

# Baptist Covenant Theology – The New Covenant is not Old

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By way of review...

## Charleston Confession – Chapter 7

3. This covenant (i.e. the Covenant of Grace) is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament; and it is founded in that eternal covenant transaction that was between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the elect; and it is alone by the grace of this covenant that all the posterity of fallen Adam that ever were saved did obtain life and blessed immortality, man being now utterly incapable of acceptance with God upon those terms on which Adam stood in his state of innocency.

## The Covenant of Grace - Definition

Benjamin Keach on the Covenant of Grace

- a. It was first decreed in past eternity
- b. It was secondly revealed to man after the Fall of Adam and Eve
- c. It was executed and confirmed by Christ in his death and resurrection
- d. It becomes effective for its members when they are joined in Christ through faith.

## The Old Covenant was faulty

Heb 8:5-8 They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain." (6) But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. (7) For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. (8) For he finds fault with them when he says: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, (9) not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord.

## The Old Covenant was a ministry of death

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. (2Co 3:4-9)

## The Old Covenant saved no one

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us--for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"-- so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. (Gal 3:10-14)

## **The Old Covenant did not annul the promises to Abraham**

To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. (Gal 3:15-18)

## **The Old Covenant is obsolete**

(10) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (11) And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. (12) For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." (13) In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. (Heb 8:10-13)

Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory. (2Co 3:10-11)

## **The New Covenant isn't like that – it is New**

1. It is faultless.
2. It is a ministry of life.
3. It saves everyone that is a beneficiary of it.
4. It fulfills the promises to Abraham.
5. It is permanent.

## **What's new about it?**

1. **Newness of administration**
  - a. No physical temple – we are the temple
  - b. No priesthood – Christ is our high priest
  - c. No sacrifices – Christ was our sacrifice
  - d. God deals differently with members of the covenant:

You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. (Exo 20:5-6)

In those days they shall no longer say: "'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' But everyone shall die for his own sin. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge. (Jer 31:29-30)

**2. Ensures the Law of God will be written on and put in the hearts and minds of all covenant members**

And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Eze 36:27)

**3. Everyone in the New Covenant will savingly know the Lord**

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (Joh 17:1-3)

And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (1Jn 2:3-6)

**So, we are not saved by good works. We are saved for good works.**

**For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:8-10)**

**4. The New Covenant cannot be broken**

Rom 2:28-29 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. (29) But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

Eze 36:25-27 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. (26) And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (27) And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Jer 32:40 I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.

Php 1:6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.