

THE TWO TESTAMENTS

That there are two testaments or covenants (to which we address ourselves in this article) is clearly taught in the Bible. A covenant is an agreement. Though we usually think of agreements as being bilateral, where both parties involved in the agreement had to agree to its being established, the Bible shows us that God's covenants with mankind have always been unilateral. That is to say, God promised to bless certain ones, or peoples ONLY IF they would be obedient to His will. Their disobedience would in no wise countermand His covenant, but rather would bring the condemnation that He had pronounced upon those who would break it. In other words, if one chose not to abide by a covenant God had imposed, he was certainly not released from its mandates. He did not have to agree with God in this covenant. But if he wanted God's blessing and avoid His wrath, he would indeed abide and obey.

What many fail to realize is that of all the covenants one could read about in the Bible, there is but one and only one to which we living today must be faithful. Perhaps the best book of the Bible that shows us the truth of that statement is the book of Hebrews. One of the key words to be found within this book is the word "better". Likewise, the words "first" and "second" indicate that the writer is contrasting but two testaments: the Old and the New. This is why your Bible has an "Old" testament and a "New" testament. This article will try to explain the difference between them. Following are several passages from the book of Hebrews, which we shall consider and upon which we shall comment. We will then be able to see more clearly by which of these two we are to live. It would be best for you, good reader, to get your Bible and read directly from it as we study in this way.

From Hebrews 7:22 we read: "*By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.*" Note that the word "better" is used grammatically to contrast or compare two items ONLY. This is a doctrinal point also and is vital to our study. There are some who would have us to believe that there are more than two covenants or testaments to be considered. In recent times there have been advertisements declaring that Jesus has "another" testament. Let us think this through. Do you have a "last will and testament"? If not, you will likely have one made before your death so that you can control what happens to your estate. But friends, do you think the law will recognize two wills or testaments as being valid at the same time? Of course not. This claim that Jesus has "another testament" in addition to the New Testament in our Bibles is a false claim and will bring many to ruin. There are no codicils attached to our Lord's covenant with mankind.

Next, we read in Hebrews 8:7 "*For if that first [covenant] had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.*" This time we find the significance of the terms "first and second." Since the word "better" indicates only two things, the word "second" proves this to be the case. This verse is showing us that the Old Testament (the first covenant) had faults. Wait! Did God not inspire it? Yes. Was it not therefore a perfect product? Absolutely! What fault then could be found within? Only this: it could not forgive sin. The Old Testament was perfect for what it designed to accomplish. It did the very thing God set it to do: prepared the nation of Israel to receive Christ. Although not all Israel accepted Him, the Old Law nevertheless finished its course and brought the Christ. Read what Paul said about this matter: "*For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.*"

Continued on page 3

BELVEDERE BEACON

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

Volume 8

Number 7

February 18, 2007

A PUBLICATION OF THE BELVEDERE CHURCH OF CHRIST

535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574

(Greater Augusta, GA area)

Written In Sand And Stone

Two friends were walking through the desert and got into an argument. One friend slapped the other one in the face. The one who got slapped was hurt, but without saying anything, wrote in the sand: "Today my best friend slapped me in the face."

They kept walking until they found an oasis. Thirsty, they stopped for water. The one who had been slapped got stuck in the mire, fell in, and started drowning. His friend saved him. That evening, he carved in a stone, "Today my best friend saved my life."

The friend who had slapped and then saved his best friend asked him, "After I hurt you, you wrote in the sand, but now you write on a stone. Why?"

He replied, "When someone hurts us we should write it in sand where the winds of forgiveness can erase it away. But, when someone does something good for us, we must engrave it in stone where it will long be remembered."

Learn to write hurts in sand and carve benefits in stone. Someone observed that it takes a minute to find a special person, an hour to appreciate them, a day to love them, but an entire lifetime to forget them.

Copied
Author Unknown

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY:		WEDNESDAY:	
Bible Classes for all ages	10.00 am.	Bible Classes for all ages	7.00 p.m.
Morning Worship	11.00 am.		
Evening Worship	6.00 p.m.		

EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley - Tel. No. (803) -279-8663
www.belvederechurchofchrist.org E-mail church@belvederechurchofchrist.org

CAN WE KNOW ANYTHING FOR SURE?

There is a strange doctrine that is being heard in many quarters today, both inside and outside of the Lord's church. This strange and false doctrine is that man **cannot** know anything for sure. When the purveyors of this doctrine are asked if they are sure, they are, in the main, adamant in their position. Thus are claiming that they can know for sure that you cannot know anything for sure. This is an absolute contradiction! Some would teach that one can have his own opinions, be he cannot know anything for sure.

However, I know for sure that this is not only a strange doctrine, it is also a false doctrine that contradicts the plain and simple teaching of Scripture.. The Bible is **very** clear, there are things that man can know for certain. This is particularly true with the book of I John. Note the following things that John believed that there were things that we can know and know for sure.

In the short book of I John, the Holy Spirit makes it **very** plain that man can KNOW. Notice what He says we can KNOW:

- KNOW - Jesus (2:3; 5:20).
- KNOW - that we know Jesus (2:3).
- KNOW - it is the last times (2:18).
- KNOW - all things (2:20).
- KNOW - the truth (2:21).
- KNOW - that Jesus is righteous (2:29).
- KNOW - that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of God (2:29).
- KNOW - that when Jesus appears we shall be like him (3:2).

Do you really KNOW these things that John has recorded for us in his first epistle?

I would recommend that if you don't know these things for sure that you spend some time reading and studying the first epistle of John that you may know for sure and certain that there are clearly things that we can know those matters that the Holy Spirit has determined that we can know and know without a shadow of a doubt.

Ken Chumbley

NEWS AND NOTES

Let us continue to keep in our prayers Helen Culpepper, Dot McLemore, Pam Gossett and her mother, Kathy Treadway's mother, Lanny Niver's father.

There will be a pot-luck following the morning worship service today. Plan to stay and eat and enjoy a visiting together.

Several were unable to be out Wednesday night because of health problems. Jennifer Wilson had bronchitis.

THE TWO TESTAMENTS Continued from page 4

In the following text, several verses are set in their Biblical order that we may see the context. In this context, we want to take note of the use of the word "testament" and the word "new". Let us read Hebrews 9:15-20. *And for this cause he is the mediator of the **new testament**, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions [that were] under the **first testament**, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a **testament [is]**, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a **testament [is]** of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the **first [testament]** was dedicated without blood. Saying, This [is] the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you."* Here are a number of things we can learn from this text: **1**-there were sins under the first testament (the Old Testament) which needed forgiving but were not; **2**-someone had to die to make the testament valid. That someone was none other than Christ. **3**-the New Testament came into effect and valid after Christ had died. **4**-the first testament (the Old Testament) was also dedicated with blood: the blood of animals. The book of Hebrews very clearly says at least twice that animal blood could not take away sins.

Finally, we must understand that what Christ brought into validity by His death (the second or New Testament) was designed to last forever, by which we mean: until the end of this world. Hear the word of the Lord: *"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of **an eternal covenant**, [even] our Lord Jesus" (Hebrews 13:20).* How long was the covenant of Christ to endure? Forever!

Friends, study your New Testament. It is the only document which provides you with the information you need to be saved and live with God forever when this life is gone. God bless you in your study!

*Robin W. Haley
Canal Winchester, OH*