

The New vs the Old (1st)

(While there are many covenants given in the Scriptures, many of the differences between Baptists and Protestants are due to how the Old and New Testaments are viewed. The Protestants believe that the New Testament is an extension of the Old, while the Baptists maintain that it is not.)

In the previous broadcast we pointed out that though Baptists are not Protestants and while historically we share some major theological beliefs, there are major differences that many today do not understand. Before we discuss some of the individual issues, it would be good to give a broad overview as to why some of these differences occur. I want to remind the audience that our purpose at this time is not to do a detail study but only give a broad overview. I believe many of you may not have the time to delve into an in-depth study of all of the different theological pros and cons of every theological difference. Equally, too often ministers throw out theological terms and various biblical doctrines when the audience really does not understand what is being discussed. To illustrate this, allow me to relate a conversation that I gave in my book *Justification: The Heart of the Gospel*.

The doctrine of justification, a central truth in Christianity, has been the focus of many books and articles written from various viewpoints. An incident related to me by a Christian friend illustrates from everyday experience the need for a practical and understandable book on this crucial subject. During a break at work, my friend discussed with an associate the apparent differences between present day Christian writers and those of the past. The fellow worker asserted that modern writers and Christians possess greater spiritual insight into the Scriptures than did Christians in previous eras. To the amazement of his co-worker my friend disagreed pointing out that very few people presently had a satisfactory understanding of important Bible doctrines such as justification. The ruffled co-worker replied, "What's that?"

That particular co-worker was a professed "spirit filled, Bible believing Christian." I'm not suggesting that the listening audience falls into this bucket. I only use this to show that many times we take it for granted that those listening understand what we are saying and following our train of thought. Therefore, if some things I say are very elementary for some of you, I ask that you please be patient with me as I seek to be clear for those new to the faith or some who may be "babes in Christ," I Cor. 3:1; I Pet. 2:2.

This being said, I believe one overall foundational difference that separates the Baptists from the Protestants is how the covenant is viewed. At the expense of being too fundamental, I will try to explain the differences as simple as possible. The Protestants maintain that the New Testament/covenant is an extension or a continuation of the Old. This is commonly referred to as *covenant theology*. The Baptist position is that the New Testament is not an extension of the Old. Both positions maintain that the covenant of God is foundational to salvation and the purpose of God. Both agree in many ways regarding the covenant or covenants of God, but there are some fundamental differences which result in how some doctrines and practices are believed which separates the two groups.

(For some who may not be aware, allow me to digress here and explain something. When I speak of Protestants, you must understand the various denominations or groups to which I am referring. Those people who were members of the Roman Catholic, and others of like mindedness, that wanted to "reform" or change the Catholics back to New Testament Christianity were designated as "reformers" or "Protestants." Their original intent was not to start a new denomination. Over time, various branches of religion under this broad understanding of the Scriptures came into being. Here

are some of the names: Reformers or designated with some such nomenclature; protestants, because they protested against Rome; Church of England (Anglicans); Episcopalians; Presbyterians; Methodists; Pentecostals; and others who came of these denominations as well. Many people who are members of some of the denomination that came out of, or came out of those who came out of Catholicism, do not have any idea of their heritage. If they understood this, they would understand more as to why they believe what they do about the Lord's Supper, baptism, church polity, the relationship between the church and state, and other practices. As we continue our studies, hopefully, we will try to clarify as to why and how we differ regarding these things.)

With this in mind, let us enlarge somewhat concerning the differences between the views regarding the covenants. If we were going to do a detailed study of the covenants mentioned in the Scriptures it would be needful to study such as the following: the covenant of works given to Adam; the covenant given to Noah; the covenant given to Abraham (both regarding the land in Palestine and the covenant concerning Christ); the covenant given to Moses; the priestly covenant; the Davidic covenant; the new covenant. While studying all of these covenants and their interrelationship are indeed interesting and of great importance, for our purpose and the general audience of today we plan only to look at the distinction between the old and new covenant and why the new is not an extension of the old. To do this, I believe it is profitable to look at some passages in the book of Hebrews. But first allow me to give a simple overview of this book.

The writer of Hebrews was writing to Hebrews (Israelites) who were converted from the Old Testament worship and identified themselves with the New Testament worship. Because of this they were being persecuted for their faith and were considering going back under the Old Testament law worship. This book shows that Christ and the New Testament worship was superior to that of the Old Testament and that what we now have is better. In other words, Christ is superior to:

- 1) the prophets, Heb. 1:1-3;
- 2) the angels, Heb. 1:4-2:18;
- 3) Moses, Heb. 3:1-19;
- 4) Joshua, Heb. 4:1-13;
- 5) Aaron (priests/priesthood); Heb. 4:14-7:18;
- 6) Ritualism, Heb. 7:19-10:39.

Also, a study of the word better from the follow verses and their context should be done in conjunction to the outline given above:

1:4: Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

6:9: But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

7:7, And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

7:19, For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

7:22; By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

8:6; But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

9:23; It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

10:34; For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

11:16, But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

11:35, Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

11:40; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

12:24: And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

I regret that our time has run out today. The Lord willing, we will continue showing that the New Testament/covenant is superior and better than that of the Old and that the New is not an extension of the Old.