

## Two Covenants (1)

There are many covenants in the Bible, but the “old” and “new” covenants are among the most important.

God made a covenant with the nation of Israel, as Moses said *this is the blood of the covenant* (Ex. 19:3-6; 24:8). Many people know *The Ten Commandments*, but that is only a small portion of this covenant. This covenant had other commands and various promises, but it was limited because it was made with a physical race and could not remove sin (Heb. 10:4). God intended for it to be a weak, unprofitable, and flawed covenant because He would make a new covenant (Hebrews 7:18; 8:7; Jeremiah 31:31-34).

On the night He was betrayed, Jesus told the apostles to drink the fruit of the vine because *this is My blood of the new covenant* (Matt. 26:28). By His death, Jesus removed the first and provided a new and better covenant offered to all races and able to remove sin (Heb. 10:9-10).

Do you hear preaching about the two covenants and how they are similar and different? Read Hebrews 7-10 to learn more, and send us your comment, question, or request for a personal Bible study at a time and place convenient for you.

## Comparing The Two Covenants (2)

Last week we learned that there are two covenants often emphasized in Scripture. They are separate covenants, but because God is the author of both, they have similarities.

**Originate with God (Ex. 19:3; Mt. 26:28)** God’s love for man caused Him to author two covenants and many gifts.

**Involve blood (Ex. 24:8; Mt. 26:28)** The two covenants involved more than just a handshake of agreement---life was ended and blood was shed as these covenants were revealed.

**Require ongoing inward and outward love (Deut. 6:4-6; Mt. 10:37)** In neither covenant was God pleased by mere outward obedience without sincere devotion (faith). God has always demanded man’s heart, soul, and strength.

**Receiving God’s gifts requires faith in action (Js. 2:26; Heb. 3:16-19; 4:11)** God has offered physical (Canaan) and spiritual (forgiveness) gifts but never by faith alone. Faith alone is dead. God’s gifts are received by faith in action.

**Some in the covenant may be rejected (Lev. 20:6; Heb. 10:29; 1 Cor. 5:11)** Being accepted by God never means it is impossible to later be rejected by God and His people. The wages of sin is death, even for people in God’s covenant.

## Contrasting The Two Covenants (3)

Last week we learned how the two covenants are similar. Now, read your Bible to see how they are different.

**Offered to -- (Ex. 19:5-6; Mk. 16:15)** The old covenant was offered to Israel. The new covenant is for all the world.

**Way of removing sin (Heb. 10:4, 9-10; Mt. 26:28)** The old covenant could only offer animal blood for sin. The new covenant has a better, perfect sacrifice—Jesus Christ.

**How to enter (Jn. 8:33; Jn. 3:1-5; 1 Pet. 1:23, 25)** Israelites entered the old covenant at birth with no personal faith (they learned as they grew). Sinners enter the new covenant when they are born again through the word of God—they must hear, believe, and obey before they enter.

**The Priesthood (Heb. 7:11-19; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9)** Under the old covenant, only a few people served as priests. In Christ, all of God's people are priests, and Jesus is the only high priest. The Catholic and Mormon Churches borrow heavily from the old covenant in their priesthoods. There is nothing that resembles their priesthoods in the new covenant. This shows the importance of understanding the two covenants. Do you? Send us your comments or questions.

## Contrasting Worship In The Two Covenants (4)

### First (Old) Covenant

Altars and blood sacrifices regularly offered Lev. 1:11  
A sanctuary in Jerusalem  
Songs played and sung  
Weekly, monthly, annual holy days Neh. 10:33  
Passover: annual memorial of lamb's blood Ex. 12:1-3  
Tithe Lev. 27:30

### Second (New) Covenant

No altar and no more blood sacrifice Heb. 9:28; 10:9-10  
No sanctuary or holy place  
Songs sung 1 Co.14:15  
One, weekly holy day  
Rev. 1:10; 1 Cor. 16:2; Acts 20:7  
Lord's Sup.: weekly memorial of Lamb's blood Acts 20:7  
Give as you purpose 2 Co. 9:7

Do any churches today meet in a sanctuary to play and sing songs to God, collect tithes, or celebrate annual holy days (even celebrating Passover)? If so, review the verses listed above and notice that this worship looks more like the worship of the old covenant than the new covenant. The true worship God seeks is found in the new covenant (Jn. 4:23). Send us your comments or questions.

## Modern Covenant Confusion (5)

The Two Covenants is one of the simpler topics of Scripture (read Gal. 4:24; Heb. 8:7; 10:9 and review recent articles at our website). Sadly, man-made tradition and doctrine spreads confusion. For example, a local ‘pastor’ recommended I read The Christ of the Covenants\* which taught, “The covenants . . . are successive stages of a single covenant. . . the covenants cannot be divided”. Can you read the Bible and see the division between the two covenants? Are the two covenants a single covenant?

If you wonder “Why does this matter?”---recent articles showed the consequences of viewing the two covenants as one. For another example, the book cited above also claimed that since the two covenants are really one covenant, the Sabbath Day is still binding under the New Covenant. Yet, Paul said “let no one judge you in... sabbaths” (Col. 2:16).

Do you notice other teachings and practices today that belong strictly to the old covenant? Jesus’ blood established the new covenant (Matt. 26:28)—beware of those who mix the old and the new! (Send us your questions or comments)

\* by O. Robertson; Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. p41, 52