

The Last Words of Jesus: **The New Covenant**

* During the celebration of Passover the Disciples and Jesus are reclining at the Seder Meal and Jesus makes a most remarkable statement:

Mark 14:22-26 (NLV)

22 As they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread. He gave thanks and broke it in pieces. He gave it to them and said, "Take, eat, this is My body." 23 Then He took the cup and gave thanks. He gave it to them and they all drank from it. 24 He said to them, "This is My blood of the New Way of Worship which is given for many. 25 For sure, I tell you, that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the holy nation of God." 26 After they sang a song, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

* During the establishing of the Church after the death of Christ, the writer of Hebrews explains this new Christian religion like this:

Hebrews 8:6 (NLT)

6 But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises.

I. In order to fully know, understand and appreciate The New Covenant, one needs to have a little understanding of The Old Covenant!

A. The "end result" of the Old Covenant can be seen in the statements repeated throughout scripture of God wanting to once again have fellowship with Man!

1. Sin separated us from God's presence!

Genesis 3:22-24 (NIV)

22 And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." 23 So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side[a] of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

2. We see the progression of God's redemption as it starts in the Garden, the place of the offense or Sin!

Genesis 3:14-15 (NIV)

14 So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

3. In setting up this redemption plan, God created a “people” to carry the message forward! Abraham gives birth to a Nation!

Genesis 12:1-3 (NIV)

1 The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. 2 “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

4. As the Old Covenant was established, God began to speak His message of Redemption through Israel, the Jews!

Romans 3:1-2 (NIV)

1 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? 2 Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God.

B. Just what was this covenant? What were the benefits?

1. God promises “to treasure Israel” with a special relationship!

Exodus 19:5 (NIV)

5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine.

2. Israel will be “a kingdom of royal priests” or in other words you will have access to my presence. You can be with me!

Exodus 19:6 (NIV)

6 You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.” (Sound familiar?)

3. Israel will be holy; set apart for God!

Leviticus 19:2 (NIV)

2 “Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.

4. God promises to defend Israel from the world!

Exodus 23:22 (NIV)

22 If you listen carefully to what he says and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you.

5. Last, God promises to be merciful and forgiving!

Exodus 34:6-7 (NIV)

6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”

C. That looks like a pretty awesome Covenant! How is the New Covenant and its promises better?

II. The New Covenant and the Better Promises!

A. Notice the words of Hebrews concerning the Old and New Covenants!

Hebrews 8:7-13 (NIV)

7 For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. 8 But God found fault with the people and said: “The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. 9 It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. 10 This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 11 No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. 12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” 13 By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.

1. The wonderful thing about this New Covenant is that it isn't about you and your ability to keep it! God made covenant with Himself! (They were unable to remain faithful to God!)

Hebrews 6:13-19 (NIV)

13 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." 15 And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. 16 People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. 17 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. 18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. 19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,

2. This Covenant is "firm and sure" because it is not based upon my ability to keep it!
3. That's why it is BETTER!

B. Jesus and His life has provided and secured my redemption!

Hebrews 7:24-25 (NIV)

24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

1. A last Will and Testament or a Covenant is only in force after a death! There has been a death!

Hebrews 9:16-18 (NIV)

16 In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, 17 because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. 18 This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood.

2. That is why we celebrate the death of our Lord Jesus!
3. Jesus' death is the beginning of the New Testament, not His birth!
4. Many Christians confuse their faith when they read the Gospels and try to live the Law of the Pharisees!

C. With Jesus we see some crazy statements of impossible living:

1. If your hand offends you, cut it off.
2. If your eye offends you, pluck it out.
3. If you look lustfully upon a woman, you have committed adultery already!
4. You see, the New Covenant is about changing sinful man

from the inside! Not the works of outside!

D. Jesus fulfilled the Law FOR US!

John 15:5 (NIV)

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

III. We MUST become aware of all these truths in order to live out our salvation to its fullest. We belittle the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus if we do not!

Hebrews 7:18-19 (NIV)

18 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless 19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

A. Everywhere we look we will notice that the New Covenant is about us once again being in the presence of God! (NOW!)

1. Paul declares to the Church in Rome that Christ is the end of the Law!
2. In Hebrews 9 we read where the writer declares that even in the Old Covenant there were divine ordinances and ways of worship that enabled Israel to experience the presence of God!

B. Then we read this written to the Church in Corinth!! A Church established in the midst of a Philosophical and Intellectual society familiar with religious worship of all kinds!

2 Corinthians 3:7-9 (NIV)

7 Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, 8 will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? 9 If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!

1. We will recall the phrase “the veil was torn in two” from the time of Jesus’ death!
2. What veil? What was that all about?
3. Back in Corinthians when we read about the “ordinances” and “was of worship” under the Old Covenant” we notice a VEIL that stood between the Presence of God and the people!
4. THAT WAS TORN! THAT WAS REMOVED BY JESUS!
5. Because of the New Covenant we have access to God’s

presence again. We can fellowship with the Creator!

* We will look further at this awesome New Covenant next week!