

## **"... Not According To The Covenant ..."**

*"Behold the days come, saith 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 ..." (Heb. 8:6f).*

The two Greek words for new: *neos* and *kainos*, are both used to describe the covenant God would make with *"the house of Israel and the house of Judah"* (Heb. 8:8; 12:24). These two words teach us the New Covenant is new both in "form and quality;" that it truly would be different from the first covenant. The following are some of the ways in which the new covenant is different from the first.

It was made with a new Israel. The first covenant was made with physical, fleshly Israel. The second covenant is made with spiritual Israel; those who are sons of Abraham through faith (Gal. 3:7). That there is such an Israel one only need read Romans 2:28f; Galatians 6:16; Philippians 3:2f. The emphasis of the New Covenant is upon the heart, not the flesh. *"I will put my laws into their mind and on their hearts also will I write them"* (Heb. 8:10b). This is not to say that the heart was not involved in the first covenant. It was. But the greater emphasis of the first covenant was external while with the New Covenant the emphasis is internal. The Corinthian writer had this in mind when he wrote, *"Not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh"* (2 Cor. 3:3b). Those with whom the New Covenant is made are members by virtue of a spiritual birth, not a physical one. *"And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizens and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest of them"* (Heb. 8:11). To this end Jesus told an astonished and perplexed Nicodemus, *"Except one be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (Jn. 3:3). When Nicodemus expressed his bewilderment and asked, *"How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"* Jesus answered, *"Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"* (Jn. 4-6). Those of the New Covenant are members of that covenant willingly; those of the first covenant had no choice in being part of it.

The grace of forgiveness would be permanent. *"For I will be merciful to their iniquities and their sins will I remember no more"* (Heb. 11:12). There is no dispute that sometimes in the Old Testament promise that sins would be *"remembered no more"* was made (Isa. 43:25). On the other hand, it cannot be disputed that there was a *"remembrance of sins, year by year"* (Heb. 10:8). The forgiveness of sins of those of the first covenant was not fully re-

alized until Jesus died on the cross. The writer earlier wrote, "*and for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance*" (Heb. 9:15). If complete forgiveness of sins under the first covenant had already occurred, Jesus would not have died for the redemption of them. It must be evident that, whatever understanding of forgiveness Israel had; true, real and complete forgiveness did not come until Jesus' blood was shed on Calvary. Next: "That Which Is Becoming Old And Waxeth Aged Is Nigh Unto Vanishing Away."

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