



JESUS CHRIST

AND THE

NEW COVENANT

by Harry Shallcross

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He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

Hebrews 10:9

Jesus Christ came to do His Father's will and fulfil God's plan for the redemption of mankind. Jesus was the "**seed**" promised in Genesis 3:15 and again in the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 22:18; ***"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."***

This was confirmed by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:16; ***"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.."***

Now what was God's plan and what was to be Jesus' part in that plan?

We have to go back and look at God's dealings with mankind since the fall. First He dealt directly with individuals, such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses.

Then, following the deliverance of Jacob's descendants from slavery in Egypt, God entered into a special relationship with them. This involved the people agreeing to enter into a Covenant with God, which they freely accepted. ***"Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey."*** (Exodus 24:7).

The people, no doubt, did not realise the difficulty that they would have in observing the covenant, as mankind is a sinful race.

Let us look at what was covered by this covenant which became known as the Law Covenant.

The laws given by God covered the acceptance by the people of Him as their only God. They were not to worship idols. It also covered their relationship and conduct between each other, such as not to kill, not to steal, not to covet another man's wife and not to act in any immoral way. The covenant also covered many things to be done in the worship of God. The people were to be ceremonially clean and to observe feasts of gratitude and remembrance to God and offer sacrifices for their sins.

Why was there a need for a New Covenant?

We are all aware that for fallen mankind this Law was impossible to keep. So why did God impose such a Law on the people?

The apostle Paul explains why in Galatians 3:24-26; *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."*

For God to implement His plan for the redemption of mankind He put in place the way in which the promise to Abraham would be completed. Jesus Christ was the seed promised and the way to redemption was through faith, not works, which was proven, through the Nation of Israel, that man could not keep a perfect Law.

How was the New Covenant ratified?

Under the Law Covenant, the people were required to offer many sacrifices for their own sins and the sins of the Nation of Israel. At best these sacrifices could only cover past sins, and for fallen mankind the sacrifices could never take away the death sentence.

What was needed was a sacrifice that could not only cover all sins ever committed but also gain favour with God and cover the original sentence of death.

Jesus Christ came to earth as a human being and lived a blameless life and so was able to offer to God the perfect sacrifice.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22-22).

Jesus Christ's death on the cross, as a perfect human being, and His shed blood, satisfied all God's requirements for the redemption of all the human race.

The New Covenant was ratified with Jesus Christ's death on the cross and confirmed as acceptable to God by His resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Who is under the New Covenant?

The New Covenant is now available to all people, they only have to believe the Gospel message. As mentioned above, it came into effect at the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are blessed to have this understanding as we now have a Mediator with our Heavenly Father. ***"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"*** (1 Timothy 2:5).

And again it is confirmed by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 10:9-12; ***"Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God".***"

We no longer have to go to a priest to communicate with our Heavenly Father - we can go in prayer through Jesus Christ. This is what He referred to when He spoke to the woman of Samaria.

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we

worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:21-24)."

What are our Obligations under the New Covenant?

The only commandments that Jesus Christ gave were that we should remember His sacrifice by observing the Lord's Supper as a memorial to Him, and that we should show our acceptance of Him as our Savior by baptism by immersion in water.

Before we can come to make the decision to follow our Lord Jesus Christ we have to be fully aware of what the Gospel message is.

We have to learn of the love of God and Jesus Christ and demonstrate that love in our lives. This was shown by Jesus in the words in Matthew 22:37-38; ***"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."***

The Offer of Joint Heirship with Jesus Christ.

The Nation of Israel did not realise that they had the opportunity to gain this special position when they rejected the Messiah, and now the offer has been made available to all people. ***"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."*** (Acts 13:46-48).

Now part of God's plan was to have a priestly class to assist in the work of bringing all people to an understanding of the Gospel message. It was not that His Heavenly Kingdom was to be set up during the Gospel Age, but rather this was a time in which He would prepare some believing people for that work in the Kingdom.

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"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." Acts 15:14-17

And again in Galatians 6:26-28; ***"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."***

Those faithful in this age will be appointed to a special position in the Heavenly Kingdom to assist with the blessing of all Nations.

The Prospect.

What a wonderful prospect that our Heavenly Father has set before those who understand and believe the Gospel message. The New Covenant is now in operation and all our sins are covered by the Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. And there is an offer for us to be part of the blessing of all people in the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God, to be established on earth, is a government where righteousness will reign and sin and suffering will be no more, where all people will learn of the love of Our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ and in turn learn to love Them.

It will be the time that Jesus taught us to pray for:

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth.”



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