

# The New Covenant and Its Better Promises.

by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

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*The new covenant offers better promises, including forgiveness, mercy, and a personal knowledge of God, through the Holy Spirit.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 8:7

**Topics:** "Grace", "New Covenant"

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## Description

Robert Murray M'Cheyne emphasizes the significance of the New Covenant, which is made with the very people who broke the old covenant, showcasing God's grace and mercy. He highlights the better promises of the New Covenant, including God's promise to forgive sins and to write His laws on the hearts of His people, thus establishing a personal relationship with them. M'Cheyne reassures those who feel unworthy that God's willingness to create a new covenant offers hope and redemption, emphasizing that all can know Him personally, regardless of their past failures.

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## Transcript

Hebrews xiii. 7-13,--"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."

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There are three things contained in these words.

- I. You have persons with whom the new covenant is made.
- II. You have the better promises of the new covenant.

III. You have it stated, that because God says it is a new covenant, he hath made the first old.

{footnote: This part of the subject was not entered upon by the author.}

I will have only time to go over the first two of these at present.

I. Let us inquire with whom this covenant was made. Verses 8 and 9--"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." You will observe that God is to make a new covenant with the house of Jacob and Israel. He is to make the new covenant with the very people who broke the old. This shows what a God of grace he is. It shows you what no natural man can comprehend. This is grace to those that deserve quite the contrary : God says, "I will make a new covenant."

Notice, first of all, how God had dealt with them in the days that are past. Verse 9--"I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." When God took them out of Egypt, he brought them to the rocky Mount of Sinai, and made a covenant with them--a gracious covenant, though it was an awful one. It showed them their guilt, and it showed them their misery ; but, O ! it was a gracious covenant. But notice how Israel treated this covenant. Verse 9--"They continued not in my covenant." Before Moses had come down from the Mount, they had broken the covenant ; and not only then, but they broke his covenant ten times in the Wilderness. He said, " For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie .... But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit." [ Isa 63:8,10 ] And, O, brethren ! look here--it is with this very people God says, "I will make a new covenant." Brethren, this should give those of you comfort that have broken covenant with God in a much worse way than Israel did. When God took them out of Egypt, he said, "Surely they are my people, children that will not err ;" but they sinned--they broke his covenant. And are there none here who are conscious that you have said, "I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink" ? [ Ho 2:5 ] {note - as published, this was misquoted as "... who gave me my corn and my wine, my milk and my oil ?" } Here is a word for you--"I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." Are there none of you who know that you have broken covenant with God in a time of sickness ? What has become of the covenant you made ? Bear witness, deeds of darkness--bear witness, days of sin--bear witness to your broken covenant ; and yet here is grace to-day--"I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." Are there not some here who have broken covenant with God at his table ? How many of you united yourselves to the Lord, and said, "I have opened my mouth to the Lord!" And you said you would never again join the world's laugh--the world's pleasure--the world's ways ; and what has come of the covenant ? Bear witness, broken sacraments--now, bear witness, to this broken covenant ! and yet, for all that, God is saying, "I am willing to make a new covenant with you."

II. I come now to the second point ; and that is, What is the new covenant and its better promises?

1st. The first of the better promises is in the 12th verse-- "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." This is the first of the better promises--"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness." Some of you will be surprised that this is the first of better promises ; but you will see that it is so. By that little word "for," it comes before all the others. Verse 10--"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 .....

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." "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." Ah, brethren ! never forget this, that forgiveness is the first of the better promises. I have heard many of you saying, "O ! if God would write his law in my heart, I think I would then come to him." But this is not God's way. O, sinners ! when will you learn God's way ? You are not to be saved by your own righteousness. Learn also from this how complete forgiveness is--"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." When men forgive, they seldom forget it ; but God forgets it. Some may say, "How can that be ?" I will tell you : The sin that God forgets is sin that has been atoned-- "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins." [Is 40:1-2] The reason why God can forget your iniquities is, that they have been answered for--"He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," and to forget them too. Come and take this better promise of the better covenant. O ! it is sweet. It is sweetest of all to those that have most sins to be forgiven.

2d. Now, look for a moment at the second promise of the new covenant. Verse 10--"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." This is the second promise of the new covenant--"I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." In the old covenant, God wrote his law on two tables of stone ; but here he says he will write it on your heart. Every natural man has Satan's law written on his heart ; and as long as you keep away from Christ, there is no eradicating this law out of your heart. But when a man comes to Christ, God says, "I will put my laws in your mind, and in your hearts will I write them." Observe, God cannot write his law in your heart until you are forgiven. The Holy Spirit can no more come into an unconverted man's heart than God can take him into his bosom. And observe who is to do it : It is God. Some people say, "I will try and write the law in my heart as deep as I can ;" but see, it is God that must do it. O, brethren ! come and give up your hearts to God--"My son, give me thine heart." You have often given your heart to the world--come and give it to God. It is never till the law is written in the heart that God says, "Delight thyself in the Lord."

3d. I come to the third promise of the new covenant. End of the 10th verse--"And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." As long as you remain out of the new covenant, you have no God. God says of many here, "Call their name Lo-ammi"--not my people. There are many of you without a God : Do not mistake me : There is one that wants to be your God. As long as you remain without the new covenant, you are without a father--without a Saviour--without the Spirit. No angel can tell how awful your state is. There is no sin you may not fall into. Think, O, brethren ! though Gabriel were to come down from heaven, he could not tell the greatness of your misery. But the moment that you get the law written in your heart, he will be all that a God should be to you. He says, "They shall be my people." It is a sweet thing to have an arm that loves us put around us. When Satan says, "You will go with me." "No," says the soul, "I am God's." When wicked companions say, "You come with us," the soul says, "No : I am God's." O, brethren ! is this the case with you ?

4th. Then look at the fourth and last promise. Verse 11-- "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." As long as a soul remains at a distance from Christ, it does not know God : It is only when a soul comes to Christ that God says, "They shall know me." Natural men think they know a great deal about God, when they speak of looking "from nature up to nature's God." You know something of a God of your

own making ; but you do not know the true God. None can know him but those who come to Christ. Observe, it is a personal knowledge --it is not a knowledge got by rote. There is a great difference between our knowing God by rote and our knowing him personally. Brethren, can you say you ever met God--that you ever found him more present than the creatures ? It is one of the deepest and richest promises of the new covenant--"They shall all know me." Under the old covenant, it was only the high priest that knew him ; but here it is all that are in the covenant.

And learn again that the least shall know him. It was only the great high priest that knew him ; but the child that knows Jesus shall know him. There are many that think a little child cannot know him ; but "they shall all know me." Amen.

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