

**LIVING THE NEW COVENANT**

David Kuykendall

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## PREFACE

The four biblical accounts of the first Lord's Supper quote Jesus saying that the cup is His blood of the New Covenant. This fact alone should cause us to realize the importance of understanding and experiencing the New Covenant. Even though the entire New Testament is about the New Covenant, there are specific statements in the New Testament explaining it and how to live it.

The word "New" implies that there was another covenant. In Scripture, it is referred to as the "First Covenant." This covenant was between God and the Israelites. It consists of both moral and ceremonial laws that the Israelites were to obey.

Other than the statements of Jesus at the first Lord's Supper, the words "New Covenant" are used in the New Testament only by the Apostle Paul and the author of the Book of Hebrews. Paul mentions and describes the New Covenant in only two chapters. The entire Book of Hebrews is about the New Covenant.

In order for us to live the New Covenant, we need a background study of the First Covenant and the New Covenant. There are four parts to this book. Part 1 is "Understanding the First Covenant," and Parts 2 and 3 deal with understanding the New Covenant. Part 2 is "The New Covenant According to Paul." Part 3 is "The New Covenant According to Hebrews." Finally, Part 4 is "Living the New Covenant."

This study will be characterized by its brevity. However, all that is needed to guide us into living the New Covenant is here.

## **PART 1**

### **UNDERSTANDING THE FIRST COVENANT**

Soon after their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites came to Mount Sinai. Moses went up into the mountain to commune with God. Moses then returned to the people with the message that God would enter into covenant with them. The Israelites responded by saying, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do” (Exodus 19:8).

Exodus 24:3 says, “So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, ‘All the words which the LORD has said we will do.’ ”

Exodus 24:7 follows, “Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.’ ”

Three times the Israelites promised that they would do what the Lord said. They would be obedient in their own wisdom and strength.

The First Covenant contains both moral laws and ceremonial laws. The Apostle Paul deals almost exclusively with the moral laws. The Book of Hebrews deals exclusively with the ceremonial laws.



## CHAPTER 1

### THE FIRST COVENANT ACCORDING TO PAUL

Some of us, while reading in the Old Testament, wonder why the Israelites kept falling into sin. God revealed to Paul the reason.

In Romans 8:3 Paul writes, “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh ...” The First Covenant was between God’s commands and man’s flesh. “Flesh” is a New Testament term that describes our sin nature—which is that “we think we are wise.” It was their faith in themselves that caused the Israelites to believe that they could keep God’s commands without needing other resources.

Speaking of all people, Romans 1:22 says, “Professing to be wise, they became fools.” All of us were born with this attitude about ourselves.

Romans 1:23–28 shows that our sin nature, our thinking that we are wise, can result in idolatry and homosexuality. Romans 1:29–32 adds:

*... being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to*

*parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.*

Galatians 5:19–21a gives another list of things the flesh produces:

*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like.*

In a personal testimony, Paul describes how he learned that trying to keep the law in the flesh results in sin. In Romans 7:7–9, Paul writes:

*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.*

After his conversion, Paul experienced a sovereign period of living by grace. In time, Paul began to have temptations to be covetous. He knew that covetousness was forbidden in the Ten Commandments and that he must obey that commandment.

The moment Paul made the decision to keep the command in his own strength, his flesh was back in power. “The law entered that the offense might abound” (Romans 5:20). Then, Paul testifies, “... sin, taking opportunity by the commandment,

produced in me all manner of evil desire” (Romans 7:8). The Greek word translated “evil desire” should be translated “covetousness.” “All manner of covetousness” possibly is a reference to the list of things the tenth commandment forbids. Exodus 20:17 reads:

*You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.*

Paul testifies that trying to keep the law not to covet in his own strength resulted in a state of such inner misery that he described it with the words, “I died” (Romans 7:9).

Many Christians live the First Covenant way. They seek to keep God’s commands in their own strength and wisdom. When any Christian is “doing his best for Jesus,” he is living in the First Covenant way—not the New Covenant way. As a result, he has sins in his life that he hates but does not know how to get them out of his life. He has times of spiritual agony.

In Romans 7:5, Paul writes, “For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.”



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE FIRST COVENANT ACCORDING TO HEBREWS**

The ceremonial law of the First Covenant centers on worship at the tabernacle. Hebrews 8:4b–5 makes a significant statement about the tabernacle and the worship there when it says, “There are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, ‘See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.’ ”

Notice the words “copy,” “shadow,” and “pattern.” God gave Moses a vision of the pattern for the building of the tabernacle and what took place there were copies and shadows of the substance explained in the New Covenant.

Three more words in Hebrews 8:4b–5 list the shadows. They are “priests,” “gifts,” and “heavenly things.” The substances of the three shadows are Jesus as High Priest, Jesus as the sacrificial gift, and things that will take place in heaven.

There is no substance to a shadow. At times, we can look at a shadow and realize who or what it is a shadow of, but a shadow does not have substance.

Some of the Hebrew believers were tempted to return to the tabernacle worship because of persecution. In doing so, they would be dealing with shadows and copies of the real substance.

We need to look at the details of the high priest, the offerings, and the tabernacle in order to get a larger grasp of the ceremonial law of the First Covenant.

### **The High Priest**

With several statements, the Book of Hebrews introduces us to the high priests of the First Covenant:

*For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. (Hebrews 5:1)*

*Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. (Hebrews 7:23)*

*[Jesus] does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's. (Hebrews 7:27)*

*For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness. (Hebrews 7:28)*

The most important work of the high priest of the First Covenant was going into the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle once a year on the Day of Atonement to offer sacrifices for his own sins and the sins of the people.

*But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance. (Hebrews 9:7)*

### **The Sacrifices**

Read a few passages about the sacrifices by the high priest and other priests. All males in the tribe of Levi were priests.

*For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. (Hebrews 5:1)*

*For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. (Hebrews 8:3)*

*Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. (Hebrews 9:23)*

*For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. (Hebrews 10:1)*

*But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. (Hebrews 10:3)*

*In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. (Hebrews 10:6)*

*And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. (Hebrews 10:11)*

### **The Tabernacle**

The tabernacle of the First Covenant consisted of two rooms. Hebrews 9:1–5 describes them:

*Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the*

*covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.*

Concerning the mercy seat, Exodus 25:21–22 says:

*You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.*

Notice the words, “And there I will meet with you.” It was at the mercy seat that God met with the high priest once a year.

We have already seen that Hebrews 8:4b–5 describes the tabernacle as a copy and shadow of the pattern of the heavenly things.

*... there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, “See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”*

Hebrews 9:6–7 says, “Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance.”

God's promise that He would meet with the high priest at the mercy seat is what makes the mercy seat the shadow of heavenly things.

## **PART 2**

### **THE NEW COVENANT ACCORDING TO PAUL**

Other than the statements of Jesus at the Lord's Supper, the words "New Covenant" are found in the New Testament only in the writings of Paul and in the Book of Hebrews. Paul writes of the New Covenant in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 and in Galatians chapter 4. In 2 Corinthians 3:6, Paul writes:

*... who [God] also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

Later in the same chapter, Paul mentions the ministry of righteousness and a superior glory.

In the Galatians 4 passage, where Paul uses the words New Covenant, he writes about freedom from the law.

According to the writings of Paul, the moral law of the New Covenant is about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the ministry of righteousness, the superior glory, and freedom from the law. I also include a chapter titled "Life of Grace." Because the New Covenant is about the Holy Spirit, it is also about grace even though the word is never mentioned in connection with the words "the New Covenant" in the New Testament.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Again, our study will be characterized by brevity. Many entire books concerning the Holy Spirit have been written. Our study here will consider only a few passages on the theme.

#### **Born of the Spirit**

In conversation with Nicodemus concerning the necessity for one to be born again, Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews. He was a teacher of Scripture, but he had no concept of his need to be born of the Spirit. Sadly, many today have never even heard about the new birth.

The second chapter of the Book of Acts reveals that the Holy Spirit draws a person to Jesus for the experience of the new birth.

#### **Baptized into Jesus by the Holy Spirit**

Romans 6:3–5 says, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism

into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.”

A believer’s baptism into Jesus has nothing to do with water. It is the Holy Spirit who does this work. First Corinthians 12:12–13 says:

*For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*

Just as the human body is one with many members, Jesus is one body with many members. Clearly, the Holy Spirit baptizes a new believer into Jesus.

It is most interesting that 1 Corinthians 12:12–13 teaches also that we are baptized into oneness with all others who have been born again.

According to Romans 6:3–5, when we were baptized into Jesus, we were baptized into His death, burial, and resurrection. When we were saved, we were spiritually crucified, buried, and resurrected.

### **The Holy Spirit Lives in Every Believer**

Romans 8:9 declares, “Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” Speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jesus says in John 14:17, “He dwells with you and will be in you.”

The passage in 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, speaking of the Holy Spirit baptizing believers into Christ, ends with the words in

verse 13: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

One of the great failures of the evangelical Christian movement is the absence of a strong emphasis on the truth that when a believer is saved, the Spirit of God becomes one with his spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17).

### **The Holy Spirit Is Helper**

John 14:16 says, “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.” The Helper Jesus refers to in this verse is the Holy Spirit.

The Greek word translated “Helper” implies a number of things. It can be translated “Comforter” as seen in the King James Version. In times of stress, the believer has the Holy Spirit in him to bring comfort. Many can joyfully say that they have had this wonderful experience. It also has been translated “Counselor.”

John 14:26 adds, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

Jesus says in John 15:26–27, “When the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

### **Filled with the Spirit**

*And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)*

Perhaps the best-known reference to the filling of the Holy

Spirit is in Acts 2:4. This is the account of Jesus pouring out the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The verse says:

*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

This verse reveals that the greatest need for the ministry of evangelism is the filling of the Holy Spirit. In the New Covenant, this is available.

Peter told the people who heard the gospel on the day of Pentecost that if they would respond to the drawing of their hearts, they would be given the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). About 3,000 did respond. Now there were about 3,120 people in Jerusalem filled with the Holy Spirit. What happens next is a beautiful picture and example of what all churches should follow. Acts 2:42–47 describes a church filled with the Holy Spirit:

*And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*

Churches today that would use the first church in Jerusalem as their example would need to begin with a study of being filled with the Spirit.

In the Ephesians 5:18 passage, the word translated “be filled” is in a verb tense that means to “continue to be filled” with the Spirit. In the New Covenant, we have the privilege of doing just that.

### **Walking According to the Spirit**

In Romans 8:5–11, Paul contrasts walking in the flesh and walking in the Spirit. Romans 8:5–6 says, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Paul continues with other statements about the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:10 says, “And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”

Romans 8:11 adds, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

In Romans 8:12 Paul writes, “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.” We are in debt to God, others, and ourselves to walk in the Spirit.

As Philip was watching the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch, the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.” Acts 8:37 records that the eunuch was saved. The result would have been that the gospel was taken by an important man into Africa.

Acts 10:9–48 gives the account of the conversion of Gentiles. It is the story of God using Peter to bring the message of salvation to Cornelius and others. Peter was hesitant to go to Cornelius the Gentile, but the Holy Spirit told Peter to go and he went (Acts 10:20).

The first missionary journey began in Antioch of Syria: “So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus” (Acts 13:4).

Acts 16:6–7 describes the negative leadership of the Holy Spirit: “Now when they [Paul and Silas] had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.”

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **MINISTRY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Continuing the presentation of the aspects of the New Covenant, 2 Corinthians 3:9 says, “For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.”

In this passage, Paul contrasts the ministry of the First Covenant with the ministry of the New Covenant. The ministry of the First Covenant is described as a ministry of condemnation. The ministry of the New Covenant is called a ministry of righteousness.

In calling the First Covenant a ministry of condemnation, Paul was likely thinking of the death that living by the First Covenant had brought to him. He describes it in detail in chapter 7 of Romans. The New Covenant is described as a ministry of righteousness because that is what it produces in those who are saved and those who live it.

One aspect of the believer’s righteousness is that of “justification.” Galatians 2:16 says, “... knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ.”

The word “justified” is a courtroom term. It describes a judge declaring a person “innocent” of the crime he has been accused of even though he might have been guilty. When one is saved, among other things he is declared righteous by God. This means that from the time of one’s conversion, God will relate to him as though he is righteous. This does not mean we will never sin again. We have sinned since we were declared righteous. If we have unconfessed sin in our lives, God will not relate to us as though we are righteous. When those sins are confessed, repented of, and forgiven, He will relate to us again as though we are righteous—even though He knows that we will sin again.

Because one is justified at conversion, the ministry of righteousness is also a ministry of evangelism. God will not declare a person righteous until he responds positively to the message of the gospel of Christ.

There is a second type of righteousness mentioned in the New Testament. It is actually being righteous. In this work, this type of righteousness will be referred to as “realized righteousness.” This begins the moment one is declared righteous. At the moment of conversion, the Spirit of God enters the life of the new believer and becomes one with the spirit of the believer. The result of this is “realized righteousness.”

In addition to this initial experience of becoming righteous at conversion, God has provided ways for the new convert to grow in righteousness.

Romans 5:17 declares, “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

The new believer grows in righteousness by receiving righteousness. The word “receive” should be translated “continue to receive.” Our growth in righteousness can be a

continual growth.

Romans 8:10 reads, “And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” This implies that we continue to receive righteousness by being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The realized righteousness that has been described is characterized by love and purity.

There is a third aspect of a believer’s righteousness. Isaiah 59:17–18 shows that righteousness brings judgment upon sin. The passage reads, “For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay, fury to His adversaries.” This is a description of a righteous God when He prepared to bring judgment on His enemies.

But how do those growing in love and purity bring judgment? It certainly is not by bringing judgment on others. It is, however, a believer bringing judgment on his own sins—doing what he needs to do to be free of sins.

We are ministers of righteousness when we tell the lost how to be saved, when we tell the saved how to be filled with the Holy Spirit and receive righteousness, and when we show the saved how to have victory over sin.

The ministry of righteousness exceeds the ministry of condemnation in glory.



## CHAPTER 5

### LIFE OF SUPERIOR GLORY

In 2 Corinthians 3:7–11, the Apostle Paul contrasts the glory of the New Covenant with the glory of the First Covenant. He begins his contrast with a reference to the glory that came on the face of Moses when he would be in communion with God. Second Corinthians 3:7–8 reads:

*But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?*

Exodus 34:33–35 provides the historical account of what Paul mentions:

*And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone,*

*then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.*

Paul says that if this kind of glory was on the face of Moses who was receiving the covenant of death, how much more shall the covenant of life have glory?

Paul follows with, “For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels” (2 Corinthians 3:9–10).

Paul concludes his contrasting statements by saying, “For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious” (2 Corinthians 3:11).

Paul concludes his explanation of the superior glory of the New Covenant in 2 Corinthians 3:18 with these words:

*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

The word translated “beholding” is in a tense of continual action. Six verses later in 2 Corinthians 4:6, Paul writes that the glory of God is in the face of Jesus.

In contrast with the fading glory on the face of Moses, the glory on the face of a believer grows as he gazes into the glory of the face of Jesus.

Psalms 34:5 describes those who look to God with these words: “They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed.”

## CHAPTER 6

### FREE FROM THE LAW

Freedom from the law means freedom from the responsibility and struggle to keep the law. In Chapter 1, we saw the need for this freedom. Consider again just a few verses that reveal the necessity of being free from the law.

*Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. (Romans 5:20)*

*The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. (1 Corinthians 15:56)*

*For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. (Romans 7:5)*

There are ample Scriptures that show it is possible for us to be free from the law. Consider a few:

*Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. (Romans 7:4)*

*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made*

*me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:2)*

*For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:19–20)*

*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. (Galatians 5:18)*

In the Book of Galatians, Paul reveals the importance of living free from the law and the necessity of continuing to experience the freedom.

Paul was God's instrument to bring the gospel to Galatia. A number of churches were started there. Paul had led many of the members of those churches to Christ. Then he taught them how to live the New Covenant.

After Paul's departure, false teachers came to the Galatian churches and taught them that Paul was wrong. They told them that one is saved by keeping the law and that one is to live for God by keeping the law. In other words, the false teachers were teaching the people to live out the First Covenant.

Paul provides an illustration of both the First Covenant and the New Covenant. In Galatians 4:21–24, Paul writes:

*Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar.*

Hagar, Abraham's slave woman who gave birth to Abraham's first son, represents the First Covenant. In verse 25 Paul explains, "For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children."

Hagar represents Mount Sinai because she is a picture of the law covenant. She represents Jerusalem because the citizens of Jerusalem were in slavery to the law just as she was a slave of Abraham.

Hagar's son was born in the natural way, picturing that those who seek salvation by law will never have the new birth, which is by the Spirit.

Sarah represents the Jerusalem from above that is free. The Jerusalem from above had no labor pains but has more children than the slave mother. The children from the Jerusalem above were not born the natural way. They were born like Isaac. They were born by the Spirit.

Galatians 4:30 continues, "Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.' "

It was Sarah who told Abraham to get rid of the slave woman and her son. However, God told Abraham to do what Sarah had said (Genesis 21:10–12). Paul was telling the Galatians to cast out the law and those who were teaching and believing that righteousness comes through keeping the law.

God is saying to born-again believers of today to cast out the law and those who are the sons of the law—those who teach and believe that keeping the law is the way to salvation and righteousness. It can also be said that we are to cast out the theology of "doing our best for Jesus" to gain salvation and righteousness.

Paul follows his illustration and exhortation in Galatians 5:1: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has

made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”

Paul makes another strong statement about freedom from the law with a personal testimony. Earlier we discussed Paul’s testimony in Romans 7:7–9. However, throughout the remainder of Romans chapter 7, Paul is giving his testimony about the failure of attempting to live under the law—under living the First Covenant way.

His testimony was about life after he became a Christian but before God revealed to him how to live the Christian life—before he knew that he could and should live free from the law.

It would be good for the reader to see if he has the same testimony. If so, he is living the First Covenant way and not the New Covenant way.

Paul writes in Romans 7:10–11, “And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.”

In Romans 7:15, Paul continues explaining his life under law by saying, “For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.”

In verse 17, Paul adds, “But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.”

Then in verse 18, Paul says, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.”

For those who have a passion to live as God wants them to, such a life is one of “death.”

In Romans 7:24, Paul cries, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”

He answers his own question in verse 25: “I thank God—  
through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

For the sake of Paul and all believers, God revealed to Paul  
how to escape life in the First Covenant and be delivered to  
life in the New Covenant.



## **CHAPTER 7**

### **LIFE OF GRACE**

Nowhere in the New Testament does the word “grace” appear with the words “New Covenant.” However, when one is walking in the Spirit, he is living by grace. In Romans chapters 5 and 6, the New Covenant life is described with the word “grace” without mention of the Holy Spirit. In Romans chapter 8, the same quality of life is described as “walking in the Spirit” without mention of the word “grace.” To describe the life of the New Covenant as the life of grace adds to the richness of our understanding.

This will be a very brief chapter because the intention is to point out a few things that grace provides that are not mentioned in the earlier study of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Reigning as a King**

Romans 5:17 says, “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

Believers living in grace are living like a king. They have victory over sin. They are successful in ministry. They live in righteousness. They have a glory about them.

**Free from the Law and the Power of Sin**

Romans 6:14 says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

When we are not under law but under grace, sin does not reign over us. There are many God-loving believers who want to be used of God and, to a great extent, are available to God. However, they also have sins in their lives that cause them grief. Nothing they have tried has given them victory over those sins. They are living the First Covenant way—not the New Covenant way.

**Power in Ministry**

Look at the “thorn-in-the-flesh” passage where Paul explains that God provided grace for power because of the limitations the thorn had placed upon him.

*And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7–10)*

Add to this the victorious words in 1 Corinthians 15:10:

*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*

### **Great Spirit of Generosity**

Paul was receiving offerings from different churches he served for the poor saints in Jerusalem. In his second letter to the church at Corinth, Paul encouraged them through a reference to what the churches in Macedonia were doing. He writes:

*Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. (2 Corinthians 8:1–4)*

Paul makes it clear that this amazing spirit of generosity was a result of the grace of God. Through the years, this passage has most likely prompted many to turn to God's grace to grant to them a spirit of generosity.



## **PART 3**

### **THE NEW COVENANT ACCORDING TO HEBREWS**

The description of the New Covenant found in Hebrews 8:8–12 is a quotation of the prophecy made by the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 31:31–34. The Hebrews quotation of Jeremiah reads:

*Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when 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 when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. 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 on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”*

Because the New Covenant is for those who have received Jesus as Lord and Savior, why are the words “house of Israel” and “house of Judah” part of the covenant? Three statements from Paul provide the explanation. First, in Romans 2:28–29 Paul writes, “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.”

Then Paul writes in Romans 9:6–8, “But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called.’ That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.”

That is, the Israelites who are the children of Abraham only in the flesh are not the children of God. The children of the promise are counted as the seed of Abraham. The children of the promise are those who have had a new birth.

Galatians 6:15–16 declares, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.”

The New Covenant is not with national Israel but with spiritual Israel—those who have been born again by the Spirit—which, of course, includes some of national Israel.

The first words of the New Covenant recorded in Hebrews 8:10–12—“I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people”—are surely a reference to the presence and leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 8:11 reads, “None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.” This is a reference to those of the new birth.

Hebrews 8:12 says, “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” These words refer to both conversion and forgiveness of sins after conversion.

However, the Book of Hebrews adds other aspects to the New Covenant that are not mentioned in the Jeremiah prophecy. These other features of the New Covenant are presented as the substance of the “shadows” of the First Covenant.



## CHAPTER 8

### JESUS IS OUR HIGH PRIEST

Hebrews 8:1–2 says, “Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.”

This statement leaves the impression that from the first verse of the book, the author has been writing about Jesus as our High Priest. Those first words highly exalt our conception of our High Priest. In Hebrews 1:1–3, the author writes:

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

Chapter 2 of the Book of Hebrews reveals Jesus who understands man’s needs from personal experience. This prepares Him to meet man’s needs.

*Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. (Hebrews 2:17–18)*

Hebrews 3:1–6 exalts Jesus as our High Priest by comparing Him to Moses, the great leader of national Israel:

*Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*

Perhaps the best known and a very helpful statement in the Book of Hebrews about Jesus as our High Priest is in Hebrews 4:15–16:

*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Hebrews 5:5–6 exalts Jesus as our High Priest by saying that He was proclaimed High Priest by God the Father:

*So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High*

*Priest, but it was He who said to Him: “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” As He also says in another place: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”*

Hebrews 6:19–20 presents Jesus as a High Priest in heaven and a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek—meaning an eternal priest.

*This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

Hebrews 7:11–12 declares that because Jesus is the High Priest, there must be a New Covenant. This is an amazing revelation. The author writes:

*Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.*

Hebrews 10:12 adds, “But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.”

The high priests of the First Covenant were shadows. Jesus is the substance.



## CHAPTER 9

### JESUS IS OUR SIN OFFERING

In the worship of the First Covenant, blood sacrifices were essential. The major sacrifice came on the Day of Atonement. On that day once a year, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place two times to sprinkle blood on and before the mercy seat. First, he sprinkled the blood of a bull on and before the mercy seat to make atonement for himself. He then left and reentered the Most Holy Place with the blood of a goat and sprinkled it before and on the mercy seat to make atonement for the people. Hebrews 9:7 describes it in this manner: “But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance.”

All of this was a shadow. The substance is Jesus Himself. The greatest passage in Hebrews declaring this truth is Hebrews 10:1–10. It says:

*For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more*

*consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—in the volume of the book it is written of Me—to do Your will, O God.' " Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

According to Hebrews 9:12, "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

Hebrews 9:14 adds to the significance of the blood sacrifice of the High Priest, Jesus.

*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

Hebrews 10:19–22 says of the blood sacrifice of Jesus, "Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, 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."

## CHAPTER 10

### THE HEAVENLY THINGS

The heavenly things mentioned in connection with the tabernacle are those things pictured on earth at the tabernacle. They will be eternal blessings in heaven. Likely, no one knows all that could be involved, but we will list four that seem to be things mentioned in the Book of Hebrews.

#### **The Shed Blood of Jesus**

Throughout the instructions for the activities at the tabernacle is the shedding of the blood of animals. This, of course, was a picture of Jesus shedding His blood on the cross. Hebrews 12:22–24 describes what is in heaven:

*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.*

#### **The High Priest**

Just as there was a high priest ministering at the tabernacle, our High Priest ministers from His throne in heaven. We are

invited to “come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

### **Fellowship with God**

The high priest would go once a year into the Holiest of All and at the mercy seat meet with God. No one else was ever allowed there.

Scripture says that when Jesus died on the cross, the veil that was between the Holy Place and the Holiest of All was torn from the top to the bottom, inviting all believers to enter into God’s presence from that point forward.

### **Forgiveness of Sins**

When the high priest would enter the Holiest of All with the blood of a goat and sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat, atonement was made for the sins of the people.

In a personal way, because of the shed blood of Jesus, God forgives the sins of those who come to Him with a heart of repentance confessing their sins.

## **PART 4**

### **LIVING THE NEW COVENANT**

We have studied the differences between the First Covenant and the New Covenant as taught by Paul and in the Book of Hebrews. Paul teaches about the differences between the moral law of the First Covenant and moral law of the New Covenant. The Book of Hebrews teaches the differences between the ceremonial law of the First Covenant and the New Covenant.

Now we will study how to be set free from the two types of laws of the First Covenant and to enter into the experience of the New Covenant. The changes in both cases come through faith and choice.



## **CHAPTER 11**

### **ACCORDING TO PAUL**

In order to understand how to experience the New Covenant, we must begin with Romans 5:12. It reads: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

The words “death spread to all men” imply that Adam is the head of the human race. The words “sin entered the world, and death through sin” imply that Adam infected the entire human race with a sin nature and a death nature. All who have been born on earth with the exception of Jesus have been born with a sin nature and a death nature.

The passage tells us that Adam is the head of the human race and when one is born into that race, things true of Adam become true of him.

We next need to pay attention to one word in Romans 5:14. The last few words of the verse are, “Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.” Our one word is “type.” Adam is a “type of Jesus.” The word means that in some ways Adam and Jesus are alike. The word picture explains well what is meant.

Adam is the head of the human race, and when we were born into his race, things true of him became true of us. This

picture of Jesus says that He is the head of a spiritual race, and when we enter His race, things true of Jesus become true of us.

Romans 6:3–5 explains the things that became true of us when we were born into the race of Jesus:

*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.*

The passage reveals that when a person becomes a Christian, he is baptized by the Holy Spirit into Jesus (1 Corinthians 12:12–14). He becomes one with Jesus and is spiritually crucified, buried, and resurrected.

Because all believers have been spiritually crucified, buried, and resurrected, they can live out the New Covenant.

It may be important here to say that Jesus did not teach about a believer's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. He did say to His disciples that He had many things left to tell them but that they were not able to bear them, so the Holy Spirit would teach them. John 16:12–13 quotes Jesus saying:

*I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

The believer's oneness with Christ in crucifixion, burial, and resurrection is surely one of the things Jesus had in mind.

Because Paul is the one New Testament writer who writes

about our oneness with Christ, we can confidently believe that the Holy Spirit revealed these truths to him. The seventh chapter of Romans indicates that the revelation came at a time when Paul was in deep distress about his walk with God.

God not only taught Paul that he was spiritually crucified, buried, and resurrected, but God also taught him how to experience his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. That guidance is found in Romans 6:11–13. Those verses read:

*Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*

When we believe that we are spiritually crucified, buried, and resurrected and obey these five statements, we will experience our spiritual crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. We will look at the five statements one at a time.

*Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*  
(Romans 6:11)

This is a “faith” command. The word “reckon” means to believe. The words “dead indeed to sin” need some explanation. The word “sin” refers to our sin nature—believing we are wise. “Dead indeed to sin” means that we are separated from our sin nature.

Romans 6:6 says, “Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.” A legitimate translation of that verse is, “Our old man was crucified with

Him that the body might be set free from our sin nature.” Because of the crucifixion of our old man, our bodies are separated from our sin nature.

Believing that we are “alive to God” means that spiritually we live in the presence of God.

The second of the five commands is a “choice” command: “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts” (Romans 6:12). We are to choose to live out our liberation from thinking that we are wise and do not need direction for our lives from God.

The third command is also a choice command: “And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin” (Romans 6:13a). This command is that we choose not to give ourselves to the control of our sin nature—our own point of view.

So the second and third commands for living out the New Covenant relate to the belief that we are dead to our sin nature. The last two of the five commands relate to our belief that we are alive to God.

The fourth command is, “... but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead” (Romans 6:13b). This is another choice command. We will make ourselves available to God’s point of view. However, there is a faith element to this command. We are to make ourselves available to God “as being alive from the dead.” This means as those who are spiritually crucified, buried, and resurrected.

The fifth command is, “... and [present] your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (Romans 6:13c). In this command we must borrow from the fourth command the word “present.” This also is a choice command. We make our bodies available to God, and He uses our bodies as His instruments to do works of righteousness.

Verse 14 of Romans chapter 6 gives firm confirmation that if we believe we are one with Christ in crucifixion, burial, and resurrection and obey the five commands that follow that belief, we will experience our spiritual crucifixion, burial, and resurrection and be able to live out the New Covenant. The verse reads:

*For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

The word “For” can be translated “Then.” It should be so translated here because when we believe we are spiritually crucified, buried, and resurrected and obey the five commands, we will not be under law but under grace and our sin nature will not have dominion over us. We will not live out of our own point of view. We will live out of God’s point of view and in God’s power.

We now must show that experiencing our spiritual crucifixion, burial, and resurrection enables us to live by the Holy Spirit, have a ministry of righteousness, have a superior glory, and be free from the law and live by grace.

### **Experiencing the Ministry of the Holy Spirit**

We were born in the Spirit. The Spirit baptized us into Jesus and into His death, burial, and resurrection. The Holy Spirit lives in us, and we can be filled with the Spirit. He is our Helper, and we can walk in the Spirit.

The one thing we need is the filling of the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:17 reads:

*For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*

The only thing that we need to do to be filled with the Spirit

is to experience the crucifixion of the flesh. Galatians 5:24 says, “And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” When we obey the five commands, we experience the crucifixion of our flesh and remove its power. We are filled with the Holy Spirit.

### **Experiencing the Ministry of Righteousness**

When we obey the five commands and walk in the Spirit, we tell people about Jesus and the salvation He offers. This leads to a person’s salvation and justification—declared righteousness. It results in the Holy Spirit being joined to the believer’s spirit. We teach Christians that they can receive righteousness when they obey the five commands. We teach Christians that if they will live out the five commands that they will experience growth in “realized righteousness.”

### **Experiencing the Life of a Superior Glory**

When we experience our spiritual resurrection, we are with the Lord in the heavenly places. From this position, we can gaze upon Jesus. Second Corinthians 3:18 reads:

*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

### **Experiencing Freedom from the Law**

In Romans 7:9, Paul writes, “I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.”

The word “revived” is important. It is a reference to our sin nature, our thinking that we are wise. Christians who live by grace experience the revival of the sin nature many times by failing to obey the five commands. However, when we continue to obey the five commands, we keep the flesh out of power and are filled with the Holy Spirit. He will fulfill the righteous

requirement of the law in us. This can best be explained by reading Romans 8:3–4:

*For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*

Remember that Hebrews 8:10 says, “I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” This is a reference to the Holy Spirit.

Freedom from the law is confirmed by Galatians 5:18:

*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.*

### **Experiencing the Life of Grace**

We live by grace as we obey the five commands. Remember Romans 6:14 immediately follows Paul’s listing of the five commands: “[Then] sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”



## **CHAPTER 12**

### **ACCORDING TO HEBREWS**

We live out the moral law of the New Covenant through choice and faith. The same is true for living out the ceremonial law of the New Covenant.

We have seen that the Book of Hebrews is written to Jewish Christians. They had been saved and had enjoyed their life with God in spite of being persecuted. However, in time, the persecution was making some of them willing to return to the temple worship and be free of the persecution.

The choice part of experiencing again the New Covenant was simply choosing to refrain from worship at the temple and choosing to return to the spiritual worship they had experienced immediately after they were saved. When any believer drifts away from God, he must choose to return to fellowship with God.

The faith part is not as simple as the choice part.

We have mentioned earlier that the Book of Hebrews shows that the ceremonial aspects of the First Covenant are “shadows” (8:5, 10:1), “symbols” (9:9), and “copies” (8:5, 9:23, 9:24). Worship at the temple was with the help of things that can be seen and touched. The New Covenant provides the substance

of the shadows, symbols, and copies. The New Covenant is lived out by faith in the realities of things that cannot be seen or heard. There is much about faith in the Book of Hebrews. However, there are two passages that, in detail, show we experience the New Covenant by faith.

In Hebrews chapter 3, the author quotes Psalm 95:7–11, which is a reference to the Israelites being brought under the judgment of God because of their lack of faith. God promised to give them the land of Canaan. This was not fulfilled because the promise was not mixed with faith in the hearts of the Israelites.

Any of the Hebrew Christians who did return to the temple worship would be making the same mistake that their forefathers made at Kadesh Barnea.

The second major passage showing the need of faith is Hebrews chapter 11—known as the “faith chapter” of the Bible. The passage lists one well-known person of the Old Testament after another who won victories by faith. Then in Hebrews 12:1–2, the author drives home the necessity of living by faith:

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

## **CONCLUSION**

Listening to dozens of sermons and looking for books about the New Covenant have revealed a lack of understanding and teaching on these basic truths. This lack is what prompted this brief introduction of the New Covenant.

Talking to individuals about their understanding of how to live the Christian life has been further revelation that a simple and brief treatment of the New Covenant is needed.

Reading this brief work has possibly shown you that you are still living in the First Covenant manner and not experiencing the New Covenant life. If you plan to begin living the New Covenant way, the purpose of the writing of this work will have been realized.

One can only imagine what the impact of our churches would be today if our Christian leaders of years gone by had taught us to live the New Covenant way rather than the First Covenant way.

It is possible that our generation of believers can leave the Christian world an understanding of how to live the New Covenant.

Remember that at the first observance of the Lord's Supper, Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood" (Luke 22:20).

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