

The King



As Christians we say we have a new covenant but if you study the previous covenants, (there is more than one) you will see that the differences between each of them isn't all that significant. When Moses lead the Israelites up to the Jordan river where they were about to cross into the "Promised Land", he felt it was necessary to remind them of God's Covenant and explain to them what obedience to that covenant entailed.

Deuteronomy 29-31 covers Moses's message to the Israelites and it starts by reminding them of God's safeguarding of them throughout the last 40 years, how He feed and defended them and how their clothing lasted all that time without showing any wear. Moses wanted them to understand that as long as God was by their side to protect them, they could not fail.

He wanted them to understand that if they were to count on God He had to count on them. Moses outlined their trip and described all the nations that they had passed through and all the "Detestable" idols and gods they had been exposed to yet didn't understand that they bear "Poisonous Fruit" but rather say to themselves, "I shall be safe though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart". He finally explains the wrath that they can expect from God contained in Deuteronomy 29 verses 20-23, curses, calamity and the "Blotting out of names from under Heaven". Reading verses 24-28 will give you some insight as to how outsiders would view them in their adversity. Perhaps Moses is giving us a better understanding of how Christians are viewed right now.

Moses finally explains that "Repentance" receives "Forgiveness". He then outlines how, when you "Return to the Lord your God and obey his voice in all that I command you today with all your heart and with all your soul" God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you. If you read Deuteronomy 30, God promises much with sincere repentance.

Joshua was appointed the responsibility to lead the Israelites into the "Promised Land" and under his leadership God made them successful in overcoming all their adversaries and prospered them in the land. Some of Joshua's achievements are well known and often recited but we will not be doing that here.

Instead we will fast forward to the end of his career in Joshua 23, where he brings all the leaders of Israel together and entrusts to them the nation of Israel and its population. He then "Reminds" them of "The Covenant", "The Law", and "The Admonitions" of Moses, encouraging them to "Love" and "Serve" "The Lord your God" so that He will favor them. He then assembles all the tribes of Israel at Shechem and gives them a history lesson from the call of Abram to the very day of his dissertation.

Once done with that he offers those in attendance a choice, "Choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The people all agreed that because of what He had done they would serve God. Interestingly enough Joshua said that because God is Holy they would probably not be able to persistently serve God and His demands on them would be more than they could handle, but they insisted that they would be able to and Joshua commended them. The Bible doesn't report whether the Israelites received a reading of "The Law" every 7 years as Moses recommended but this was the second "Reminder" of "The Covenant" that the Israelites had signed into.

For a while after Joshua entrusted the leaders with the future of the land of Israel, the Lord reigned as their ruler, but soon the people sought after other gods (read Judges 2) and forsook God that had done so much for

them. This was the beginning of the erratic course they set out on that would describe their existence as a population.

First there were Judges who appeared on the scene and through God's empowerment were able to rescue the people from one calamity or another. The scenario starts out with, "The people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord" progresses to, "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel" that caused, "The people of Israel to cry out to the Lord" which caused, "The Lord to raise up a deliverer for the people".

Do you see the cycle here? Abandon service to God and adherence to His Commands, followed by inflaming God's wrath which results in affliction for the people and once they come to their senses and "Repent", a deliverer comes on the scene and the people are rescued from this predicament but unfortunately not from themselves, since they will fall back into the same traps that they were just dragged from. Do you think your life might suffer from this cycle of events? I'm sure that it's a "Big" boat, those people in England are called "Bargees" and they live their whole life on that boat. This cavalier and unconcerned existence continues throughout the rest of the Biblical account and while their leadership changed from King to King the cycle of Disobedience, Displeasure of God, Repentance of the People, God's Grace Extended continued. There isn't much record of their activities while they were in Babylon but we have to believe that they weren't any different there than anywhere else.

John The Baptist was the turning point between the "Mosaic Covenant" and the "Christian Covenant" and the "Last Reminder" for Judaism. Interestingly though, when Jesus started His ministry in many ways He mimicked John's message but then went to a new level. Jesus's message was "Simple" but "Very Complex". Initially, it was "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand", which was similar to John's but then He announced that His life was the "Fulfillment of the Law" yet in the same breath He said that "The Law Wasn't Going Away". Which kinda sounds like we still have to contend with it and then elaborates on that law for 3+ years in an effort to clarify His assertions. Who understands what He said, Do You?

Abraham Kuyper said, *"Wherever man may stand, whatever he may do, to whatever he may apply his hand, in agriculture, in commerce, and in industry, or his mind, in the world of art, and science, he is, in whatsoever it may be, constantly standing before the face of his God, he is employed in the service of his God, he has strictly to obey his God, and above all, he has to aim at the glory of his God."*, which sounds like a formidable assignment but nonetheless critical for a bountiful future.

Is that your "Modus Operandi"? We rely on Jesus's Death and Resurrection for the salvation that insures our entrance into Heaven but what about "Today" and maybe "Tomorrow"? We have the Holy Spirit and The Document that God gave us for that! Do we pay attention to any of that? Only you can answer that? But God knows!

David in his Hebrew way put it a little backwards, he said in Psalm 49:20, *"Man in his pomp yet without understanding is like the beasts that perish."* but reassures us in 15, *"But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me."* Are you pursuing understanding? While David admonishes us to pursue "Understanding", Kuyper suggests that striving to achieve the "Righteousness of God" while not achievable is still important to undertake. Life can become more fruitful for you and for others when you do.