
Words of Truth

Hebrews 8:7-13

By: Brian A. Yeager

“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Hebrews 8:7-13).

The law of Moses was not faultless [blameless; free from fault or defect (Strong’s # 273)]. In the previous chapter we read: *“For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God”* (Hebrews 7:18-19). The Law of Moses was added because of transgressions (Galatians 3:19 and I Timothy 1:8-11). The Law of Moses was weak through the flesh (Romans 8:3). The old law was intended to be a schoolmaster [tutor] (Galatians 3:24). Even for the children of Israel, the Law of Moses did not offer justification (Acts 13:26-39). Thankfully, Jesus came to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17-18) and give us the “perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25).

The penmen of this letter then turned the reader’s attention to a prophesy of old. We have a detail given to us now before we look at that prophecy. We know that the thought behind the prophecy was that the Lord found fault with the Law of Moses. With that information, notice what the prophet Jeremiah prophesied and you will have the text wherein our current study originated: *“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days,*

saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

If you compare the words of old with what is written in the Hebrew letter there are slight differences in wording. You will notice that in what Jeremiah wrote, God spoke of being an husband to them. It was not God that broke that covenant, it was Israel and Judah that broke that covenant (II Chronicles 21:8-13, Jeremiah 3:1-25, and Ezekiel 16:1-63). There are other differences to ponder from what Jeremiah wrote and the text we are studying now.

Jeremiah and the Hebrew writer that is quoting from Jeremiah established some differences between the old and new laws. The law of old was written on tables of stone initially (Exodus 24:12). The New Testament law was originally given to men by the Spirit of God and not on tables of stone (II Corinthians 3:1-3). Even today, wherein the Spirit of God is not working through men as He did in the first century (I Corinthians 12:1-13:13 and I John 2:27), the word of God takes root in the heart and mind of the hearer (Luke 8:1-15). Consider though, that this happened under the old law as well (Deuteronomy 6:6 and Deuteronomy 11:18). The fact is, Romans 10:8 is a quote from Deuteronomy 30:14. Thus, we have to see that this difference was experienced through the work of the Spirit directly in the first century. That contrasting point is made and taught in two chapters in the letter that was written to the saints in Rome (Romans 7:1-8:39).

Another difference is the teaching about God. Under the Old Law, the Gentiles were a law unto themselves because the word of God was not taught everywhere (Romans 2:1-15). That was the case because the Law was given to Israel rather than the whole world (Leviticus 26:46 and Romans 3:1-2). The words of our Lord on the other hand were to be preached by the Apostles to all nations (Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:14-20, and Luke 24:44-47). They accomplished that task (Romans 16:25-26, Colossians 1:5-6, and Colossians 1:23).

Another difference is something we have discussed several times throughout our studies of this letter and will again going forward. Under the Old Law the forgiveness of sins that we have in Christ was not available to anyone. Now, that forgiveness is available to any sinner who will be converted and be faithful. These words are New Covenant words only: *“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (I John 2:1-2).* Our God wants all men to be saved (I Timothy 2:1-4). He is not willing that any should perish (II Peter 3:9). Therefore, it is no wonder why He found fault with the first covenant. For this, we should be eternally grateful. The Jews that missed these truths needed to wake up!