

So Great a Covenant

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction:

A. Three lessons in this study:

1. So Great a Salvation
2. So Great a High Priest
3. So Great a Covenant

B. What is a covenant?

1. A covenant is an agreement between two beings involving promises on the part of both to the other. It is greater than a contract
2. Covenants between God and humankind are central to every dispensation of time in the Bible
3. Covenant comes from bereeth - "a cutting; a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh; a confederacy, covenant, league" (Strongs)
4. It comes from a Hebrew root word that means "to cut." This is the custom of two people passing between the split bodies of slain animals after making an agreement - Gen. 15:9-10, 17; Jer. 34:18
 - a. Sometimes accompanied by sharing bread - Gen. 31:54
5. Abraham and his children were commanded to be circumcised as a "sign of covenant" between them and God - Gen. 17:10-11
6. At Sinai, Moses sprinkled the blood of animals on the altar and upon the people who entered into covenant with God - Ex. 24:6-8
7. There were covenants between people who considered each other as equals; the agreement bound them to carefully outlined responsibilities - 1Sam. 18:3
8. What is remarkable is that God Who is holy, omniscient, and omnipotent; yet consents to enter into covenant with humankind, who is feeble, sinful, and flawed.

C. The covenant of Christ

1. The New Testament makes a clear distinction between the covenants of the Law of Moses and that of Christ - Gal. 4:24-26; 2Cor. 3:7-9
2. God accomplished for His people what the old covenant failed to do
 - a. Jer. 31:31-34
3. Jesus is the Mediator of this superior covenant between God and man
 - a. Heb. 8:6, 9:15, 12:24
4. The offering of Christ sealed the new covenant under which we are justified by God's grace - Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20; 1Cor. 11:25
5. The new covenant holds God's promise (forgiveness of sin and eternal life) and our promise in return (faith, love, and a lifetime of service)
 - a. Heb. 10:2, 22, 12:22-25, 28-29

I. THE OLD COVENANT

A. The first covenant was not faultless - Heb. 8:7

1. The Levitical priesthood was flawed and powerless - Heb. 7:11
2. The Law made no one perfect, was weak & unprofitable - Heb. 7:18-19

3. The sacrifices could not cleanse away sins - Heb. 10:4, 11
4. The people of the first covenant were also at fault
 - a. Heb. 8:8-9; Jer. 11:6-8
5. God built obsolescence into the old covenant. By calling the promised covenant "new" (Jer. 31:31), God declared the first covenant would become obsolete
 - a. Heb. 8:13; 2Cor. 3:13
6. The old covenant continued for about 500 years after Jeremiah, providing an environment in which the new and perfect covenant could come in glory.
 - a. The covenant given through Noah had its glory, but it was exceeded by the covenant given through Moses; far above both is the covenant given through Christ

II. THE NEW COVENANT

- A. It is inward and spiritual - Heb. 8:10; James 1:21; 1Peter 1:22-23
- B. It provides a close relationship with God - Heb. 8:10; 1Peter 2:9-10; Rev. 21:3
- C. It is with people who truly know the Lord - Heb. 8:11; John 6:45
- D. It grants full forgiveness of sins - Heb. 8:12; Rom. 11:27, 7:24
- E. It is for everyone - Heb. 7:25; Rom. 1:16

Conclusion:

- A. Will you commit to your half of this superior covenant, made with superior sacrifices, offered by a superior high priest, granting superior salvation?
- B. Heb. 10:19-23, 2:1-3