

Lesson 112

God's New Covenant

The old sacrificial system was replaced by the perfect sacrifice of Jesus.

Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Introduction

In our last lesson, we learned about three different men who were allowed to see something very special.

What did God allow the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and the Apostle John to see? A vision of God and his glory.

Slide #3

Refer to Lesson 111 Theme Poster. Ezekiel's vision was so amazing that it was hard for him to describe, but he used words like brightness, fire, lightning, gleaming metal, and even a rainbow! He was overwhelmed by the sight of the Lord on his throne, and he fell on his face in fear and worship. Another prophet, Isaiah, was also given a vision of God and the seraphim as they worshipped him. Then the Apostle John saw Jesus, the Son of Man, in heaven. These visions were truly awesome. God's glory and holiness overwhelmed these men, and they were humbled before him when they understood how holy God is and how sinful people are.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. Think back now to the people of Judah. They were captured and taken away into exile by the Babylonians. We talked about Daniel and his friends as well as Ezekiel who were all living in Babylon. The prophet Jeremiah told the people that they would be captives in Babylon for only 70 years.

Have Illustrations and/or items ready to show.

Today our lesson is about another prophecy God gave to Jeremiah about a new covenant, a promise of God. This message gave the exiled people hope as they were living far from home. But guess what! This new covenant Jeremiah was talking about so long ago is also for us today, so we're going to compare the old covenant the people already knew and the new covenant they looked forward to.

Slide #4

Slide #5

Slide #6

Slide #7

Slide #8

Slide #9

To get us started, we'll play a game of "Old and New." I'm going to hold up some pictures, and I want you to tell me if each item is old or new (current) and which one is better. Ready? Hold up pictures, one at a time, and have students call out the answer. You may discuss some of the unfamiliar items with the class and how technology has changed or improved. If you brought items from home (e.g., old keys, VHS or cassette

tape, vinyl record, old camera, Walkman, smart phone), show those to the class and discuss.

The Two Covenants

Many of the old things have been replaced by newer, better things, haven't they? Let's take a look now at God's Word to see how the old covenant compares to the new covenant.

Who remembers what a covenant is? Serious promise or agreement.

When God makes a covenant, or promise, we know it will happen because God is faithful to do what he says he will do. God made a covenant with his people, the Israelites, when he gave them laws, including the Ten Commandments, right after he brought them out of slavery in Egypt. These laws told the people how to worship God and how to live right and be different from the nations around them. They had to obey the laws in order to get God's blessing. We call this the old covenant.

However, it was impossible for any person to keep all the laws of the old covenant because of sin. The Israelites kept disobeying God, and he had to punish their sin. Remember, that's how the people of Judah ended up in Babylon because they continued to sin and God had to punish them. This seems kind of hopeless, doesn't it?

But God had a plan, and he sent his prophet Jeremiah to tell about his plan of a new and better covenant. It included promises that would bring eternal hope, not only for the people at that time—but for everyone to come!

Slide #10

Slide #11

Slide #12

Slide #13

Jeremiah 31:33

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn to Jeremiah 31:33. Listen to God's plan for this new covenant. Read the verse.

With whom was the Lord going to make this new covenant? The house of Israel.

In the new covenant, where was God going to put his law and write his law? Within them, on the hearts of the people.

The Ten Commandments were part of the old covenant, and they were written on stone tablets. But God promised that the new covenant would be written on their hearts.

What does that mean, that the law will be written on their hearts?
Allow discussion.

It will be a personal covenant, or promise, between God and his people. He will forgive them of their sins, and each person will want to obey God from his heart.

Pass out the Class Notes.

Now look at your Class Notes. We will compare the old covenant to the new covenant. You will choose a picture to draw for each statement.

Who will read #1 about the old covenant and tell us which picture goes with it? Choose a reader. Stone tablets. Have students complete drawing for #1.

And #2. Who will read about the new covenant? What drawing goes with it? Choose a reader. Heart with writing on it. Complete #2.

Before we do #3, I want you to think about the Ten Commandments. It is impossible to keep all of God's laws. How many times in a day do we disobey our parents? That's breaking God's command to honor our father and mother. How many times have we wanted something that someone else has? That's the sin of coveting. What about lying or covering up the truth to stay out of trouble? That's bearing false witness. When we look closely at God's laws, we realize we can't keep them perfectly. We are all born as slaves to sin—as if we are chained to it.

What will you draw to go with #3 on the Class Notes? Chains. Complete #3.

God is holy and demands perfect obedience. When we disobey, we sin, and God must punish sin. But in the new covenant, God promises to forgive all of our sins. To do that, someone had to pay to buy us back so that we wouldn't have to be slaves to sin anymore.

God promised a Redeemer—someone who would pay the price by dying in the place of sinners and taking their punishment for sin. And we know now that only Jesus Christ could do that because he is God and has no sin. According to the new covenant, because Jesus died and rose again, he offers everyone who will believe in him the promise of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Does that mean we have to pay him back somehow by working to do as many good things as possible? Allow discussion.

Slide #14

Slide #15

Slide #16

Ephesians 2:8–10

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Let's see what the Bible says about that. Turn to the New Testament book of Ephesians. Who will read Ephesians 2:8–10? Choose readers.

How are we saved? By what? By grace.

By grace through what? Through faith.

What is this grace? Do we have to work for our salvation—to buy it? No. It's a gift of God.

Jesus already paid the price to buy us back from slavery to sin. The new covenant of salvation through Jesus is a gift of God. We cannot earn it by doing good works. If that were possible, we would all be going around

boasting and saying things like, "Jesus saved me 'cause I'm so great and I've done great things."

Now look at verse 10 again. Reread verse 10. When we have put our trust in Jesus for salvation, we should do good works to show our love for God. He has special things he wants his children to do, and we should be obedient to do them.

On the Class Notes, what picture goes with #4 to show God's gift of grace, our salvation from sin? Gift. Complete #4.

The Perfect High Priest

Let's look at another big difference between the old and new covenants. The old covenant, back in the Old Testament before Jesus came, included lots of different priests. Because the high priests were sinners just like everyone else, God told them they had to make animal sacrifices to cover their own sins as well as the sins of the people. But these sacrifices had to be made over and over because, like we said earlier, people are born as slaves to sin, so they kept sinning over and over.

Slide #17

Slide #18

Slide #19

Slide #20

Slide #21

Slide #22

What picture goes with #5 to show that the priests were also sinners? Black heart. Complete #5.

Hebrews 9:11-12

Now turn to the book of Hebrews. Let's find out what made the new covenant better. Follow along as I read Hebrews 9:11. Read the verse. What did Jesus appear as? A high priest.

Right. We know that because Jesus is God, he is perfect and holy and has never sinned.

What picture on the Class Notes goes with #6 to show Jesus' sinless life, which makes him the perfect high priest? White heart. Complete #6.

Now listen to verse 12. Read the verse.

When the priests of the old covenant made sacrifices, what were they sacrificing? Animals.

In verse 12, we see that Jesus did not come with the blood of animals like goats and calves. What blood did Jesus offer? His own blood.

Jesus was and still is the only perfect high priest. He offered himself as a sacrifice to redeem sinners and forgive sins.

The phrase "once for all" in verse 12 means Jesus' death happened only once, and it put an end to the animal sacrifices of the old covenant. In the

new covenant, Jesus' death on the cross paid for the forgiveness of sins to all who believe in him.

Do you see how the new covenant is so much better than the old covenant? Under the old covenant, the priests had to keep killing animals to cover their own sin and the sins of the people. But their sacrifices could never completely forgive sin.

The new covenant was different. Jesus came as our perfect high priest and made one sacrifice for all by shedding his blood and dying on the cross. Then he conquered death by coming back to life! That is the new covenant—God's promise of forgiveness through Jesus. Now, all who trust in him, turn from their sins, and receive his forgiveness will be saved.

Let's finish the last two pictures in the Class Notes. What will you draw for #7 to show the animal sacrifices? Lamb. Complete #7.

Who will read #8 and tell us what picture goes with it? Choose a reader. Cross. Complete #8.

Application

Slide #23

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. God's plan to redeem and forgive sinners was in place from the beginning. For a long time, God's people lived under the old covenant that God gave to Moses. The old covenant included many laws that the people could never fully obey. They had to offer animal sacrifices over and over, day after day, to cover their sins.

But God sent his prophet Jeremiah to tell of a new covenant, which would put God's law in the hearts of people who were redeemed—saved from sin. Jesus Christ would give himself as the perfect sacrifice and offer forgiveness to all who believe and trust in him.

Sadly, a lot of people still believe that they need to work hard to be good enough to get to heaven. For those people, it's as if the law is still written on tablets of stone—they are still living under the old covenant, trying to save themselves. The new covenant is NOT about doing good things so that God will love us and let us into heaven. It's about God's grace and his free gift of salvation from sin. Jesus did the work for us when he came to earth as a man, lived a perfect life, then died and rose again—all for sinners.

We do good things to show our thankfulness to God for saving us from the slavery of sin. When we believe in Jesus, our sins are forgiven—we are set free—and God's law is written on our hearts. That means God gives us the desire to obey him and the Holy Spirit to help us obey as we live to please him each day.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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