction.
- I heard a statement by a doctor on a TV program that went something like this;
 - We humans retain every detail of every event in our lives.
 - He went on to say that most of these details are not retained in our conscious memory for easy access.
 - We know this because if we stimulate a given portion of the brain people are able to recall the events in vivid detail.
 - Given our ability to retain and recall painful events it takes great discipline for humans to override or attempt to erase them.
- To truly erase them we need divine assistance.
- God provided the Holy Spirit to help us in many ways.
- Clearing the conscience or erasing painful memories is one of His specialties.

Q – Who can say this with me?

- “How much more!”
- Let's say it again “How much more!” (Hebrews 9:13,14)
- (If) The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.
- How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Q – How does the author describe the degree of completeness of Calvary? - His blood was shed once for all.

Q – By the above statement he means?

- His sacrifice for sins was complete and perfect.
- As such, it only had to occur once for all the sins of all of mankind.

Q – What did the author say was the purpose of His appearing the second time? (Hebrews 9:28)

- He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.
- At that time, “The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. Then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven”.....(Matt 24)
- Q – Who is speaking or making these statements in Matthew 24? - Jesus himself!

Q – We are admonished to draw near to God with _____ and _____? - A sincere heart and faith.

Q – What did he say would insult the Spirit of Grace? - Deliberate sin after knowing the truth.

Q – A requirement of all Christians is? - Faith or to live by faith.

Q – He who has promised is _____? - Faithful.

Q – What are the four things this author suggested for all Believers?

- Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings.
- Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.
- Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.
- Not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.