

The Bible; God's Covenant to Man

Introduction:

There are primarily two distinct covenants revealed in the Bible. The first covenant encompasses "the law" of the Old Testament and the second came through Jesus Christ (the new covenant). This lesson shall examine God's covenants. We shall illustrate, through a study of God's Word that covenants were given to man by God that man might be saved from the consequences of sin.

I. What is a Covenant?

- A. The word "*covenant*" (*diatheke*) = "An arrangement between two parties, covenant" (LS 187).
- B. "A binding agreement made by two or more persons or parties; compact. Law" (AHD 334).

II. Five things Bible Covenants Do:

- A. Bible Covenants identify sin (Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 7:7; I Jn. 3:4).
- B. Bible Covenants restrain sin (I Tim. 1:9-10).
- C. Bible Covenants reveal man's need for forgiveness of sins (Isa. 59:1-2; I Jn. 1:5-7).
- D. Bible Covenants give man instructions as to how to receive forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:24 etc.).
- E. Bible Covenants leave man with hope (Rom. 5:1-11).

III. Two Primary Covenants in the Word of God:

- A. Though our Old Testaments record man covenants between men, for the purpose of this study, we shall examine the two primary covenants God made with man.
- B. The "*first*" covenant is often simply referred to as "the law":
 - 1. All the OT is considered "the law" (cf. Matt. 11:3; Lk. 16:16; 24:44; Jn. 1:17).
 - 2. The term "the law" is often used to make a distinction between the first and second covenants.
- C. The "second or new covenant" (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8):
- D. This lesson shall illustrate the fact that God gave man the 'first law' not to save the sinner from sins but to bring said one's mind to the realization that he needs forgiveness. The second law (covenant) was given to save man from his sins. Covenants are thereby acts of love from God toward man.

IV. A Closer Look at "the law" (first covenant):

- A. Let us examine the progression. God had made covenant laws from the beginning and to these laws He "*added because of transgressions, till the seed should come*" the Mosaic Law (Gal. 3:19).
- B. God had clearly given Adam and Eve law in the garden (a covenant) (Gen. 2:16-17; I Tim. 2:13).
- C. God gave the people of Noah's day law (cf. Gen. 6:5-8; II Pet. 2:5).
- D. God gave Abraham law (Gen. 17:9-14).
- E. The Mosaic Law was added to the above law as earlier stated (again, see Gal. 3:19).
 - 1. The Mosaic Law is termed a covenant (Deut. 5:1-3; II Cor. 3:14-15).

2. The purpose of the first covenant law was never to remove man's sins but to identify sin (Rom. 3:20; 5:20; 7:7), bring the sinner to the conclusion that he needs forgiveness (Gal. 3:24-25), and to restrain sin (I Tim. 1:8-10).
- F. The "*weakness*" or "*fault*" of the Mosaic Law (Heb. 7:18):
1. While the Mosaic Law demanded perfection (cf. Gal. 3:10) it did not offer a means whereby man could attain a "state" of perfection (i.e., the forgiveness of sins (Heb. 7:19; 8:7; 10:1-4).
 2. "The law" was given to the Jewish nation alone (Deut. 5:1-3; Ex. 20:1-2; Rom. 3:1-2).
 3. "The law" was temporary (Matt. 11:13; Heb. 8:13; 9:8-9; Gal. 4:4-5).
 4. The Mosaic Law was never designed to remove man's sins (Heb. 10:1-4). Because it could not remove sins, it served its purpose, and was then "*disannulled*" (Heb. 7:18; Col. 2:13-14). To be "*disannulled*" is to be "set aside" (LS 17).
- V. **A Closer Look at the "Second Covenant":**
- A. The second covenant is a "**new covenant**" (Heb. 8:8).
 - B. The "new covenant" is termed "**Law**" (Heb. 8:10).
 - C. God's two primary covenants are termed "**truth**" (Dan. 9:13; Mal. 2:5-6; Heb. 8:10).
 - D. Jesus received "truth" from the heavenly Father (Jn. 8:40).
 - E. Jesus preached this "truth" and termed it the "**gospel**" (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Eph. 1:13).
 - F. The gospel is the "**grace**" of God (cf. Titus 2:11-12; I Pet. 1:9-12) and considered "**sound doctrine**" (I Tim. 1:10-11).
 - G. Truly the second and new covenant may best be termed "the Law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2) because it is a law that emanated from deity.
- VI. **Consider the strength of the "second covenant":**
- A. The second covenant has no "*fault*" (Heb. 8:7) because it provides a means for man's perfection (i.e., the forgiveness of sins) (cf. Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:13-14; 10:14).
 - B. The second covenant is not limited to race (Gal. 3:27-29).
- VII. **Who is Subject to the "Second Covenant?"**
- A. Consider the fact that God is the God of "*all flesh*" (Jer. 32:27).
 - B. Secondly, Jesus will judge all of mankind by the standard of His Words (cf. Jn. 12:48; Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:12ff).
 - C. Thirdly, consider the fact that John said "*Whosoever goeth onward...hath not God...*" (II Jn. 9).
 - D. Note that all of humanity is under consideration in the terms "*all flesh,*" "*both just and unjust,*" and "*whosoever.*"

Conclusion:

God is a just, righteous, and merciful God (Jer. 9:24b). He has given His covenant law to man that we might know and follow after righteousness because these things are what He is delighted in (again, Jer. 9:24). The first covenant served its purpose and had its time (cf. Gal. 4:4; Heb. 9:8-10). Righteousness, justification, forgiveness of sins (Bible Perfection) could not be obtained through the first covenant; however, God gave it to man to **lead** him to perfection (Heb. 10:1ff). Bible perfection (i.e., righteousness, justification, forgiveness of sins) can now be obtained through Christ because He redeems sinful man if he would but obey God's law. The one who rejects God's laws will not please the Lord (Heb. 10:38-39).