

## Hebrews 8:1-13 - 'The New Covenant'

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**I've always loved book of Hebrews** - so different to rest of NT

All about - how Jesus / his new way - is better than old way

And the word covenant - is at the heart of this - a rich term

Think of - every time have communion - central to faith

Jesus words - *'This is my blood, of the new covenant'*

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**First section of this chapter - v1-6** = are explaining old covenant

Put in place through Moses / the Law / Temple / sacrifices

About the relationship between God & Israel - good & bad

High priest was central / but all people played a part

**But the system / relationship was broken** - covenant not kept

Hadn't achieved what was intended - something new needed

A different approach - new way of doing things

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**Next section - v7-9** = outlines the damage - transition needed

Specifically - God unhappy with the situation - wants change

Israel still in sight - but God has turned away from them

**Quote from Jeremiah 31** - God speaks clearly - new day coming

First mention of the new covenant - will not be like before

People had been unfaithful - now a new relationship

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**Final section - v10-12** = this is key for us - focus for today

An outline of the new covenant - differences / key elements

- I will put my laws in their minds, write on their hearts
- I will be their God, and they will be my people
- Everyone will know of God, from least to the greatest
- I will forgive their wickedness, and forget their sins

**So - is this all just interesting history** - or is there more to it?

What does this mean for us today - in a practical sense?

I believe - this is truly at the heart of our faith / belief

For everyone who is part of the new covenant

**Want to think about these key verses** - what mean for us today

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### **God's law is written on hearts and minds - v10**

**Old covenant** = 10 Commandments as basis = written on stone

Obviously expanded in OT law / Mishnah - huge code of law

Everything became black and white - a formula to live by

But this was never how it was meant to be

**Giving of 10 commandments** - key for understanding here

Ex 20:2 - *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt*

Says - I am your God - so this is how I want you to live

Not - this is how I want you to live - and I'll be your God

**Relationship / covenant comes 1<sup>st</sup>** - laws / rules / contract 2<sup>nd</sup>

The new covenant - is taking it back to God's original plan

A covenant agreement between God and His people

Based on love / trust / faith / grace / forgiveness

### **He is our God; we are His people - v10**

**Not a covenant based on rules or fear** - but on relationship

Our personal relationship with our father God - through Jesus

It is Jesus who brought this change into reality for us

He demonstrated this truth - paved the way for us

**Not a turning away from the past** - but a re-imagining of it

This is why the new - is built on the old - back to Ex 20:2

Everyone who accepts this covenant - part of the new

No longer just for Israel - but for all people - anywhere

## **God is truly knowable - to everyone - v11**

**God is no longer a distant figure** - only some can point to

He is now the one true God - who makes himself known

Every heart can know Him / experience Him / be accepted

**This is the heart of God's covenant** - what was always planned

The old way - was legalised into an impossible standard

The new way - is all about rediscovering God's grace

## **Our sins are forgiven and forgotten - v12**

**Forgiveness of sins** - not just about going to heaven when we die

Is a re-imagined and renewed relationship with God - today

Our past is forgiven / forgotten - that is equally valuable

How much do we beat ourselves up - past failings

God Himself - has forgotten them - why can't we

## **Conclusion - v13**

**Important to note** - who audience was - clear Jewish influence

This isn't saying old covenant had no value - just run its course

The impact of this chapter - is how the new is built on old

Covenants cannot coexist - one replaces the other

What is old and worn out - needs to be replaced

**Is not an antisemitic thought** - though how sometimes taken

Is about how we relate to God - in past (old) and now (new)

The new covenant - at heart of our faith / relationship

**This image is 100% positive** - and therefore a challenge to us all

Is our faith built on the whole revelation of God - OT & NT

Or only on a part - if so - we would be poorer for it

## **One of my favourite verses - 2 Tim 3:16-17**

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*