

HOPE through Prophecy



Lesson 13 – Better Promises

1. How many salvation covenants does the Bible speak of? Heb. 8:6-9

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, a “covenant” is “a binding agreement; a formal sealed agreement or contract.”

2. Where do we find the “first covenant”? Heb. 8:9; Deut. 4:11-13
3. A covenant takes two. Where do we find the agreement? Ex. 19:5, 8; 24:7

The first covenant was made between God and the children of Israel at the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai, when the people told Moses to make a “binding agreement” with God that whatever He said, they would do “and be obedient” (Ex. 24:7).

4. What is the “New Covenant”? Heb. 8:10 (also Jer. 31:33)

The New Covenant was God’s agreement with His people that He would write His laws in their minds and on their hearts; that He would give them true and pure motives that would inspire their hearts to serve Him as their God, and they would be His people.

5. Who were both covenants made with? Heb. 8:8; Rom. 9:4

Note: God never made a covenant with the Gentiles; their only hope was to be “joined” to Israel, thus becoming a part of “Spiritual Israel” (Rom. 11; Isa. 56:1-8).

6. Where do we first find the “New Covenant”? Gen. 3:15 (compare Rom. 8:7)

The book of Genesis records the first promise of salvation through Christ. This is why Jesus is called “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” in Revelation 13:8.

7. With whom else did God make this covenant? Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-6; Gal. 3:16-17

God confirmed this promise to "Abraham's Seed," who the apostle Paul identifies as Christ. In other words, the promises of salvation come through Christ alone, and from Christ to all who believe in Him.

8. What else does the Bible call this covenant? Ps. 105:8-10

The everlasting covenant (compare with Rev. 14:6 – "the everlasting gospel").

9. If the "New Covenant" was made after the "Old Covenant", why is it called "new"? Heb. 9:16-20; Mt. 26:28

The Bible says that a covenant does not go into effect until the one who made the agreement dies. It further says that the covenant made with the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai was "ratified," or put in effect, by the blood of sacrificial animals. The covenant made with Abraham, however, was not put into effect until the death of Christ, so that even though the covenant made with Abraham came first, it was not put into effect first, but last. For this reason the Bible calls it the "New Covenant."

10. If God already had a good covenant, an "everlasting" one, why did He make another? Gal. 3:19; Rom. 5:20; 7:13

11. What was the problem with the "Old Covenant"? Heb. 8:8-9; Jer. 31:32; Rom. 8:3; Mt. 26:41

The "Old Covenant" was not God's intended covenant for His people. He already had a covenant in place. The problem was that his people felt self-sufficient. They thought that they could in themselves live an upright life in accordance with God's will and ways. God entered into the agreement with His people at Mt. Sinai for their sakes, that they might come to realize their own spiritual helplessness. And they did. They broke the covenant in less than forty days after they made it by worshiping the golden calf. The problem with the Old Covenant was the faulty promises of the people unaided by divine grace.

12. What makes the "New Covenant" better? Heb. 8:6

13. What are the "better promises"? Heb. 8:10; 13:20-21; Ezek. 36:26-28; Eph. 4:20

The Bible tells us that what makes the New Covenant a better covenant is the "better promises" that it is based upon. Note that both covenants were based on God's Ten Commandment Law, but it was not the law that was the problem. It was the people's faulty promises. The New Covenant is based, not on man's weak and unsure promises, but on the sure promises of a covenant-keeping God, who says that He will "write His laws" in our hearts and minds, and "cause" us to walk in His ways through the power of the Holy Spirit and the new birth.