

The Covenants of God
Lesson 4 – The Nature and Purpose of the New Covenant
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Introduction: In the covenants of God we can see the ultimate purpose of God’s plan.

A. God’s plan involved first a physical element that *pointed to a later spiritual reality*.

1. The first covenant *by design* had many “fleshly ordinances.” **(Heb 9:9-10)**

2. Consider the fleshly priest in contrast to Jesus *with an endless life!*

(Heb 7:15-17)

3. The old covenant dealt with a fleshly nation, a temporary temple and temporary sacrifices! In the New *came the spiritual realities!* **(Heb 9:11-12)**

B. The major focus of the punishments and blessings of each covenant follows the same pattern of *first the physical in the Old and then in the New the spiritual reality*.

1. Many of the warnings and blessings of the Old revolve around *the health and prosperity of the nation of Israel*.

2. In the New the major focus is on the blessings and curses *of the life to come*.

3. The resurrection of the dead follows this same pattern. **(1 Cor 15:44-47)**

I. The glory of the New Covenant eclipses that of the Old Covenant

A. God wants *His people to see and share in His glory*. **(Jn 17:24)**

Glory - δόξα (1) as a manifestation of light radiance, brightness, splendor (AC 22.11); (2) as a manifestation of God's excellent power *glory, majesty* (RO 9.23); (3) as an excellent reputation *honor, glory, praise* (JN 5.44); (4) as a state characterized by honor, power, and remarkable appearance *glory, splendor* (LU 24.26)....

1. How does the glory of each covenant compare? **(2 Cor 3:5-11)**

2. In the Old Covenant God’s glory was manifested on Mt. Sinai. The people were rightly fearful and humbled.

3. *Moses’ face glowed* from being in God’s presence. **(Ex 34:29-30)**

4. Moses asked to see a fuller revelation of God’s glory. He saw *God’s goodness*.

(Ex 33:17-19, 22-23)

B. In the New Covenant we come to see God and His glory in *the fullness of the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ*. God became man!

1. The fullness is *much more powerful than the shadow!*

2. Both had glory, grace and truth but when compared *the difference is overwhelming!* **(Jn 1:14, 16-17; 2 Cor 3:9-10)**

3. Consider how *we are changed* when we come to see that glory daily!

(2 Cor 3:17-18)

II. The New Covenant was different in kind and in character

A. Jesus personally gives the New Covenant in contrast to those that delivered the Old Covenant. **(Heb 1:1-2; 2:1-3)**

1. God wanted men to do much more than recognize the identity of Jesus.

2. In a very rare occasion God spoke directly from heaven both identifying His Son and in His desired response from men. Hear Him! (Mt 17:4-5)
 3. Consider the contrast between Christ and Moses. Jesus built the house and has more glory than the house He built! (Heb 3:3-6)
- B. Jesus would have His words delivered in the lifetime by the men He personally chose, the apostles. (Jn 17:6-8, Jude 3)
1. Jesus wrote nothing. He instead carefully chose the men that He would use to deliver the New Covenant.
 2. These delivered words are the foundation of the church! (Acts 2:42; Eph 2:20)
 3. The nature of this delivery allowed those under this covenant to be assured that they simply needed to stay within the words they received. (Jn 12:48-50)
- C. The apostles are the only means by which we can know and believe in Jesus. (Jn 17:20)
1. This carefully delivered message would not be added to by Jesus, the Holy Spirit or the Apostles as it was delivered! (Jn 16:12-13)
 2. The words delivered from God are together perfect. We glorify God by simply allowing all that we teach and practice be authorized by these words. (1 Pt 4:11)

III. The New covenant provides for every spiritual need of men

- A. One comes into the blessing of the covenant by a spiritual birth. (Jn 3:3-5)
1. Nicodemus had difficulty in understanding this concept. He likely was focusing on a physical people in a physical nation with a physical temple.
 2. Consider the power in understanding that each of us become the temple of the Holy Spirit! (1 Cor 6:19-20)
 3. We come into a relationship with god that even the high priest could not have!
- B. The worship in the new covenant is not dependent upon place or nationality.
1. The woman at the well wanted to rekindle an age-old debate. Where should we go to worship God? (Jn 4:20)
 2. The worship in the New Covenant would be very different. (Jn 4:21-24)
 3. Imagine the spiritual reality of our assemblies in contrast to the temple worship of the Old. (Heb 12:22-24)
 4. What a glorious place to worship and see the glory of God!

Questions

1. In what order does God work when revealing the physical shadow and the spiritual reality? How does this help us in understanding the Bible?
2. What is the glory of God? What is God's greatest manifestation of His glory here on earth?
3. What great difference is there between how the Old and New were delivered?
4. Why is it significant that the New Covenant was given "once for all?"
5. Why do the examples of the New Covenant provide a powerful way to teach us?
6. What is the difference between the temple of the Old and the New?
7. What is the difference between the place of worship in the Old and the New?