

## The Covenants, Grace and Law (Part 10)

### A Testament and a Covenant

John W. Ritenbaugh

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In this series, I have used the term *covenant* in virtually every sermon that I have given; and I have briefly defined "covenant." But what is a covenant in the biblical sense? Is there any difference between a biblical covenant and a social (or business) one? Is there a difference between a testament and a covenant? Is the Old Covenant done away completely? Has the New Covenant been completed?

The approach commonly held by most Protestants is that the Old Covenant and the law of God were one and the same thing. When I say commonly held in Protestantism, I mean by the average church-going Protestant person. If you read any of their technical literature on their theology, they do not believe that but, some how or another that is not completely communicated to everybody who is sitting in a pew out there. And so commonly the Protestants do not have the same conception of the Old Covenant and the law that is in line with the truth. This has very interesting ramifications in that it reveals an attitude that lies at the very foundation of mankind's relationship with God.

We are going to begin in the Old Testament in Psalms 111. We are going to look at all of the verses there, because there is something that I want to pick out of this as we go through it. It is something that has an impact on the proper understanding of the covenant and its relationship to law. This is a psalm that is glorifying God's faithfulness—extolling the fact that God is involved in the outworking of history as it involves His purpose.

It's also interesting and perhaps very important to understand when the researchers feel this was written. They think that this was written *after* the Jews returned from their exile in Babylon. In other words, sometime after the time of Nehemiah and Ezra, or perhaps during that time. So you might get in your mind a scribe (someone like Ezra, or someone like him) who wrote this psalm extolling how God once again redeemed His people from their slavery, brought them back to their land, and supplied their every need.

Psalms 111:1 Praise you the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.

Those two are not necessarily different. That is, "the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation." It's just a parallelism in which the one reinforces the other. So we are made very clear who it is, before whom God is going to be praised.

Psalms 111:2 The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

He means, "sought out" in the sense of meditated upon or thought about. It's the kind of position that every one of us ought to be in. Searching out the works of the Lord—whether it be in history in the sense of something that He did for His people, or whether it has to do with the redemption of His people and how He supplies all the needs of His people.

Psalms 111:3 His work is honorable and glorious: and His righteousness [the way He does things, how He does things, when He does things] endures forever.

Now, remember that word *forever*.

Psalms 111:4-5 He has made His wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He has given meat unto them that fear Him.

This is undoubtedly a reference back to the wilderness journey. Here's where we begin to get into something interesting in relation to this subject:

Psalms 111:5 He will ever be mindful of His covenant.

Now let me ask something here, before we answer it. Which covenant?

Psalms 111:6-8a He has showed His people the power of His works, that He may give them the heritage of the heathen. The works of His hands [whether it be the creation, or in redemptive situations] are verity [truth] and judgment [That is, they are so soundly and wisely thought out.]; all His commandments are sure [another term indicating longevity—an eternal term]. They stand fast forever and ever...

That's doubled over, paralleled, reinforced. It is not just "forever." It's "forever and ever" that His commandments stand fast.

Psalms 111:8b ...and are done in truth and uprightness.

Does that sound like God's going to do away with His law? If they stand fast, nothing can move them—regardless of how many people tell you, "*The law is done away.*"

Psalms 111:9 He sent redemption unto His people. He has commanded His covenant forever.

Let's ask a question here. Which covenant? Was the Old Covenant commanded forever? Which covenant is going to last forever?

Psalms 111:9-10 Holy and reverend is His name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A good understanding have all they that do His commandments. His praise endures forever.

Now, *forever* does not always mean "without end" in the biblical usage; but I am confident that, in this context, it does here. Sometimes forever means as long as conditions exist. Here we are talking about a covenant. Here we are talking about commandments that stand fast forever. Here we are talking about righteousness that endures forever. (That's in) verses 3, 8, 9, and 10—and strongly implied in verses 5 and 7. That's six out of ten verses, where we have words that indicate *time without end* and reinforce "forever and ever."

I submit to you that the covenant that he is talking about is the *New Covenant*. That is the one that is going to endure forever—not the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant, in Hebrews 8, is declared to be obsolete! The important thing here is that God's commandments are connected to the covenant which is going to last forever.

Don't let anybody tell you that the commandments are done away with the coming of the New Covenant. Here's God, way back in the time of Ezra (and we are going to see something else that confirms that God was thinking way ahead of time); and His commandments are NOT done away with the coming of a covenant that is going to last forever.

But the notion in Protestantism is that since the Old Covenant is done away with, then God's law is also done away with. So, these people decisively deal with the Old Covenant and the law of God in one fell swoop. It's not true what they have done. It's not true what they have said. But it neatly gets it out of the way. And, as I mentioned earlier, there is *an attitude* that is shown in this.

The teaching, then, continues by exclaiming that one of the reasons why it had to be done away is that God's law is too difficult to keep—that it is harsh, that it is enslaving. And it leaves one with the definite impression that (since this is so, and God gave the law) the reason it didn't work—the fault, the flaw in the whole mix—was God. And human nature is agreeable to this because it is ever willing to shift the blame elsewhere in order to justify its conduct. But what says God's Word?

Hebrews 8:7-8 For if that first covenant had been faultless [Seems like there was a problem there.], then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, the days come, says the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."

Let's begin by affirming something that is a biblical truth; and that is that God's Word is truth (John 17:17); and it faithfully discloses, as we are going to see here, where the real problem lays. There indeed was a fault. He tells us here, in verse 8, "for finding fault with them." That is a plural pronoun. It cannot possibly be referring to the singular noun, covenant. In order for 'covenant' to be the antecedent of 'them' it would have to be plural. But the way it is, it would

have to have read "*for finding fault with it.*" God's Word is telling us—not completely yet, but nonetheless it is implying very strongly—that it was with a plural *them*.

Hebrews 8:6 But now has He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Verse 6 tells us, then, that Jesus is the Mediator of a better covenant, established upon better promises. It was not established upon law changes—but upon *better promises*. Some changes of terms were made; but the focus is not on law changes, but changes in promises. Now, why? Why were the promises changed? Being where that appears—in context with "for if that first covenant had been faultless" and "finding fault with them"—the changes had something to do with *the fault*; and the fault was with *them*. So 'them' is a plural reference to the multitude of people who made the Old Covenant with God anciently.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh...

The context here in Romans 8 is somewhat different than the context in Hebrews 8, but the principle being dealt with is similar. *Flesh* in Romans 8:3 is a reference to *people*. The problem with the Old Covenant was not with its laws, but with one of the parties who made the covenant—the plural 'them.' That is, the people who made the covenant. The people would not keep the terms of the covenant!

This is confirmed by the Old Testament record, which shows that Israel never would keep the Old Covenant except for brief periods of time. That's why there are so many references back there in the Old Testament about them being stiff-necked, or about them being fornicators or committing adultery, or being filled with iniquity.

You might remember that I said that Israel would not keep the terms of the covenant. I did not say, "could not." God's intent in making the Old Covenant was limited. Israel should have been able to keep its terms. To think otherwise is to accuse God of being unfair in His proposition and having taken advantage of Israel's ignorance. Human nature is always looking for ways to shift blame.

We must be careful, or we might be guilty of doing the same thing under the New Covenant. We could say that it is too hard, and then use this as a justification for our own failures and bad attitudes. Jesus anticipated this. Do you recall the parable in Matthew 25—the parable of the talents? He gave five talents to one person, two talents to another, and one talent to a third. What was the response of the person to whom He gave one talent? The person said that the reason he did not produce was because "*I knew that You were a hard man, and that You reap where you do not sow. And therefore I hid it.*" He was saying, "*God, You were too hard!*" But Jesus anticipated human nature never changes. It always wants to shift the blame! And that's what the third person in that parable did. He shifted the blame to God.

There is an overall principle that is expressed in I Corinthians 10:13, and we always have to

keep this in mind. This ought to be in our scriptural vocabulary, where he says:

I Corinthians 10:13 There has not temptation [trail, test] taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer [allow] you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

God promises that He will allow no test (and that includes commandment keeping, within the framework) except that they can be successfully overcome *with the help of God*. He is not saying that we will be able to overcome them ourselves; but he (Paul) is saying that He is faithful. Several parts of the Bible address this issue. In fact, much of the entire book of Job is devoted to it.

God is careful and fair with us, because the stakes are so high. God is love. He is not trying to lose people, but to save them—and, at the same time, to fulfill His purpose of transforming us into His image. His concern is for our and His Kingdom's well being. Each covenant was designed to accomplish specific objectives, and each is *fair*, within its intended purpose.

God did not expect Israel to keep the Old Covenant "in the spirit of the law." He does expect you and I to do it. But then, again, the game has been changed somewhat. The stakes are much higher now. This is why I said Israel would not do it. God didn't deal with them unfairly. He gave them something that reasonable men—under the circumstance, with Him as King of a nation (ruling over it, watching it, providing for it, helping them along, feeding them, giving them, protecting them, guiding them)—should have been able to keep their end of the covenant.

I'm sure that's one of the reasons why that parable in Matthew 25 is in there, because He learned that human nature is going to shift the blame wherever it possibly can. So each covenant was designed to accomplish specific objectives, and they are *fair!* So, let's go to Jeremiah 31 as we continue this. A good way to remember where the covenant appears in the Old Testament is 31/31. That is, Jeremiah 31: 31.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "Behold, the days come," says 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 in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they broke, although I was an husband unto them," says the Lord. "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days," says the Lord, "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord;' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them," says the Lord. "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

That is repeated almost verbatim in Hebrews 8 (beginning in verse 10); but I wanted to come back here and look at it, because I want to put it in position with where we began in Psalms 111. Jeremiah lived in the sixth and seventh centuries B.C. That is, he lived in the 500s and the 600s before Christ—six hundred and five hundred years *before* the New Covenant became a reality. So this in Jeremiah 31 was written prior to Psalms 111. The covenant that is forever is the covenant that is being prophesied here in Jeremiah 31:31. It is the one that is going to endure forever, and it is the one in which law (the commandments of God) is associated with.

In this prophecy, God shows that the New Covenant is going to be made with political entities—nations (Israel and Judah). And it is going to be different from the one that those people were presently living under otherwise there was no need for a New Covenant. We find in Hebrews 8, that the reason for the New Covenant is *to address the fault* that is given there in Hebrews 8.

Please understand the *major differences* brought out here in Jeremiah 31. God's laws will be written in the hearts of those who make the New Covenant. It is obvious that the law was NOT written in ancient Israel's hearts. So the New Covenant is going to address that problem. Second, this tells us that there is going to be access to God and a personal relationship with God.

In addition to that, it implies very strongly that there will be no privileged class who alone are set apart to teach. There will be no class distinction due to age or rank in the community. This is all encompassed within this thing about "*every man shall know Me.*" "*Everybody will have access to Me.*" It doesn't mean that there will be no ministry, because it's obvious from the New Testament that God gave the ministry as a teaching vehicle—a gift—to the church. And a real biggie that he mentions right at the end is that sins will be forgiven.

Each of these elements mentioned is *a promise* of something not included as part of the Old Covenant. Previously in this series, I explained sometimes completely and sometimes just as an overview how the average Israelite did not have access to God, and how that was shown in so many things. They couldn't go into the place where God symbolically lived. They couldn't get any closer than getting up to the court of the priests (an intermediary). That "privileged" class of priests had to be the ones who went up there, into God's presence, for them. So the New Covenant is going to address those things.

Here we begin to get into something that I think is very interesting. Several of the words—all in the New Testament, and used mostly by Paul in reference to this subject—give us very interesting insight into how God wants us to view our involvement in the New Covenant. There are four of these words, with one that is interesting only because it does not appear. We aren't going to spend a lot of time on it, but these four words are words that are translated into the English *old* and *new*, and then *covenant* and *testament*. God inspired Paul to use descriptive words that do not focus much on order, (One, two, three, four.) but on other aspects that are more important. And most of these things will show up in the word that is translated new.

Hebrews 8:13 In that He says, "A New Covenant," He has made the first old. Now that which decays and waxes [grows] old is ready to vanish away.

The word translated "old" is *palaios*. It is translated here in my Kings James Version correctly as "old." It means, "to make old." In its strongest sense, it implies "obsolete." That is, something that is obsolete.

Hebrews 8:8 For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, the days come," says the Lord, "when I will make a *new covenant* with [them]."

Hebrews 8:13 In that He says, "A *new covenant*"...

Hebrews 9:15 And for this cause He is the Mediator of the *new testament* [covenant].

Those words "new" are all translated from the same Greek word, *kaine*. This is interesting because, while it does mean new in terms of time, the emphasis in the use of the word (when compared to something of the same kind) is on quality—not time. Let me give you that last phrase again. Even though the word does mean new in terms of time, when the Greeks use the word the emphasis—when it is compared to something of the same kind (in this case, covenants)—the emphasis is on "quality" and not "time." Hence, the emphasis in the use of *kaine* is on *better* rather than age, when the assumption is that it is being compared with something of the same kind.

I'll leave this context and give you another area in which the same word is used, in a parable of Jesus. Remember the parable of the old wineskins and new wineskins. Using this understanding of this word *kaine*, the difference between the wineskins was not necessarily age (though that is implied) but rather *quality*. One wineskin was dried and cracked. The other was supple and resilient. And though it may also have been newer, it was decidedly *better*.

Let's update that, because we don't normally carry wineskins around with us. Here we'll put it into a modern context—an analogy that I think fits. We are going to make a comparison between a 1910 automobile and a 1995 automobile. The 1995 automobile is a continuation of the same general kind as the 1910 automobile. Both have the same necessary parts: engine, wheels, steering wheel, seats, transmission, brakes, lights, a nut behind the wheel. But the 1995 model has made the 1910 model *obsolete* as a viable mode of transportation.

Thus it is in the comparison between *the Old Covenant* and *the New Covenant*. Both have the same necessary parts, so that they may be considered of the same "kind." But the *new* is so much *better* and with more going for it that it has made the old one obsolete.

Is there a difference between *a testament* and *a covenant*? Do you know that the word "testament" doesn't even appear in English translations of the Old Testament, but it does appear thirteen times in the New Testament? And it is a very interesting word that is in the Greek, because in the Greek language it doesn't even mean "covenant" as the word "covenant" means to an English-speaking person. In fact, researchers have been able to find only one usage outside of the Bible—in classical Greek—in which this word is used in the same way that the English and the Hebrew words are. It is the Greek word *diatheke*, and it is the equivalent of our English word testament or will (not "covenant").

A *covenant* is an agreement between two parties. The emphasis is on the words "agreement" and "parties." But a *diatheke* is a testament. It is a will. As in English, it is a unilateral—a one sided—declaration of the disposition of property which a person makes in anticipation of his death. That's what a will is. Before you die, you draw up a declaration of what you want done with your property; and most people don't consult with the people they want to leave it to. It's usually a very private matter.

There is no doubt that Paul used this singular word—*diatheke*—where two different words normally would have been used. The interesting thing is that the Greeks do have a word for a covenant, but he did not use it. That word is *suntheke*, which in Greek is a bilateral agreement. It's an agreement between two parties, exactly the same as the English word *covenant*.

The use of the one word (*diatheke*)—which seemingly, in some sense, does not fit—has given the translators sometimes great difficulty trying to determine when Paul meant "covenant" and when he meant "will" or "testament." But why did he even do this when he could have used *suntheke*? I'm not sure that I know the fullness of the reason. In fact, I am certain that I don't know. But I do think I know the overall reason; and it is very, very encouraging. Paul wanted to emphasize how much that God has done unilaterally—that is, that He took upon Himself to do without consulting with others involved in the covenant—to drastically tip the scales in our favor for the purpose of keeping the covenant and making it into His Kingdom.

I'll go through that again. Paul wanted to emphasize how much God has done unilaterally—that is, that God took on Himself to do without consulting with others involved in the covenant (that's you and me)—to drastically tip the scales in our favor for the purpose of keeping the covenant and making it into the Kingdom of God. Let me begin. "God so loved the world that He *gave*" Jesus Christ died in our stead! That was a completely voluntary act on His part. God gives us grace and forgives our sins, and we are justified on the basis of that sacrifice and on the declaration of our faith and repentance.

God gives us access to Him in prayer, again on the basis of the work of Jesus Christ. God gives us the very faith that saves. God gives us His Spirit, which is a down payment of eternal life and empowers us to enable us to keep His laws. God gives us gifts, by that same Spirit, to serve Him and the church. He promises never to give us a trial that is too great—which translates into very personal attention to each of His children! And He promises never to forsake us, and that He will complete the work that has begun in us. Is that a good enough start?

Now, brethren, some of these—in a very limited form—appear in the Old Covenant. But it is no wonder that Paul wanted to emphasize *better* rather than "new." The Old Covenant (because of what God has unilaterally done) is but a pale shadow of the new (covenant) in terms of what God is working out. It is nothing more than a pale shadow of the *promises* and of the *hope* that is derived by those of us who understand the New Covenant's terms.

Brethren, to the unconverted reading the Bible—looking at these things—those terms are so enticing that it lures them into saying that there is nothing that we have to do. I mean, some will go that far! They will say that it's all been done for us. They can read the terms, but they reach the wrong conclusion. It leads people to say, "*There is no law.*" It leads people to say, "*Well, you don't have to keep the Sabbath. That's just ceremonial.*" But the truth is that it is

so one- sided, in our behalf, that it leaves us *without excuse* for failure to keep the terms; and those terms include law keeping.

Hebrews 8:10 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days," says the Lord; "I will put My laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

This has been updated. We're into the New Testament. And Paul, when he wrote it, he did not eliminate for the need for law in the New Covenant—the necessity of keeping law. There are some that will go so far as to say that the whole New Testament contained the terms of the New Covenant. That they are scattered everywhere throughout these books—unlike Exodus, where the terms appear in a very few chapters (Exodus 20-24), and everything can sort of be summed up right there. They say, "*Not so, with the New Covenant.*" They are scattered from the beginning of Matthew to the end of the book of Revelation. I don't know whether that's true, but I do know that the terms are not all in one place (like they are in the Old Covenant).

He does say that there is law appropriated with the New Covenant. Let's go to Matthew 19. I'm turning here because I feel that it summarizes this subject in regard to the New Covenant. Jesus Christ was the Messenger of the New Covenant. He was the one who came preaching the good news.

Matthew 19:16-22 And, behold, one came and said unto Him, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" And He said unto him, "Why call you Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God; but if you will enter into life, keep the commandments." He says unto Him, "Which?" Jesus said, "You shall do no murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, honor your father and your mother; and you shall love you neighbor as yourself." The young man said unto Him, "All you things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" Jesus said unto him, "If you will be perfect, go and sell that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

When the young man comes to Jesus, the question is "*How can I have eternal life?*" We ought to be able to see from that (in connecting it to the New Covenant terms that we just read in Hebrews 8:10) that the writing of the law on the heart is a two-sided affair. Only those who have (1) made the New Covenant with God, and (2) met the terms within the framework of the time that they live, will be given *eternal life*. The Boss—Jesus Christ, Lord and Master, Messenger of the covenant, our Savior, the One who preached the gospel, who knows what He's talking about—said "*If you want to have eternal life, keep the law!*"

Is Jesus guilty of doublespeak? After He begins to preach the terms of the New Covenant, He

tells this fellow one thing and to you and me something else? That's what some are telling you now. I saw in a write-up where that section of verses was quoted; and the person who wrote the article said that this doesn't mean that we have to keep the commandments.

Now, the young man left at that point because he was *unwilling to meet the terms* of the New Covenant. I want you to understand this, because they say *terms* were part of the Old Covenant. Recall again the 1910/1995 automobile analogy that I made earlier. Both of them are automobiles. Both share many parts that are similar. But some of the things that were in the 1910 model have been eliminated (because they were no longer functional) and replaced by equipment far superior on the 1995 model so that—What? We have a much better chance of arriving at our destination that we would in the 1910 model.

Every excursion in a 1910 model is exciting. You never knew whether you were going to make it around the block. But in a 1995 model you can drive from one coast to another and back again, and about the only time you have to stop or even think about your automobile and its performance is when you are running out of gas. The new has made the old *obsolete*! Both share many of the same things, but now we have a much better chance of making it where we want to go—and that's into the Kingdom of God.

Acts 3:25 You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made unto our fathers, saying unto Abraham...

The word covenant here is definitely referring to something that took place way in the distant past. It is definitely not the New Covenant, as we understand it in the New Testament framework. But Luke (who wrote Acts) uses the same word that Paul did—*diatheke*.

Acts 7:8 And He gave him the covenant of circumcision...

Again, the word used is *diatheke*. I just bring that up because I want you to see that the New Testament writers used the word *diatheke* for both. So, a testament is a will. And there was no testament, no will, associated with the covenants that are being talked about here in Acts 3 and 7; but the New Testament writers used the same word throughout. Even though there was no death associated with the Old Covenant, there is a major difference; and that difference is that the New Covenant is something that God did on His part, and it is important to the effectiveness and completion of the New Covenant.

When Israel made the Old Covenant with God, they arrived at Sinai; God made a proposal; He gave them three days to get ready; the people heard God speak from the top of Mt. Sinai; the people backed away; Moses then was given the remainder of the terms. He then came down off the mount; delivered them to the people of Israel; they agreed to them; and in chapter 24 the whole experience was completed. It took just a few days. I'm leading up to something here that might be surprising to many people. It's something that has to do with the New Covenant.

Ezekiel 16:8 "Now, when I passed by you [Israel], and looked upon you, behold, your time was a time of love; and I spread My skirt over

you, and covered your nakedness: Yes, I swore unto you, and entered into a covenant with you," says the Lord God, "and you became Mine."

Knowing the story of redemption, we might possibly be able to conclude (just on reading this verse) that Israel was merely possessed by God as one might purchase something.

Jeremiah 31:32 "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they broke, although I was an husband unto them," says the Lord.

That is undeniable. The covenant to God was analogous to a marriage. And when it says in Ezekiel 16 that "you became Mine," it means that you (Israel) became My (God's) wife.

Jeremiah 3:1 "They say, 'If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again?' Shall not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me," says the Lord.

God is talking to His wife about a situation that was part of their relationship with one another.

Jeremiah 3:8 "And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery [something that takes place within marriage] I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also."

Jeremiah 3:14 "Turn, O backsliding children," says the Lord; "for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion."

Besides these references, there is much in the book of Hosea that is devoted to a description of God's and Israel's relationship. It was seen by Him as a marriage relationship that went awry. But what about the New Covenant? Back to Hebrews 8:5. This leads right into the verses that we have been using, showing the covenant and the laws and their relationship.

Hebrews 8:5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle. For, "See," says He, "that you make all thing according to the pattern shown to you in the mount."

I've taught you in the past how that much of our teaching, our understanding, in the Old Testament comes to us because God establishes *patterns* (by which He operates) in order to give us understanding. This mention of "pattern" leads right into an announcement of a

change—from the Old Covenant to a better covenant. But it is following a pattern that has already been established. Therefore, the New Covenant is going to very greatly resemble the Old Covenant in many factors—even the way a 1995 automobile resembles in many ways a 1910 automobile. A pattern has been established in the old, very much of which is going to follow through into the better one.

Let's remember who is doing the speaking in the Old Testament, and who is being spoken about in the New Testament. Follow the pattern—Jesus Christ, our Savior, the Messenger of the covenant, the Preacher of the gospel. He was the God of the Old Testament. It is He with whom Israel made the Old Covenant. It is He who inspired Jeremiah to write that He would make a New Covenant with Israel.

Matthew 26:27-28 And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink you all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament [*diatheke*], which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

There we see it being instituted, and in I Corinthians 11 we see a repetition of it by Paul—telling us about what he received.

I Corinthians 11:25 After the same manner [pattern] also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament [*diatheke*] in My blood. This do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

"Testament/covenant." We find this encompassed within the death of God in the flesh—the One who made the Old Covenant marriage. He's involved in the beginning stages of the New Covenant.

Revelation 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him [Let's defer to Him.]: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready.

Here we find this same One—the God of the Old Testament, who came in the flesh and then He died. But now we see Him in this context in Revelation 19—very God, but thousands of years after His death in Jerusalem where He laid the foundation for the New Covenant. And once again we find Him involved in a marriage, but this time to *His wife*. The indication was, when He married her in Ezekiel, she was a virgin who had never been married before. Now we find Him involved in a marriage, but this time with His wife; and she has made herself ready.

II Corinthians 11:1-4 [Paul is writing to the Corinthians and he says to them:] Would to God you could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent

beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that comes preaches another Jesus, who we have not preached, or if you receive another spirit, which you have not received, or another gospel, which you have not accepted, you might well bear with him.

Brethren, there is only one answer to this which I have posed to you; and that is that when we believe in Jesus Christ, when we repent and believe the gospel, when we are forgiven and baptized and receive God's Holy Spirit, the New Covenant is not completed. Rather it is only entered into, and a process has *begun*. (I hope that sinks in.)

Exodus 19:11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

Now, think of the circumstance here. The people who were going to make the Old Covenant with God had at least two days—but no more than three days. It says "over against the third day." So they had two days—and no more than three days—to get prepared for God Himself to come down upon the mount.

Think of this in terms of 1000-year days. If that is so, we historically are drawing very close to the end of the second day of preparation for the Bride of Christ—His wife. I have been telling you right along that it has not been Satan's intention to merely induce us into breaking a couple of laws. Rather his intent is to blow God's whole purpose for our lives right out of the water *by destroying the preparation stage—sanctification (holiness)*—so that we cannot complete the covenant, because we will not be prepared to marry Christ.

Romans 7:2-4 For the woman which has an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress. But if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore [Here comes a concluding statement.], my brethren, you also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that you should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Christ died for us, that we might be free to remarry Him. Revelation 19 tells us when *the actual marriage*, and therefore *the completion of the covenant*, is going to occur. It is still before us. Right now our responsibility is to bring forth fruit to God—to grow, to overcome, to become perfected, to be sanctified.

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together,

she was found with child by the Holy Spirit.

*Espoused, but had not come together.* We are in this circumstance in relation to the completion of the New Covenant. Joseph and Mary were *espoused* to one another, but they had not come together. She was still a virgin. Christ's wife is going to be a *virgin* in the spiritual sense, when we are married to Him. This espousal period is similar to our culture's engagement period; but a little more so, because they were actually considered to be husband and wife.

Remember that Paul said that he wanted to present them as "chaste virgins" to one husband—which in spiritual terms means that we are to keep unspotted from the world. An engagement time is that period during which the fellow and the girl make more intensive and specific adjustments to each other in preparation for marriage.

It is this way in our relationship with Christ, except for one major difference. In our culture, both the fellow and the girl must make adjustments to each other. However, in our relationship with Christ, He is already perfect; and every adjustment has to be made on our part, to conform to Him. And it is this *conforming to Him* that plays a major role in transforming us into His image, so that when we do marry we will be in perfect agreement. We will be one with Him.

Hebrews 8:8 For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, the days come," says the Lord, "when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."

The New Covenant will be made at the time of the return of Christ; but it will not be made with flawed and sinning flesh-and-blood Israelites. It will be made with *spirit born Israelites*—born again—who will not sin, because they have God's law indelibly implanted within them (written on their hearts, in their minds, and in their character). God's divine nature will be permanently implanted within them. Jesus Christ will be married to His own kind. It will be a perfect match.

Just as a way of a little review at here the end: What we have seen is that there is a difference between a *covenant* and a *testament*. *Testament* emphasizes what God has done, on His own part, to better enable us to uphold our part in the covenant—so that we can be prepared for His Kingdom. We have also seen that the New Covenant will not be completed until Christ returns. So, next week we will see more of this Self-giving of God and how the testament (the will, the unilateral declaration) of God further affects the two covenants.