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GOD'S NEW COVENANT

Many times in advertisements we see and hear such phrases as "new and improved" as it relates to a particular product or service. With all the technological advances that have happened in your lifetime, you have seen a lot of new and improved things come on the scene. It seems that there is no end to the improvements. No one has found the ultimate improved product; however, in the spiritual realm, we have a case of an improvement over the old that is the ultimate--it cannot ever be improved. Before the coming of Jesus, God had used many ways to communicate with mankind. There had been messengers, both earthly and heavenly, that God had used, but then finally God sent the Living Word, His Son to give the ultimate message. Jesus was greater than the prophets and greater than the angels. Jesus is greater than Moses, and He is a greater priest than the Levitical priests. He is a priest that is of the same type as Melchisedec. Melchisedec is described as without beginning or end, he is a mysterious character on the stage of history. He was a the priest of the Most High God and Abraham paid tithes to him.

When Jesus was with His disciples before the crucifixion, He talked about a New Covenant with them. This is the basis for our calling the part of the Bible from the Gospels through The Revelation, the New Testament. This New Testament is superior to the Old Covenant.

The Old Testament had a system of sacrifices to deal with the sins that people had done. There was an earthly temple where these sacrifices were offered and once each year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle blood on the Ark of the Covenant. This would be repeated year after year. All of this was an example of what Jesus was to do in the completion of His mission in the spiritual realm. In the work of Christ, He entered in the very presence of God (not just the representation of it in the earthly temple) and carried in His own blood (not the blood of animals). The argument made here is that if the blood of animals work under the Old Covenant for the temporal cleansing, then the work that Jesus did was sufficient for the eternal.

HEBREWS 9:15-17 Jesus is the implementor of this New Covenant which is of an eternal nature. Notice that the word "inheritance" is used. This covenant is like a will where the inheritance and conditions are outlined. If a will is written, it is really not in effect until the person who writes the will dies. After than the will is in effect. The argument here is that it was NECESSARY for Jesus to die for the New Testament to be in effect.

HEBREWS 9:18-22 If we look at the implementation of the first covenant, we see that death was involved and the blood of a sacrificial animal which symbolized the life of the animal was sprinkled on all the people and the things that pertained to their religious observance. The practice of shedding blood for restoring by means of forgiveness goes back to the time of the first sin. When Adam and Eve sinned they realized that they were naked and, consequently, God provided them a covering made from the skin of an animal that was slain. We see that this was incorporated into the Law of Moses in Leviticus 17:11. (For the life {soul} of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make

atonement for your souls, for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.)

HEBREWS 9:23-26 When Moses and the Levitical priest that followed sprinkled blood on the items used in their worship they did so to purify or make these items acceptable to God. By comparison, the heavenly is much better than the earthly and, therefore, a better sacrifice is needed relative to what is used in the spiritual realm. This better sacrifice accomplishes much more than the old system of sacrificing animals. Whereas with animals, it was necessary to repeat the sacrifice every year, yet with this ultimate sacrifice it is once and for all. Again we find that what Jesus did in offering Himself did more than the Old accomplished because the Old answered for SINS (the acts) and what Jesus did addressed the issue of SIN (the principle). He has given us the means to deal with sin and be done with its power over us. His sacrifice is so much better in that it not only cleanses us from the guilt of sins but also gives us victory over the power and influence of sin. Why is this important?

HEBREWS 9:27-28 There are two aspects to consider: First, judgement is a sure thing for everyone has an appointment with death and judgement and the question of the outcome of the judgement needs to be addressed BEFORE we get to the time of judgement. The second aspect is that Jesus is coming back and when He returns, He is not going to be addressing the issue of dealing with sins, but will be implementing the fullness of His salvation to all who have participated in what He has already provided for the sin question. In other words, when Christ returns, He will not bring another means of dealing with remission of sins. That has been done already, there will never be any other means offered for atonement. This is why Jesus could (and did) say that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and that no one could come to the Father except by Him. There will never be a newer or more improved version of what Jesus did for us in providing a way of salvation.