

# “I Will Make a New Covenant”

*“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers: . . . But this shall be the covenant that I will make; . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts: . . . for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD.”*  
—Jeremiah 31:31-34

**APOSTLE PAUL WROTE,** “Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” (Rom. 5:14) Adam’s transgression was individual and willful, and it brought upon him the penalty of death. Because Adam fell from perfection prior to the birth of his children, they were born imperfect and, therefore, inherited the death penalty. Paul reminds us that this situation continued from Adam to Moses. Adam’s descendants were not necessarily as individuals willful sinners, but in any case they were under condemnation to death because of their inherited imperfection.

When Moses became the leader of the Hebrew people and delivered them from Egyptian bondage, he mediated a covenant between them and God. Because this covenant was a representation of God's perfect law of obedience, anyone who could keep it perfectly would, by doing so, have the right to continued human life as long as such perfect obedience was maintained. This arrangement is often referred to as the Law Covenant. The epitome of that covenant, so far as God's law was concerned, was the Ten Commandments. The Apostle Paul wrote that these commandments were "ordained to life."—Rom. 7:10

When the rich young ruler asked Jesus what he could do to have eternal life, Jesus referred the young man to the Law, for he knew that anyone who could keep those commandments would be worthy of life. The young man indicated that he had kept the Law—and probably he had kept it as well as he could—but he realized that just like everyone else, he was dying. The fact is, as discovered by the most earnest of the Israelites, by the rich young ruler, and by Paul, that the standards of righteousness set forth in the Law were beyond the ability of any imperfect human to meet, so no one gained life under that arrangement. However, the Israelites were given an opportunity, and it was this Law Covenant arrangement that made the change in status of the Israelites who died after Moses.

Paul wrote that the Law was a "schoolmaster" to bring Israel to Christ. (Gal. 3:24) In other words, the Law demonstrated the need of a Redeemer in order for members of the Adamic race to obtain life, and that the Redeemer was, and is, Jesus. Paul

wrote, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Cor. 15:22) Through the Prophet Jeremiah, God reminds us of the principle involved in the matter of all mankind's dying because of Adam's transgression. He speaks of it as the fathers eating the "sour grape" and the children's teeth being "set on edge." In this scripture, God promises that it will not always be this way. He speaks of a new arrangement, saying, "In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge."—Jer. 31:29,30

This wonderful passage of scripture immediately precedes our theme text concerning the New Covenant which the Lord promised to make "with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." The complete lesson is that through the instrumentality of the promised New Covenant, people will no longer die because of Adam's transgression, but if they die at all it will be because of their own individual transgression of divine law, having thus eaten the "sour grape" of sin.

## **INTERESTING DIFFERENCES**

In his promise of the New Covenant, God said that it would be "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers." In connection with the giving of the Law Covenant, the one made with Israel's fathers, there was the sacrifice of animals to provide blood for sprinkling the people. Moses went up into the mount, and there received from God the tables of stone on which were written the

Ten Commandments. After returning, the Law was read to the assembled people, and they shouted, “All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.” Then Moses sprinkled the people with the blood of the covenant.—Exod. 24:3-8

In its entirety, this was an impressive and glorious inauguration of a most solemn covenant, or agreement, between God and his people Israel, and it has many valuable lessons for us today. The blood of that covenant pointed forward to the blood of Christ, which is the blood that makes possible the establishing of a New Covenant. The Law Covenant had a mediator, who was Moses, and the New Covenant will have a Mediator—Jesus. (Heb. 12:24) Associated with him in the mediatorial work relative to the New Covenant will be his bride, the church. Additionally, any who could have kept the Law Covenant would have been worthy of continued human life, and those who fully come under the terms of the New Covenant are promised eternal life upon the earth.

There are other aspects of the New Covenant, however, which will be “not according” to the old Law Covenant, and it is in the examination of these features that we obtain our clearest understanding of what the New Covenant will really mean to those who come under it. One of the principal “not according” features of the New Covenant lies in the fact that its law will not be written on tables of stone, but in the hearts of the people. According to our theme text, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.”

Moses was in the mount with God for forty days while the Law was being etched on tables of stone. There will be no such literal procedure as this in

connection with the making of the New Covenant. The Apostle Paul gives us the antitype of this phase of making the New Covenant. "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves; . . . but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament [covenant]; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth, For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech."—II Cor. 3:3-12

There should be no misunderstanding of the meaning of this beautiful and straightforward presentation by the Apostle Paul. He speaks here concerning the relationship of Jesus' followers to the New Covenant, as "ministers," likening it to the relationship of the tables of stone to Moses in connection with the ministry of the Law Covenant. However, the "not according" aspect of this comparison

is striking. Moses was in the mount forty days receiving those typical tables of stone, but it requires the entire Gospel Age in the plan of God to prepare the antitypical tables of stone, embodied in the “ministers of the new covenant.”

When this “ministers of the new covenant” class is complete, they will appear with Christ in glory, which will be the antitype of Moses appearing with glory on his countenance, bearing the tables of stone. This is the “hope of glory” which so inspires us as we are being prepared for the future ministry of the New Covenant. It is the fulfilment of the promise referred to by Paul: “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”—Col. 3:4

## **TO TEACH THE PEOPLE**

In Exodus 24:12, we are informed that the typical tables of stone were given to Moses that he might teach the people. The teaching of the people in connection with the making of the New Covenant will be the work of the entire next age in the plan of God. It will involve the enlightenment of the whole world of mankind concerning the truth of God’s provision of life through Christ. Paul touches on this, saying, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”—I Tim. 2:3-6

The church, as the antitypical tables of stone, will be associated with Jesus in the work of testifying to all mankind God’s law. They will teach man the

truth concerning the ransom through Jesus, and offer the opportunity of life to all. The church, as the “bride” of Christ, will be associated with him in saying to the people, “Come . . . [and] take the water of life freely.—Rev. 22:17

What a wonderful provision God has made for writing the law of the New Covenant in the hearts of the people. This is another of the “not according” features of the New Covenant—its law will not be written on tables of stone, but in the inward parts of the people themselves—in their hearts. Of necessity, this will begin with their being made acquainted with the great truth of the ransom and the high standards of righteousness which will then be enforced through the agencies of the Messianic kingdom. Then also God’s Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh, and under its influence, through the teachings of the “able ministers of the new covenant,” mankind will, with different degrees of progress, gradually be restored to perfection of heart and mind and action. Upon the basis of this restoration under the terms of the New Covenant, mankind will come back into full harmony and communion with God as his human children.

## **THE DEAD AWAKENED**

In the study of this aspect of the plan of God, it is important to keep in mind that the great majority of those who will be reconciled to God through the New Covenant arrangements and receive everlasting life will, at the beginning of that age of restoration, be asleep in death. This means that these will need to be raised from the dead in order to enter into the blessings of the New Covenant. While it might not require the entire age to reconcile a single generation

under the New Covenant, when we take into consideration the many generations who at the start will be in their graves, we can readily see that the restoration work of the New Covenant with all the people will indeed require the entire Messianic Age.

How wonderful it will be when that covenant is made and its restoration work is completed. Note again these words of our theme text: "For they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD." Here is another difference between the New Covenant and the old Law Covenant. While the people back there said, "All these things will we do," the precepts of the Law had not reached their "inward parts." It is only when this is accomplished that the people will be truly in full relationship with God. When this is accomplished in the lives of all the willing and obedient, and the willful opposers are "cut off from among the people," all will know him. The work of teaching the people concerning God will have been finished, for all will then know him from the least unto the greatest.

There will be still another "not according" in connection with the New Covenant. Concerning those who are reconciled to God through its agencies, the Prophet Jeremiah says, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:34) There was a typical forgiveness of sins in connection with the Law Covenant, based upon the year-by-year atonement day sacrifices of bulls and goats. This pointed forward to the "better sacrifices" of the Gospel Age, whereby, through the blood of Jesus, permanent forgiveness is provided for those who accept and whose lives become transformed through obedience. Then it (Continued on page 36)

*(Continued from page 31)* will be true that God will remember their sins no more.

## **AS INDIVIDUALS**

As we have already noted, the period spanned by the making of the New Covenant will be one in which every man will suffer for his own iniquity, and not for the sins of another. Each individual will then need to accept the provisions of God's love through Christ in order to be fully cleansed in heart and mind from the effects of Adamic sin. Each one, as individuals, will need to obey the Messianic kingdom laws in order to make progress toward perfection, and toward having the law of God written in his "inward parts."

In the promise of the New Covenant, it is said to be made "with the house of Israel and the house of Judah." This emphasizes the fact that the natural descendants of Abraham who have been regathered to their "Land of Promise" will be among the first who will be given the opportunity to come, through faith in Jesus, their Messiah, under the blood of the New Covenant, and to begin walking upon the "way of holiness" which will lead to perfection.—Isa. 35:8

However, the blood of the New Covenant is the blood of Jesus, which was shed for all mankind, not just for Israelites. "He [Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (I John 2:2) This reminds us of another sense in which the making of the New Covenant will be different, and on a much grander scale than the making of the typical Law Covenant. Then, as we have noted, the blood of animals was sprinkled literally upon the people of Israel. However, in the case of the New Covenant it will be a symbolic sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ upon

the people of all nations. (Isa. 52:15) The Apostle Paul admonished the church, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."—Heb. 10:22

How different is this from the sprinkling of literal blood upon the heads of the people. While Paul is here speaking of consecrated believers in this age, the principle will be the same in the next age. Then also the antitypical sprinkling will be associated with the heart cleansing of the people. Paul again speaks of this in his preview of the wonderful prospect which is set before us as followers of the Master, when he talks of "the blood of sprinkling," which speaks better things than the blood of Abel.—Heb. 12:24

The Apostle Peter also mentions this blood of sprinkling. He says, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 1:2) Peter does not say that we are sanctified by obedience, or by the blood of sprinkling, but "unto" these, thus signifying a process. Sanctification is our setting apart to the holy service of God, and that setting apart is to be so complete that we will be wholly obedient to the divine will. This is the great objective of our Christian lives so far as the present is concerned. We are also set apart "unto" the great future work of sprinkling the blood of Jesus Christ in connection with our service of the New Covenant.

It will be through reconciliation to God, and a restoration to human perfection of body, mind, and heart, that the houses of Israel, Judah, and all people will become worthy to "inherit the desolate

heritages.” This, in reality, is descriptive of complete restitution. It is that which Jesus said of the sheep class in the parable, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”—Matt. 25:34

It will be then that the “knowledge of the LORD” will fill the whole earth “as the waters cover the sea,” and when nothing will “hurt nor destroy” in all God’s holy kingdom. (Isa. 11:9) What a blessed prospect it is to contemplate the human race re-stored, and reconciled to God, delighting to do his will! It is for this glorious consummation of the divine plan that we continue earnestly to pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”—Matt. 6:10

■