

# ABLE MINISTERS

## SEMINAR 2024 | NEW COVEVNANT CONFUSION | SESSION 7

“[God] also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit” – 2 Corinthians 3:6

### 1. Creating Our Own Problem

- a. 2Co3:6/1Co11:25 are not problems for anyone but Bible-believing\* Mid-Acts Pauline Dispies
- b. Hopefully, after 6 sessions of learning about the New Testament, this problem is easily solved
  - i. New Creature ≠ New Covenant, Christ ≠ covenant, blood ≠ covenant, Spirit ≠ new covenant or new creature, covenant = testament = prophesied contract b/w Israel & God
- c. The simple answer: you can be a minister of something without being party to it or partaking of it
  - i. To minister = to explain, teach, reveal, serve, assist, or give things needful
  - ii. Teachers/students; Doctors/patients; Disaster relief
- d. There is a reason Paul mentions “new testament” 2x in his epistles, yet we are not under it

### What the Old Covenant & the New Covenant Have in Common

OLD	NEW
Covenant	Covenant
Israel in the flesh	Israel in the flesh
Works	Works
Law	Law
Land (Priests/Kingdom)	Land (Priests/Kingdom)

### How the Old Covenant & the New Covenant Are Different

OLD	NEW
Covenant	Covenant <b>Christ (blood)</b>
Israel in the flesh	Israel in the flesh <b>Spirit</b>
Works	Works <b>Faith</b>
Law	Law <b>Grace (hearts)</b>
Land (Priests/Kingdom)	Land (Priests/Kingdom) <b>Salvation (everlasting)</b>

## What the New Covenant & the New Creature Have in Common

OLD	NEW	MYSTERY
Covenant	Covenant <b>Christ (blood)</b>	<i>New Creature, the Body of Christ (blood)</i>
Israel in the flesh	Israel in the flesh <b>Spirit</b>	<i>No Jew/Gentile 1Cor 12:13 Spirit</i>
Works	Works <b>Faith</b>	<i>Not by works Rom 4:5 Faith</i>
Law	Law <b>Grace (hearts)</b>	<i>Not under law Rom 6:14 Grace (hearts)</i>
Land (Priests/Kingdom)	Land (Priests/Kingdom) <b>Salvation (everlasting)</b>	<i>Heaven Eph 2:5-6 Salvation (everlasting)</i>

- a. We partake of Christ, not a covenant. Israel's covenant was glorious for many reasons. We partake of some of that glory (e.g., the spiritual things: salvation, forgiveness, atonement, peace, etc –Rom 15:27), but without Israel, without works & conditions, without the law, & without sight.

## 2. Why God Made Us in the New Creature to Be Able Ministers of the New Testament

- a. Further revelation requires understanding what has come before (i.e., prophecy/mystery, law/grace, MMLJ = who Jesus is) – Rom 3:20, Rom 15:4, Eph 3:9-11, Acts 18:26
- b. The mystery revelation is the manifold wisdom of God that is more excellent. To Paul (and us) was given the understanding of *how* God could be righteous to save any man at any time.
- c. Thus, we are the only people who *could* minister the new testament (when the NT is here, they will need no minister of it because everyone will know it – Jer 31:34) – JN Darby quote...
- d. Knowing this & context, 2Cor 3:6 become much less difficult:
- i. 2Cor 2:14 → “God...always *causeth* us to triumph in Christ...” no matter to whom
  - ii. 2Cor 2:16 → “...And who is sufficient for these things?”
  - iii. 2Cor 3:5 → “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves...but our sufficiency is of God”
  - iv. 2Cor 3:7 → OT Israel was not sufficient themselves, but there was glory b/c it was of God
  - v. 2Cor 3:8 → NT Israel is more glorious b/c God causes them to be sufficient by the Spirit
  - vi. 2Cor 3:9 → OT was glorious, but condemning b/c flesh alone can't perform the law
  - vii. 2Cor 3:9 → NT is more glorious b/c righteousness is realized by Spirit causing the law
  - viii. 2Cor 3:13-15 → OT Israel was blind to this, unbelieving Israel (still OT) is also blind to this
  - ix. 2Cor 3:16 → One day Israel will turn to the Lord & believe (NT)
  - x. 2Cor 3:17 → Then they will partake of the Spirit (NT) & have liberty
    1. We have liberty b/c we're not under the law; they have liberty b/c the law is performed in righteousness and therefore is not a burden/cannot condemn

- xi. Through the mystery of Christ, God makes us sufficient to “maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge...in every place” – **2Cor 2:14**
- xii. **2Cor 3:6** → “God also hath made us ministers of the new testament”, not b/c we are under it (the letter), but b/c we understand the sufficient grace of Christ Jesus (spirit of it)
- e. 1Cor 11:25 also can be more easily understood with context
  - i. The Corinthians apparently had issues with situations surrounding actual food. Their greater issue was lack of charity, and that is the point of the entire epistle – a rebuke for lack of charity. In every chapter, Paul expositis at least one reason to do good works & how to treat people under grace. (1Cor 8:1, 8:8)
  - ii. In 1Cor 8:8, Paul shows them how “under grace, it doesn’t matter what you put in your mouth – if you do or don’t eat this or that – food doesn’t commend you to God” It’s not about physical things, it’s about understanding & charity—not about flesh, it’s spiritual.
  - iii. In ch.10, Paul exhorts good behavior showing sin is bad being an able minster of the OT
  - iv. In 1Cor 10:3-4, Paul clearly uses “eating and drinking of that Rock, which was Christ” as a figure: OT Israel in the wilderness didn’t even know of Christ, let alone eat or drink him.
  - v. In 1Cor 10:16-17, Paul uses “cup” & “bread” as a figures for the blood & body of Christ: (You know it’s a figure, because the common union/fellowship(10:20) you have with Christ’s blood is not an actual cup, & the common union/fellowship(10:20) you have with Christ’s body is not actual bread – Remember John 6??—You also know it’s a figure b/c of 1Cor 10:17—you and I are not slices of bread in a loaf. It’s a figure!)
  - vi. Then in 1Cor 10:30-31, Paul reiterates that food is not special, people are, so “Let no man seek his own, but another’s” (10:24), and “not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved” So “whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (10:31) and consider other people (10:32) – charity. Just getting some context...
  - vii. So we get into 1Cor 11 & again, this business of eating bread/body & drinking cups of blood shows up again & people isolate this passage to justify a ritual & put you under Israel’s New Testament. But what has been the pattern so far? Ably ministering.
  - viii. In 1Cor11:20, he says, “When you come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s supper.” Now, back in 1Cor 10:21 when he mentioned the “Lord’s table”, he’s equating that to “the bread which we break” (10:16), which we saw was a figure.
  - ix. In 1Cor ch.8-10, the Corinthians were having issues with eating, so Paul uses figures about eating & ministers both OT & mystery to communicate the exhortation & rebuke.
  - x. In 1Cor ch.11, the Corinthians are still having issues with eating (11:21-22), so Paul quotes Jesus in his *earthly* ministry, when he was ministering the NT to Israel—the night he was betrayed—saying, “Eat my body, drink my blood” (11:23-25).
  - xi. In John 6:54, Jesus said, “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life;” Who is Jesus talking to in this verse? A: OT Israel (John 6:32). Taking everything we’ve learned so far this weekend, how does Israel get eternal life? A: New Testament
  - xii. Unbelieving OT Israel in John 6 (& Catholics ever since) thought Jesus meant it literally. But, 9 verses later, he explained to his disciples that eating/drinking flesh/blood was *not* literal:

**“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”**— John 6:63 (*Jesus, able minister of the NT!*)

- xiii. They need to listen to his words, believe his words. What are his words? A: He is their Messiah. He’s bringing in their New Covenant, kingdom, salvation (eternal life).
- xiv. In Luke 22:19-20, the night Jesus was betrayed, he is eating a private Passover meal with the 12, and he breaks literal bread and says, “This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.” Then he gives them a cup, they drink it, and he says, “This is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”
- xv. Even if the 12 didn’t remember what he said in John 6, they knew this was symbolic: it was a figure—the bread wasn’t really his body, & the cup did not contain his actual blood.
- xvi. So why the show?
  - 1. The Passover was no longer for remembering the lamb of the Passover in Egypt, but remembering Jesus, the true Lamb of God. Passover was a law to remember Israel’s flight from Egypt: the lamb died so they could live to be born in the flesh as a nation (Ex 4:22, 12:42). Jesus, the fulfillment of that Passover, needed to die so he could send the Spirit & they could be born again as Spiritual Israel.
  - 2. The disciples did not understand he had to die (Luk 18:34, 22:50). Blood was not something that was prophesied about the NT. But nonetheless, Jesus is about to die & shed his blood to make the NT possible (Heb 9:14-17). He deserved to be served. He deserved to be first, have the best, he did not deserve to die. And yet, he was giving of himself for *them*—humbling himself unto death, not considering himself, but preferring others before him (Phi 2:3-8)—and that on the eve of his death!
- xvii. So back in 1Cor 11, Paul references this event to communicate something to the Corinthians. He states their problem (11:20-22 – “When ye come together therefore, you’re not doing it right! You’re not doing it the Lord’s way.”), quotes Jesus when he was giving of himself the night he was betrayed, then tells them why:
- xviii. In 1Cor 11:26, Paul says, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”
- xix. In all the verses we’ve run in 1Corinthians, John, and Luke, it was never about actually eating the bread/body or drinking the cup/blood. That’s your flesh, which profiteth nothing. It’s believing Christ’s words, they are spirit, they are life.
- xx. What is the lesson the Corinthians needed to learn from what Jesus said (and did) the night he was betrayed? A: He served others, even though he deserved to be served. He gave his body, he shed his blood, that night for the sake of both the OT sins and NT provision, but also for the sake of the mystery, the New Creature. The mystery was in the mind of Christ the night he was betrayed, though no one else knew it. He gave of himself to see the truth be able to work in other people → That’s charity, that’s grace.
- f. That’s how knowing the mystery makes us able ministers of the New Testament. We can explain it better than probably even they could. Not because we are sufficient in ourselves, but because God has made known his manifold wisdom to us through the apostle Paul in the scriptures.