

**“OUR NEED FOR BIBLICAL AUTHORITY” (#8)**

Introduction

- I. In our study of Biblical authority, one aspect of study which confuses many is the study of the covenant under which we are living today.
  - A. Confusion abounds due to a lack of teaching on this subject.
  - B. In days gone by, whole books have been written on the subject of which covenant we live under today. Such knowledge is still needed today!
- II. A lack of knowledge about the covenants is what keeps many folks confused about the Bible and living in error.
- III. Before we begin, let us define the word covenant.
  - A. Covenant – *“in the sense of cutting; a compact (because made by passing between pieces of flesh): -confederacy, (con-)feder(-ate), covenant, league.” (Strong’s).*
    - 1. **Note:** Passing between flesh to symbolize a binding covenant occurred in Genesis 15:7-18
    - 2. In the New Testament, “covenant” is defined as: *“a disposition, i.e. (specially) a contract (especially a devisory will):--covenant, testament” (Strong’s).* *“a promise or undertaking, human or divine” (Vine’s, Vol. 1, p. 251).*
  - B. Therefore, a covenant stands as a promise, or contract between two parties. In the Bible, such a “covenant” is seen as binding between: God and an individual, God and a nation, or God and the world, depending on the context.
  - C. **Disclaimer:** I recognize that sometimes, men made covenants with other men (Genesis 21:27, 26:28, 31:43-44, Deuteronomy 7:2; etc.), but our study concerns covenants between God and men, so I will confine our studies to passages which stress that.

Discussion

**I. IS THERE MORE THAN ONE COVENANT REVEALED IN SCRIPTURE?**

- A. We begin with this question, because there are many who do not believe there is more than one Covenant to be found in the Bible! When we do not have this basic knowledge of the covenants, we cannot handle God’s word accurately (II Timothy 2:15)!
- B. Various covenants God made in the Bible:
  - 1. God’s covenant with Noah (Genesis 6, 9). What did this involve? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. God’s covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 15, 17, 17:21; Exodus 2:24; Leviticus 26:42). \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. God’s covenant with national Israel (Exodus 19:5, 24:8, 34:27-28; Deuteronomy 4:13, 5:2). We sometimes call this: \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. God’s covenant of salt (Numbers 18:19; II Chronicles 13:5).
  - 5. God’s covenant of peace and of priesthood with Phineas (Numbers 25:10-13).
  - 6. God’s covenant at Jericho (Joshua 6:17-19, 7:11, 15). What was this covenant? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7. God’s covenant with Jews and Gentiles (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:5-13). We sometimes call this: \_\_\_\_\_
- C. **Note:** These covenants fit the definition above. We can fit them into categories such as: “God and an individual,” “God and a nation,” or “God and the world.”
- D. Primarily, we speak of “two covenants” (just as the Bible does, Hebrews 8:13, 10:9). The “Old” and “New” Covenants are often called \_\_\_\_\_.

**II. WHY STUDY THE COVENANTS?**

- A. What are some valuable reasons for studying the difference between the Old and New Covenants?
  - 1. God made the distinction between the two covenants (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:5-13).
  - 2. If we do not respect the covenants, we are doomed to confusion. For example:

- a. Are we to worship God on the Sabbath day or the first day of the week? (Exodus 20:8; Jeremiah 17:21-27; Acts 2:42, 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2)
  - i. Both are taught in the Bible, and both days of worship were practiced by those who loved and followed God!
  - ii. How confusing when we do not distinguish between the covenants!
- b. David was “a man after God’s own heart.” So, can we do as David did? (Multiple wives, Instrumental music, observe the Ten Commandments, Observe the Passover, etc.)
- 3. We can see how folks become confused when reading the Bible when they do not realize that there is a difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.
- B. When we study the covenants and learn to distinguish between them, we will have learned a lesson that most of the world has not learned!!

**III. HOW LONG WAS THE OLD COVENANT TO LAST?**

- A. God made it clear in Old Testament days that the Old Covenant was temporary.
  - 1. In Jeremiah 31:31-34, this is stated in clear language. God promised that He would make a \_\_\_\_\_ with Israel and Judah.
  - 2. Some say that based upon Christ’s words in Matthew 5:17, He did not take the Old Law out of the way.
    - a. Remember, Christ had promised to “fulfill” (fill to the full, complete, finish) the law.
    - b. If the Law is completed, finished, and filled, what is left to follow?? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. Among other things, Christ said, “\_\_\_\_\_” before He died (John 19:30).
- B. While the apostles lived, they spoke about the Old Law ending. Paul wrote much about this:
  - 1. II Corinthians 3:7-16 use several terms to show that the Old Law ended. Can you find these terms? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Galatians 3:19-25 – Paul contrasted things happening “before faith” (v. 23) and “after faith” (v. 25). He said that the law was added “till” \_\_\_\_\_. After this time, what happened? Was there a change or no change? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. Hebrews 8:8-13 is a direct quotation of \_\_\_\_\_. At the end of the chapter, he contrasts the \_\_\_\_\_ covenant with the \_\_\_\_\_ covenant! Which covenant was ready to vanish away? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. Colossians 2:14 (Ephesians 2:15-16): What was “abolished” or nailed to the cross? \_\_\_\_\_
- C. We need to respect the difference between the Old and New Covenant so that we follow the Lord’s will the way He would have us do!
- D. Seeing that the Old Law is removed, what does this mean to us?
  - 1. Under the New Testament, both Jew and Gentile are united (Ephesians 2:13-16). In contrast, who were God’s chosen people in the Old Testament? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. The New Testament is called a “better \_\_\_\_\_” established upon “better \_\_\_\_\_” (Hebrews 8:6).
  - 3. The New Testament alone is called the “\_\_\_\_\_ law of \_\_\_\_\_” (James 1:25).

**IV. WHAT VALUE DOES THE OLD LAW HAVE FOR FOLKS TODAY?**

- A. The Old Law was written for \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 15:4).
- B. In the Old Testament, we learn of God’s nature, His love, care, judgment, as well as examples of righteousness and wickedness among men and the consequences.
- C. There are many Old Testament references found in the New Testament which hold no meaning to a person if he/she is not exposed to the Old Testament. (Ex: Elisha, Lot’s Wife, Adam, Creation, etc.)
- D. The Old Testament sacrifices, as well as some events and people, pointed folks to Christ!
- E. Let us respect the purpose and place of the New Testament, and at the same time not be guilty of saying that the Old Law has no purpose today!

- Jarrod Jacobs