

## **A Better Promise**

**Hebrews 8:9 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. 2**

God specifically promised that the New Covenant would not be like **the covenant that He made with them when He took them by the hand out of Egypt**. How would it be different? He does not say, but perhaps the answer is implied in the remainder of the verse, **because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord**. The covenant of the law failed because it was conditional; it called for obedience from a people who did not produce it. By making the New Covenant an *unconditional* covenant of grace, God avoids any possibility of failure since fulfillment depends on Himself alone and He cannot fail. 12

The quotation from Jeremiah contains a radical change. The words in the Hebrew text of Jeremiah 31:32 are “though I was a husband to them.” Some early translations of Jeremiah read, “so I disregarded (or turned away from) them.” The Holy Spirit, who inspired the words of Jeremiah and superintended the preservation of the Bible, directed the writer to the Hebrews to select this alternate reading. 22

**Hebrews 8:10 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.3**

Notice the repetition of the words **I will**. The Old Covenant tells what man must do; the New Covenant tells what God will do. 13

**After** the **days** of Israel’s disobedience are past, He **will put His laws in their mind** so that they will know them, and **on their hearts** so that they will love them. They will want to obey, not through fear of punishment but through love for Him. The laws will no longer be written in stone but on the fleshly tables of the heart. 23

**I will be their God, and they shall be My people**. This speaks of nearness. The OT told man to stand at a distance; grace tells him to come near. It also speaks of an unbroken relationship and unconditional security. Nothing will ever interrupt this blood-bought tie. 33

**Hebrews 8:11 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. 1**

The New Covenant also includes universal knowledge of the Lord. During Christ’s Glorious Reign, it will not be necessary for a man to **teach his neighbor** or **his brother** to **know the Lord**. Everyone will have an inward consciousness of Him, **from the least**

... **to the greatest**: “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9).<sup>1</sup>

**Hebrews 8:12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” 3**

Best of all, the New Covenant promises mercy for an unrighteous people and eternal forgetfulness of **their sins**. The law was inflexible and unbending: “Every transgression and disobedience received a just reward” (Heb. 2:2).<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, the law could not deal effectively with sins. It provided for the atonement of sins but not for their removal. (The Hebrew word for atonement comes from the verb meaning *cover*.)<sup>23</sup>

The sacrifices prescribed in the law made a man ceremonially clean, that is, they qualified him to engage in the religious life of the nation. But this ritual cleansing was external; it did not touch a man’s inward life. It did not provide moral cleansing or give him a clear conscience.<sup>33</sup>

**Hebrews 8:13 In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.1**

The fact that God introduces a **New Covenant** means that the **first** is **obsolete**. Since this is so, there should be no thought of going back to the law. Yet that is exactly what some of the professing believers were tempted to do. The author warns them that the legal covenant is outmoded; a better covenant has been introduced. They should get in step with God.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Tent in Heaven**

**Hebrews 9:1 Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. 1**

In 8:3 the writer made passing mention of the fact that every high priest must have something to offer. He is now ready to discuss the offering of our great High Priest and to contrast it with the OT offerings. To introduce the subject he gives a rapid review of the layout of the tabernacle and of the regulations for worship.<sup>1</sup>

**Hebrews 9:2 For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; 7**

The **tabernacle** was a tentlike structure in which God dwelt among the Israelites from the time of their encampment at Mount Sinai to the building of the temple. The area