

## Hebrews 8:6-13

### “Christ’s Covenant”

#### I. Introduction

#### II. Vs. 6-7 Better contract

#### III. Vs. 8-13 Jeremiah’s endorsement

#### I. Introduction

Though out the book of Hebrews the two things the writer is most passionate about continues to be written numerous ways: *He most passionate about them staying with their profession of faith in Jesus and because of this he is passionate about Jesus!* The 8<sup>th</sup> chapter marks a transition in his letter as it switches from the person of Jesus to the work of Jesus; the final 7 verses of chapter 8 take a unique look at the work of Jesus as mediator of a superior covenant because of it’s 8 superior characteristics. If your Bible is like mine, you will notice that 167 out of 244 words of these 7 verses are italicized. The reason for this is that the writer is making his case by quoting the prophecy of Jeremiah 31 concerning a future New Covenant. All of this was designed to cause the readers to realize that despite those Hebrews who were attempting to get them to abandon Jesus for the Old Covenant there were far more reasons to stay. Before we break into the text we need to clarify what we are examining today.

#### II. Vs. 6-7 Better contract

Vs. 6 First the writer says in regards to Jesus that “*He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also a MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT, which is established on better promises.” The argument hinges on the reader understanding both what a covenant is as well as what a mediator is. First the Greek word for*

**mediator** means a *person who stands between two people or parties and brings them together.* They are a go-between in a dispute or conflict and they must represent both parties. A *covenant is a contract or agreement between two parties.* In the case of **Jesus** His *ministry is to reconcile humanity back to God.* The First covenant had mediators as well, in ceremonial matters the priests filled this role but ultimately it was Moses who acted as a mediator, as we see in Exodus 20:19 as the Israelites after hearing the 10 Commandments read and observing lighting flashes and smoke from the mountain said, “*You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.*” The prophets also acted as mediators of God’s word. Moses and the prophets weren’t false mediators they were just unable to bring fully reconcile people to God, they were just a reflection of the true mediator, Jesus. So *Jesus is a better mediator because only He can bring sinful humanity together with a Holy God, He is the ONLY go-between.* But *further more is offers a better covenant or contract.* If you have ever entered into any kind of contract you know that some are better than other and it all hinges on the “*terms*” and “*promises*”! The author of Hebrews declares that the reason for the New Covenant being better is because it offers a much great set of terms and promises. A standard contract has promises made to both parties and some of those promises are “*conditional*” in nature know as “*if then*” promises. What makes this New Covenant superior with better promises is that it is **NOT** an “*if then*” contact and the promises are 100% beneficial the humanity with 100% of the responsibility in keeping the contract with God not with humanity! If the New Covenant was even partially dependent upon us keeping our part of the bargain, then there would be no hope of us ever being able to enjoy the promises. People break their promises all the time but God never breaks His.

Vs. 7-8a The next point the writer makes is show that *while the Old Covenant wasn't false it had it's faults because of what it had to work with, US!* That's why he writes, "*If that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a **SECOND.***" The point that the writer makes is that *the Hebrew scriptures anticipated a New Covenant as Jeremiah the prophet foretold of establishment 2000 years before it came.* That obviously means that the first covenant was temporary and pointing to a later New covenant which would render it obsolete. He suggests that instead of encouraging those fellow Jews to abandon the New Covenant in which Jesus was the mediator they should have been expecting a New one and embraced it. So the writer says in verse 8a, "*finding fault with them*" and then *quotes Jeremiah's prophecy listing eight reasons according to God's word that the New Contract is better than the old contract.*

### III. Vs. 8-13 Jeremiah's endorsement

Vs. 8b-13 This quote over 2000 years before the New Contract was issued is from one of their most beloved prophets, Jeremiah.

1. **Based only on God's terms:** Vs. 8b "*Behold the days are coming, says **the LORD**, when I will make a New Covenant*": The Lord told Jeremiah that He was going to write a New Covenant based only on His terms. *This contract was more like a WILL then it was a contract between two parties in which both had terms and promises.* Though a "WILL" is a type of contract, and may have many different "beneficiaries" that can all enjoy it's promises it is only written by ONE Person. The beneficiaries have no part in determining the benefits, their only responsibility is to accept or reject the WILL's promises they can never change what the WILL provides. The New Covenant is based upon Jesus being the Mediator of it and it is only on His terms and conditions, all we can do is reject it or accept it. And some of these Hebrews were trying to change the terms by adding on to it, which render it for them null-and-void!
2. **New and BETTER then the Old:** Vs. 8b-9 "*A New Covenant...not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers.*" The writer continues to tells his readers what necessitated this New Covenant saying in verse 9, "*because **they did not continue** in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord.*" It was the Jews forefathers that soon after God made the contract that broke it and that is what necessitated the making of a new one. This reveals to us a powerful truth,

- the New covenant had to eliminate the flaw in the first contract, the Israelites.** It also reveals that there was NO HOPE of improvement from humanity through time or culture otherwise God would have reissued the same covenant. **The New Covenant isn't slightly modified or enhanced it is radically different because it eliminates what caused the first contract to fail, humanity to keep up their terms.**
3. **Proven better because it had perfect results with the same imperfect people:** Vs. 8c *"with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."* It had the same *beneficiaries* that the Old Covenant had but it achieved perfect results. Note that God mentions both halves of the divided kingdom: The 10 northern tribes that were carried away by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. These 10 tribes never fully returned from captivity and were either absorbed into the two tribes of the Southern kingdom or became half Jewish and half gentile, Samaritan. **The point the writer makes is that the effects of the failure of the Old Covenant because of Israel didn't alter the success of the New Covenant in Christ.** Even though the Northern tribe lost their genealogical records, God still knew who they were and was able to keep His promises to them. Now you might note that the *beneficiaries* are all Hebrews. God has never made a direct Covenant with gentiles and as far as the Bible is concerned He never will. The New Covenant isn't made with the church it is made too the same people the Old Covenant was made with, Hebrews. We can become *beneficiaries* by being grafted in the same way Abraham became a *beneficiary*, by faith. We must remember God has never and will never reject Israel even though they have rejected Him at times. Neither will he ever transfer His promises to another.
4. **Better because the promises weren't dependent upon Israel keeping their terms:** Vs. 9 *"because **they did not continue** in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord."* The blessings of the Old Covenant were conditional upon perfect obedience to the terms it was a **"if-will" contract!** God gave the law with the contract and having already been recipients of God's blessing through the Exodus they said, *"All that You have said we will do!"* I have no doubt that this was their intention as Paul explains the problem in Romans 7:14-25 *"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."* **Israel's sins did not do away with the obligations of the law but it did forfeit their experiencing all the blessings of the contract.**

5. **Better because it is relational not religious:** Vs. 10 “*For **this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.***” The **New Covenant would be radically different because it would internal and external, relational and not religious!** What this New covenant did was **change the motivation of obedience from FEAR to LOVE.** Notice the difference in the parchment of the contract: God’s Old Covenant as seen in the law was written on cold hard stone or on doorposts, writs and foreheads as a continual reminder of the terms we have agreed too! There was no way to place the terms on hearts. But God’s intention is too write His New Covenant upon our hearts and He does this through the Holy Spirit, birthed through a relationship because of His Son who proved His love for us! The New Contrast is a “**HEART CHANGER**” not a “**THOUGHT REMINDER**”!
6. **Better because it’s personal not merely educational:** Vs. 11 “*None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.*” This dove tails with the above superiority because the contract is relational it is personal as God’s word is within us and so is our tutor, the Holy Spirit. Every believer as a resident Teacher in the Holy Spirit. That’s what Jesus said in John 14:26 saying that “*the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*” The contrast between the contracts is obvious in Jeremiahs quote as the old contract was dependent upon those who couldn’t keep the contract to teach those who wouldn’t keep it and in the New contract we are dependent upon the Holy Spirit who implement the truth into our hearts!
7. **Better because it offers forgiveness for failures:** Vs. 12 “*For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.*” Where the old contract broke down because the promises were tied to perfect obedience the New Contract is tied to perfect forgiveness! What we “promise breakers” need more than anything else is forgiveness. **Under the old contract our sin and failure were never truly forgotten because they were never truly forgiven as sin was covered but not cleared!** The old contract was a shadow anticipating the New contract. Oh glorious it is that God had “forgotten” all our sins!
8. **Better because it is ready and available NOW:** Vs. 13 “*He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*” This New contract that Jeremiah 2000 years before it came was now available for all of the Hebrews to receive. This was their stumbling block as to receive the New contract they had to abandon the old obsolete contract. They had to realize that it was no longer valid for them or anyone else and that God no loner honored the old contract because the new one had arrived. The old contract was only temporary and a symbol or picture of the new contract. These Hebrews rejection of the new contract was like a person who has a picture of a loved one they haven’t seen in many years. The picture is on the wall of their home and in their wallet and on their desk at work they see it everyday and look forward to the time when they will be reunited with their loved

one. The picture is a great representation of their future time together and over time the picture becomes for dear to them. But one day unexpectedly their loved one shows up at their door. But all they do is continue to look at the picture and never recognize their loved one. They have focused so long at the picture that when the loved one had come in person they no longer see the person. The symbol has been substituted for the reality, the symbol is treated as the real thing! The sad truth is that the loved one can do for them what the picture could never do but can't because they still hold on to the picture which can never accomplish what they wish it could. The picture wasn't BAD it is beautiful it was never intended to be the real thing. When the real thing has come its time to get rid of the picture and grab ahold of Jesus!