

The Law and The Lord's Supper

By Mark Hatfield

There have been many thoughts circulated about the two covenants that God made with man from the time of creation to our present day. Under each covenant there have been certain commandments that we have been asked to keep. One of these commands under the law of Christ is to keep this memorial feast in memory of Him (Matt. 26:26-28). Some would contend that there is only one covenant. Because God's blessings are found in a covenant relationship with Him we need to understand what the word of God says on this issue concerning the covenants. Was there only one covenant that continues today? If there are two, which one are we under today? What do I need to do under the present covenant to have a relationship with God? How does this feast in memory of the Lord Jesus Christ become a part of any covenant?

DEFINING COVENANT

The word in reality means "to make an agreement". Two people who agree to do something enter a covenant. In our spiritual lives it involves man and God. God makes the covenant possible and we are to agree or disagree with His stipulations.

EXAMPLES OF A COVENANT

When God was commanding Noah to build an ark, He said, "But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark..." (Genesis 6:18) God agreed with Noah that if he would build an ark and "come into" it that he and his family would be saved from the flood of waters. The Bible tells us that Noah kept his end of the covenant. Moses recorded, Noah did, "according to all that God commanded him so did he" (Genesis 6:22). After God saved Noah and his family in the ark, he made a second covenant with Noah. It is written, "And God spake unto Noah and to his sons with him saying, And I, behold I establish my covenant with you and your seed after you". With this, God placed a rainbow in the sky and promised not to destroy the earth with a flood ever again. God called this rainbow a "token of the covenant which I make between you and me" (Genesis 9:8-13). Every time we see a rainbow it is a reminder of God's agreement to never destroy the earth with a flood again. This is an example of a covenant in the Patriarchal age.

THE OLD COVENANT

In Exodus, God spoke of the Sabbath as being a covenant between Himself and man (Exodus 31:16) Then back in verse 13 of Exodus 31, it is stated, "it is a sign between me and you." This was a specific covenant for the Israelites and not other nations.

Although there were covenants made with the individual families of the Old Testament, there was a specific covenant that God made with all of Israel under the Law of Moses. This is known as the first covenant. In Deuteronomy 5:2-3 it is penned, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day". God made this covenant to stop the overwhelming amount of sin (Galatians

3:19). This covenant was to last until the "seed should come". The Bible tells us who the seed is in Galatians 3:16, "and to thy seed which is Christ". This signifies that when Christ would come, and He has, that the first covenant with the law has been nailed to the cross and taken out of the way (Galatians 2:15; 3:24-25; Col. 2:14).

THE NEW COVENANT

Although the first covenant was limited to the Jews, the new covenant is for all of every nation (Matt. 28:18-20). John wrote, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Just as there are two lawgivers, there are two laws that have two separate covenants. It is by this second will that we are sanctified by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 10:1, 8, 10, 16-18). This covenant is not only a new, second covenant, but a better one with better promises (Hebrews 8:6). Because the first covenant could not make anyone perfect, the second was established in its place (Hebrews 8:7-13). The first covenant vanished away with the death of Christ (Hebrews 9:16-17), as he established a new one, with a new law. We are made perfect not by the law of Moses but by the perfect law of Christ (Gal. 5:4; James 1:25; Hebrews 10:12, 14). Salvation is made possible to those who will obey the law of Christ (Hebrews 5:9).

Realizing that the covenant which we are under is in accordance with the law of Christ, we need to make sure that we keep this supper of our Lord. He is our lawgiver and it is to Him that we give all glory, honor and praise. Jesus not only established this covenant with His law, but opened its seal with His own death. Just as by this will we are sanctified, it is truly by His blood that we find true sanctification. For without the shedding of blood, we cannot be forgiven and made whole.

It is a blessing to be in a covenant relationship with God. Let us remember that when we partake of the Lord's Supper that we are keeping a part of our agreement with God, to remember the death of His Son.