

THE AUTHORITY OF THE NEW COVENANT – A Study of Hebrews 8:6-7,13

The vast majority of Evangelical Christians believe in the authority of Scripture. From Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, we view the Bible as the authoritative and infallible expression of God's truth. This is why the apostle Paul doesn't hesitate to affirm in 2 Timothy 3:15-17, that all Scripture is PROFITABLE, in not only contributing to the salvation of someone in need of Christ as Savior; but as an essential factor in the spiritual growth of the Christian. The difficulty arises when we seek a more detailed understanding of the relevance of one aspect of the Word of God in relation to another. Simply put, is all Scripture EQUALLY applicable and profitable? Is Philemon as profitable as Romans? Most Christians would agree that it is not. The more debatable question consists of whether or not all Scripture is equally applicable to the Christian. The author of Hebrews in attempting to clarify this issue for a group of first century Jewish believers, struggling with their new found faith in Christ, says this in Hebrews 8:6-7, while also concluding the chapter in v13 –

“But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.”

“When He said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.”

These verses confirm to us that the New Covenant is not only superior to the Mosaic Covenant; but that it has replaced it as the relevant governing authority over the life of the Christian. Unlike the Old Covenant ratified by Moses with the blood of an animal sacrifice, the New Covenant has been ratified by Jesus Christ, with the sacrifice of Himself upon Calvary's Cross. The author of Hebrews elaborates upon this for all of us in Hebrews 9:11-15, where we read the following –

“But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

So, while there are important spiritual truths and lessons to be learned from the life of believers who lived under various covenants in the past, every Christian must come to the realization that we are living under a new and better one. The apostle Paul refers to it in 1 Corinthians 9:21 as being under “the law of Christ.” It is our Savior's new and authoritative arrangement in governing the behavior of His Church, the body of Christ, both individually and collectively. As a result, it is critically important for each of us to live our Christian lives in harmony with the guidelines and parameters of this new and better relationship with God (Luke 9:51-56).