

***New and Improved Agreement
Heb 8:1-13***

Intro: After the death of Elvis Presley it became fairly common to read headlines in the Tabloids such as: "*I was Elvis' Love Child*" or "*Elvis' Ghost is My Father*". Many people claimed to be related to "*The King*" either for the prestige of wearing his name or possibly to try and get a share of his inheritance. In the heat of all this activity, a Detroit radio station advertised that for just \$2 and a self-addressed, stamped envelope, YOU TOO could be Elvis' child.

For that sum you could receive an authentic birth certificate from the radio station signed by a Radio Disk Jockey named Dick Puritan. The certificate claimed it entitled the bearer to "*appear on any talk show in the country.*" About 2000 people sent in their envelopes and became "*children of the King.*"

Everybody knew it was a worthless piece of paper. No one became Elvis' child because of this certificate. And the people who bought those documents had no legal standing for anything.

BUT WHY? Why couldn't you become Elvis' child by purchasing one of those documents? Because the people at the radio station had no authority to issue the document in the 1st place.

What the writer of Hebrews is telling us is that there is now a legal document - a "New Covenant" - that literally makes us children of **THE King**.

[Read Heb 8:1-13/Pray/Dismiss Jr Church]

Hoping in God's Mercy—John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, searched for many years to find assurance that God had forgiven and accepted him. He met people who had this experience, but he lacked it. He had sought assurance of forgiveness by working, praying, reading the Bible, attending church, and sacrificing. A stint as a missionary in Georgia in the 1730s brought him disillusionment. He returned from the trip with the observation, "**I went to America to convert the Indians; but, oh, who shall convert me?**"

After his return from Georgia, he continued to search for peace with God. Gradually it dawned on him that God would not be pleased with these feeble efforts to gain divine love. He began to spend time in the company of a group of earnest Christians known as Moravians. During his travels across the Atlantic Ocean, their devotion had challenged him.

Wednesday, May 24, 1738, during a Bible study in London the light of gospel truth broke upon him. He explained his experience:

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Wesley was rejoicing in the forgiveness of his sins. He had tried for years to find forgiveness. Wesley found God's mercy through faith in Christ. He learned what the writer of Hebrews meant when he promised that God will "**...be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.**" He had placed his hope in God's mercy.

One of the greatest joys believers find is the assurance of forgiven sin. We don't discover it by trusting in our goodness, church attendance, efforts to keep the Ten Commandments, or any other feature of self-effort. We find new hope when we live each day knowing God has forgiven our sins.

In the prophecy from Jeremiah, quoted here in V.10b, that was made hundreds of years before, God tells us "...***I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.***" (Hebrews 8:10b)

John says it this way: "***Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...***" (1 John 3:1)

This New Covenant is what makes us children of the King and gives us that assurance that John Wesley was so desperately looking for. It has value because the one who offered it had the authority to do so. As Hebrews 8:6 tells us, "***But now hath he [Jesus] obtained a more excellent ministry [superior ministry]*** (i.e. superior to the priests of the O.T.) ***by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.***"

This New Covenant has better promises than the Old one did. Promises? What's this NEW Covenant offer that we couldn't have had before?

1. SUMMING UP THE FIRST 7 CHAPTERS Vv. 1-5. The author of Hebrews sums up all what he has said of Jesus Christ as our High Priest give the crowing reason that all lesser priests must fade away. He says that his new captain has a new place of service and ministers on a new standard. Regarding His new place of service he tells us...

A. ***It is A Place of Majesty*** V. 1

B. ***It is A Place of Ministry*** Vv. 2-3

C. ***It is NO LONGER A Place of Mystery*** Vv 4-5

2. A NEW AND IMPROVED AGREEMENT Vv. 6-9. Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant that is based on new promises.

FIRST THIS NEW AND IMPROVED AGREEMENT...

A. Is Based on God's Provision Not Man's Performance

1) There are basically two kinds of covenants in Scripture—conditional and unconditional.

2) The Old Covenant was a conditional one

(a) A conditional covenant was one that says, ***If you do such and such then I will do such and such.***

(b) Instead of that kind of a covenant, we have an unconditional one

3) When you Read Exodus 19 through the first 10 chapters of Number and you get an understanding of what the conditions the Old Covenant had.

(a) In these chapters you find all the conditions the people had to keep in order to receive God's blessings.

(b) This is exactly what the people agreed to when Moses presented then with the first covenant (1) They foolishly abandoned the ground of grace and put themselves under the law.

(i) ***"...All that the LORD hath spoken we will do,"*** they said, and Moses ***"...returned the words of the people unto the LORD"*** (Ex 19:8).

(ii) It was an answer of complete ignorance.

(iii) Before long they were making the golden calf and exposing themselves to such wrath that, had Moses not assumed the role of mediator, their whole history would have ended right there (32:1-14).

4) But God knew when He gave them the first covenant that the people were incapable of living up to it.

5) The prophet Jeremiah said that God, ***"...finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant."***

6) This new covenant was not going to be based on Man's Performance

7) But...

8) He was going to provide for their blessings

9) The OT was characterized by ***We Will*** the new covenant is characterized by ***I Will***

SECONDLY THIS NEW AND IMPROVED AGREEMENT...

B. WOULD BE AN INTERNAL COVENANT Vv. 10-12. This ***Internal Covenant*** has four features outlined here...

1) ***First it would be Inscribed on the Heart*** v.10a

- (a) The phrase **Mind and heart** when used together like this means the entire person—all that makes us who we are.
- (b) Granted the complete fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy will not happen until after the 7 year tribulation; when he will engrave His Word upon their minds, hearts, understanding and emotions...the whole man.
- (c) For us today it is already inscribed on our whole person.
 - (1) The Holy Spirit took up residence in my heart when I receive Christ as my Savior and He has been busy inscribing all the Love, understanding, and knowledge of God as I obey and surrender to His leading.
 - (2) Through our daily reading of His word and mediation on what we have read and our obedient surrender to do what that word says the Holy Spirit is inscribing this new covenant in my person.
- 2) **Second it would bring Intimate Fellowship with God** V. 10b
 - (a) The next things this new covenant will do is bring us to a deep and intimate fellowship with God
 - (b) It says **I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people**
 - (1) This implies an intimate relationship between God and His people
 - (2) **I will be to them a God** means that He will be all that God can to them, and do all that God can for them—nothing more can be said in a thousand books than is understood in these few words
 - (3) **They shall be to me a people** means
 - (i) that they will willingly love, honor, observe, and obey him in all things; complying with his cautions, conforming to his commands, living consistent with his principles, copying his example, taking contentment in his favor.
 - (ii) This they will do not to gain His favor but as a loving and living sacrifice for His grace and provision
- 3) **Third it would bring Intuitive Knowledge of God** V. 11
 - (a) The Old Covenant recognized the truth that people are basically ignorant and selfish.
 - (b) Teachers were needed to just teach them in the "**kindergarten of the school of God**".
 - (c) The New Covenant is based on an intuitive knowledge of God possessed by all who have the Spirit of Truth residing in their hearts
 - (1) **"...when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."** John 6:13
 - (2) It is true that the complete truth of all we need to know and understand will not be completely fulfilled until we enter the millennial kingdom; certainly not for the Jew until then.
- 4) **Fourth it would bring Gracious Forgiveness of Sins** V. 12
 - (a) The most important feature of the New Covenant is that it carries the Mercy of God with it.
 - (b) The Old Covenant and all of its requirements were only capable of providing a temporary covering for sins.
 - (1) In my daily devotion this week I have been reading the book of Leviticus
 - (2) When you read all the details of what the priest had to do for each of the different sacrifices you begin to understand just how holy our God truly is and how unqualified any human priest could have been to take away the sins
 - (c) It is only because of the Grace of God that we can today have true, complete, and total forgiveness of sins through the once and for all sacrifice Christ made for us on the Cross—
THANK GOD HE HAD DONE IT ONCE AND FOR ME.

THIRDLY THIS NEW AND IMPROVED AGREEMENT...

3. WILL BE AN INDESTRUCTIBLE COVENANT V. 13

A. Within two years of the writing of this book verse 13 became very real to the Jew.

- 1) The truth of the statement that the Old Covenant **"...Now... decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away"** would soon take on prophetic meaning
- 2) Temple services would soon come to an abrupt end.
- 3) This book was written around 68 ad and in 70 ad the earthly Temple was destroyed never to be rebuilt as of today.

B. Our security come today in knowing that the Covenant made through Christ and His work in the true tabernacle built not by mans hands will never be destroyed.

1) The blood shed on Calvary is the basis of all our blessings

2) The literal New Covenant is with Judah not with the church.

3) But the Christian believer participates in the spiritual promises of the New Covenant but not in the earthly blessings.

(a) We enjoy those provisions of the covenant that promise salvation, forgiveness of sins and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

(b) We are not included in the promises concerning land, rest from persecution and material prosperity

Conclusion: When we first joined the Army and moved to Texas for my first duty assignment we rented an apartment about 25 miles from post. That meant that we had to have a car so I could get back and forth to work. Well our car broke down and we had to get it fixed but we didn't have any money. I called my dad and told him the situation and asked if I could borrow the money. After receiving the obligatory lesson on money management he sent me the money to fix the car. Because dad loved me and because we were part of a family he didn't leave us hanging.

Love Doesn't Leave You Hanging

By faith in Jesus you and I become members of God's family. We have urgent and desperate needs. Because God is now our heavenly Father, he loves us too much to leave us hanging. We are family. God will help.

You and I desperately need to know that God will accept us. Whenever we are honest about it, we must admit that we have broken God's laws, lived selfishly, forgotten to seek God's will, and lived as if there were no life beyond. We need to know that someone will represent us before God. We need someone who can say for us, "God, I present my life as a sacrifice for their sins. Let them enjoy your blessing."

That's where Jesus fits in. He is the new leader who gives us hope. Through faith in Jesus, we become children of God (John 1:12). Through following Jesus, we experience abundant life Uohn 10:10). Because of Jesus, we can find mercy and grace for our every need (Heb. 4:16). Thank God for Jesus!

Knowing these truths produces three responses in our lives. First, we have gratitude. We can say, "Thank you, God, for your great provisions for me." We can live as thankful people. Second, we have encouragement. We can feel, "God has given us a good agreement. He supplies all we need." When our load becomes heavy and our future confused, we find hope simply to keep plodding on in God's strength. Third, we find fear and respect for God. We must say, "A God this gracious deserves our obedience." Then we must live as if we mean it.