

The Covenant

What is your relationship with God? Or maybe I should ask, how are you keeping your part of the contract or covenant you have with God? Is it by going to church regularly, reading your bible daily, or doing what YOU think is pleasing to God?

Today if you enter into a contract with another person, there are certain terms both sides have to achieve if there is to be a successful completion to the contract. When one or both do not fulfill their part of the contract, then the contract is considered void. When you accepted Jesus as your Savior, a contract with God was formed. You agreed to His terms of the covenant. You did not have the right to rewrite certain parts that you were not comfortable with. It was a contract or covenant that was offered to you and you either accepted the conditions or there was no contract or covenant.

Jeremiah (31:31-33) prophesied a long time ago that God would establish a new covenant with Israel and Judea. It was revealed to Peter thousands of years later that this new covenant was not only for the Jews but all mankind who would accept the terms of the new covenant. You are asking yourself, what does he mean...terms? Doesn't believing in Jesus as our Savior save us? Doesn't the Bible say, "*That whosoever believeth in Me shall not perish but have everlasting life*"? The problem with that verse is the translation. The translators used the word "believe" to take the place of... "*Whosoever trusts in, relies on, and adheres to Me shall not perish but have eternal life.*" Those are the real terms of the covenant. You follow those terms and God will fulfill His part of the covenant by being here to guide you on this earth and give you eternal life after you die.

The first verse of the gospel of John reads, "*In the beginning was the Word and Word was with God and the Word was God*". Verse 14 continues "...*and the Word became flesh.*". Why is this important, because the Word is our way of being able to comply to the terms of the new covenant that we have to live by. It is through His Word that we are able to trust in, adhere to and rely on Him for our salvation.

Verse 24 of Chapter 12 of Hebrews says, "*You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the NEW COVENANT between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which graciously forgives instead of crying out for vengeance as the blood of Able did. See to it that you obey God, THE ONE WHO IS SPEAKING TO YOU. For if the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to LISTEN to Moses, the earthly messenger, how terrible our DANGER if we reject THE ONE WHO SPEAKS TO US FROM HEAVEN*". In the amplified version of the Bible it reads with a greater emphasis...(verse 25) "*So see to it that you do not reject Him or refuse to LISTEN to and HEED HIM Who is speaking to you NOW.*"

Lets read this new covenant. Jeremiah 33-34..."*But this is the new covenant which I will make with the house of Israel: After in those days, says the Lord, I will PUT My law within them, and on their hearts will I write it: and I will be their God, and they will be my people.*" Verse 34 continues, "*And they will no more teach each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they will all know me,(recognize,*

understand, and be acquainted with Me) from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord". 1 John 2:27 reaffirms this prophecy of Jeremiah, "But as for you, the anointing (the sacred appointment, the UNCTION) which you received from Him abides (permanently) in you: (so) then you have no need that anyone should instruct you. But just as His anointing teaches you concerning EVERYTHING and is true and is no falsehood, so you must abide in (live in, never depart from) Him (being rooted in Him, knit to Him), just as (his anointing) has taught you (to do)".

God is saying, He is not trusting man with the new contract with His people.

In Hebrews, the writer gives the example of how the children of Israel were lead out of Egypt and were taken to Mount Sinai. God intended to be God to His people and communicate directly with them but they refused and begged that Moses would be their messenger from God. The writer refers to Moses as the "earthly messenger" But the new covenant did not come with a stipulation, in which another man could talk for God.

So this raises the question of the purpose of pastors, teachers, evangelists, prophets and apostles. It really isn't confusing if you can understand that God intended these people to carry out a function, which results in the building up of the body. They should be teaching the terms of the covenant to believers and salvation to the others. I believe that some religious leaders today have convinced the sheep, either intentionally or unintentionally, that they are the only ones that hear from God. But this comes into direct conflict with the covenant that God has put in place with mankind.

History tells a pretty sad story of the actions of the early church, not the ones of Peter and Paul, but much later. The church rose to power because the leadership was able to convince the people that they represented the will of God. Yes, Martin Luther did help change the thinking, as well as the written Bible that was finally made available for everyone to read. Sadly, for the most part, people still relied on what the church leaders told them. And, sadly, that is still happening today in a lot of churches. That is why this concept of the new covenant may sound strange to you.

The difference between you and me compared to the writers of the New Testament is, they understood the covenant. They all wrote of the importance of the Holy Spirit and His guidance. Not because it was the "Christian thing to do" but because for them, they had to abide in the Spirit to fulfill their part of the covenant.

Nothing has changed in God's covenant. He hasn't amended it. He hasn't decided that whatever we want to do is alright with Him; that different teachings by the different denominations of today are going to be acceptable to Him. If changing the old covenant with God didn't work for the Israelites, why would we think He would accept anything less than the covenant that He created for us?

Mankind has always been trying to be God and to do things the way we want them done. If you disagree, read Jeremiah 5: 30-31 *"An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priest rule on their own authority,*

AND MY PEOPLE LOVE IT SO! But what will you do at the end of it?" The amplified version is even more frightening. *"An appalling and horrible thing (bringing desolation and destruction) has come to pass in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests exercise rule at their own hands and by means of the prophets. And My people love to have it so! But what will you do when the end comes?"*

This is a warning for today's church as well. If we are not abiding in the new covenant by hearing the voice of God for OURSELVES, then we are not apart of the covenant of God. The leaders of today's churches should be teaching this covenant to the sheep. We should dedicate our lives to learning to listen for His voice. Why is that important? What did Jesus say, *"My sheep hear my voice and they follow Me."* We have to realize He was speaking about the covenant? Remember these scriptures, *"In the beginning was the Word" ...the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God."* *...I will send you a comforter, who will lead you in all truths."* *"Faith comes by HEARING and hearing by the Word of God."* God has never stopped talking to us. He can't because it would mean that He has broken His own covenant.

It is confusing because I believe God does speak through men and women. It is these male writers of the bible that have revealed these truths. I think where the church has gone wrong is that they try to do things that they think would please God when in fact the only thing that pleases God is obedience to His voice. *"My sheep HEAR my voice, and they follow Me."*

Jesus followed this covenant while He was on earth. *"I only do what I see the Father do".* *"...not my will but your will be done,"* How did Jesus know the will of the Father unless it was told to Him?" How can He bring mankind a new covenant if while He was a man, He didn't abide in the terms of His own covenant? He was our first example of how we are to live while on this earth... 1st John 2:6, *...the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked."* Jesus listened and then obeyed. Why is it so hard to accept this concept? Are we so set in our ways that even though we know it's wrong, we can't change or have we stopped caring and we *"have adhered to a form of Godliness and denied the power there of"*? Maybe Jeremiah's warning extends further into the future than we thought.

Are we so stubborn that we could miss the greatest gift Jesus gave to us, His Voice? Ask yourself the question that God ask the Israelites in Jeremiah 5:31 *"But what will you do when the end comes?"* Whose voice are you following? It is a covenant that you agreed to when God offered it to you. Are you fulfilling your part of the covenant? *"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* Are we doing His will? You are not capable of doing His will if you are not hearing His voice.