

### **The Relationship Between Faith and Obedience (part six of a seven-part study)**

The inadequate nature of the Mosaic Covenant with its complimentary role in fulfilling God's plan of salvation, through Abraham's Promised Seed, is described for us in Hebrews 9:11-12 –

**“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.”**

Throughout this epistle, Jewish Christians are reminded of this all-important fact: the fulfillment of God's redemptive purpose was contingent upon the appearance of Abraham's promised singular Seed. He would accomplish what the sacrificial system of the Old Covenant never could: eternal redemption! It would involve the setting aside of an old covenant in favor of a new and better one, ratified in the Savior's blood (Luke 22:20; Hebrews 9:15-28). With the rejection of Christ as Israel's Messiah, this redemption would now be offered to the entire world, not through a theocratic nation, but by means of a new spiritual instrument of God: Christ's Church.

The superiority of the New Covenant is detailed for us throughout the Pauline epistles. But its purpose is no different. It is ultimately designed to **govern the obedience** of those who have placed their faith in Abraham's Promised Seed, and are participants in that unconditional promise covenant which God established with father Abraham centuries earlier (Hebrews 6:13-20; cf. Hebrews 7:28). The Abrahamic Covenant is redemptive in nature, entered into by faith in Abraham's promised singular Seed. The purpose of the New Covenant is not redemptive but complimentary to our redemption. In replacing the Old Covenant its objective remains the same: to *govern the obedience* of those who have already been redeemed by faith in Christ and are now under His authority; and in need of progressive sanctification. This is why Paul, in 1 Corinthians 9:21, describes his relationship to the New Covenant as being “under the law of Christ.”

The most advantageous aspect of the New Covenant in governing the obedience of its members involves the indwelling of every believer by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9; 2 Timothy 1:14). It would not be an overstatement to say that the Holy Spirit is the GOVERNOR of the New Covenant, by means of His indwelling presence within every follower of the Savior. This is why we should not be surprised by what took place with Ananias and Sapphira in the earliest stages of the Jerusalem church. The Spirit's governance was necessary and made evident in their deaths. This is confirmed by Peter in his confrontation with the couple, where he accuses them of lying to the Holy Spirit in Acts 5:3 and putting the Spirit of the Lord to the test in Acts 5:9. Equally important, entrance into the New Covenant cannot take place by means of a physical birth, but only through faith, producing a spiritual birth (John 1:12-13; 3:5-8; Hebrews 8:10-11). This is why infant baptism “sends the wrong message” regarding this superior aspect and true nature of the New Covenant; since an infant is incapable of exercising faith. Properly understood, the potential capacity for obedience, as well as disciplinary accountability, under the governance of the New Covenant, becomes greatly enhanced, confirmed with unmistakable clarity in Romans 8:2-4 –

**“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”**