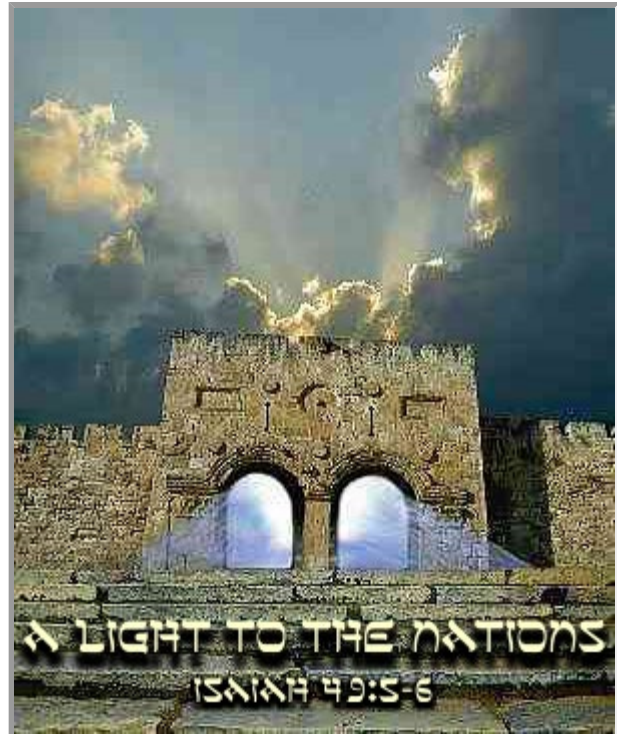


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What's "New" About It?

by haRold Smith
a citizen of the Commonwealth (Ephesians 2:19)

"But as it is, Yeshua haMaschiach has obtained a ministry that is much more excellent than the old as the covenant He mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For, if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. For He finds fault with them when He says: 'Behold, the days are coming, declares YaHoVeH, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares YaHoVeH. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares YaHoVeH: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know YaHoVeH,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.'" Hebrews 8:6-12



When you read **Hebrews 9:15** (**click on highlighted words to view content**) in the modern translations of the NKJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV or ESV, you will find that the Greek **diatheke** (used in the LXX for the Hebrew **briyth** which means "covenant, alliance or pledge") is correctly translated "covenant," not "testament." But simply because these translations have corrected the **word** does not mean they have corrected the 400 years of theological error that followed the King James error. We need some history to see just how influential this little mistake has been. When Jerome translated the LXX into the Latin Vulgate (the version used by the Roman Catholic Church for nearly 1500 years and subsequently passed on to the Catholic Protestant movement), he correctly translated **Jeremiah 31:31**, using the Latin **feriam** for the Greek **diatheke** for the Hebrew **briyth**. No problem here. But when he translated the **citation** of this same verse in **Hebrews 8:9**, he did not use the Latin **feriam** (or even the synonym **pactum**). Instead he used the Latin **testamentum**. With this mistake, he introduced the idea of a "new testament" - which the writers of the KJV carried forward some centuries later by translating it as the English "testament". Unfortunately, even though the Greek word **diatheke** appears more than 300 times in the LXX, it is translating the Hebrew **briyth** - which **NEVER** means "testament." Why is that? It is because a "testament" is the last declaration of a single person for the disposal of property upon **death**. A covenant, however, is a declaration of terms of a relationship between two parties **who are both alive**. A covenant has no authority once one of the parties dies (as Paul makes abundantly clear in Romans). But a testament does. It is a **death** statement, not a life statement. And since it takes effect only upon **the death** of its maker, it implies that what was formerly true is no longer the case. The person has died. By legitimizing the idea of a "testament", the Catholic translation allowed the former covenant of YaHoVeH with Israel to be treated as if it no longer applied - the former agreement was over because one of the parties was dead, i.e., YaHoVeH rejected Israel and offered up a "new testament." Therefore, all of the previous requirements that kept the former agreement in place were now dead, null and void - in spite of Yeshua's proclamation of **Matthew 5:17-19**, which was subsequently **redefined** and explained away. The thinking was that since the death proclamation closed that "old" way of relating to YaHoVeH - **now the Christian faith could rewrite the agreement**. This mistake influences even the ASB translation of **Hebrews 9:15-16**. It suggests that the mediator must die because if there is a covenant, **"there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it."** But this isn't correct. It is not the **mediator** who dies because a covenant requires **living** parties - it is the symbol of the commitment **between the parties**. The idea of a "testament" influences this

incorrect translation. On page 45 of his book, **Daniel Gruber** writes: "*Hebrews 9:15 speaks of Messiah as the mediator of the new covenant. That means that Messiah is not the maker of the covenant. He is the mediator between the parties making the covenant. The parties of the New Covenant, as presented in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8:8-12, are YaHoVeH and the house of Israel."* He goes on to say: "*This simple mistranslation, misrepresentation, and misunderstanding are foundational to virtually every Christian theology. It creates the illusion of a conflict within the Bible itself"* (Ibid., p. 47). The only reason this issue becomes confusing is, primarily, because we tend to look at what these words are describing through the lenses of traditional and cultural filters. In **Hebrews 9:17** we are told that someone does die - but, who? As stated previously, it's not the mediator, Yeshua - and it can not be YaHoVeH since He is the Source of Life. That leaves only one party, Israel - since the covenant was made between YaHoVeH and Israel. **Verse 15** sets up this premise by pointing out that there were transgressions made toward that covenant - which had to be by Israel since YaHoVeH can not transgress Himself. It is in verse 16 we are reminded that where a will is involved (whether it be an individual will, as in Adam, or a collective will, as in Israel) a death must be established - because anything apart from Life is death. Thus, we find Hebrews 8:12 able to proclaim "For I will be merciful toward their (Israel's) iniquities, and I will remember their (Israel's) sins no more" because it was the darkness of their sin of **self-determination** that led to a separation from the Source of Life Who is **Light**.

YaHoVeH told Adam in the Garden that in the day he eats of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge between what is good and what is evil - he will die. But Adam did not physically die on that day. In fact, scripture tells us he lived for another **930 years** with he and his family having interaction with **the Present Presence** all during that time. Since we know that YaHoVeH is not a liar, then, in what sense did that dying occur? There are only two places in scripture where Spirit breathed upon men. The first was in the Garden where **scripture** tells us that the breath of YaHoVeH became Life to Adam, **the first of the Hebrews**. Scripture also tells us that **the Life is in the blood** so when YaHoVeH breathed Life into Adam, it became his blood. Just as my son's blood carries the DNA of his father, Adam's blood carried the DNA of his Father, YaHoVeH. Adam and YaHoVeH were **echad** (Hebrew for "one"). They were in complete union, meaning the Nature they shared caused them to be as one. Adam carried the Essence of the Nature of his Father in his blood. That Essence is expressed in the Father's **Glory**, in **His Name** and in **His Word**. Adam's disobedience to his Father's Word injected the darkness of **self-determination** into that Nature - thus corrupting the Purity of the Blood and necessitating a **separation**. It is this self-determination of will that began with Adam and **continued to occur** in the lineage of Israel that caused them to live in death since anything apart from Life is death - which necessitated **an atonement** by the exchange of the **blood** of Yeshua to restore YaHoVeH's covenant to His family.

In the end there is no "new" testament and "old" testament. In fact, there is no "testament" at all. The Bible is about covenants, not testaments. The very existence of the page separating the Old Testament from the New Testament is a lie. Tear it out. It's one book about one YaHoVeH and one people who have entered into living covenants together. Any theology that suggests otherwise is a consequence of its invention by Jerome. There has never been a "new" or second covenant. There has only ever been **One Covenant** made with the house of Israel and Yeshua restored it as YaHoVeH promised He would in the Person of Israel's Messiah. There is also an inference between the words "old" and "new" that what is newest supersedes what is "oldest". That concept is simply not seen when scripture is viewed from the Hebrew perspective it was written in (see **Who's Word Is It?** for more insight). The *Tanakh* or the Original Scriptures are not an "Old Testament." They make up the completeness of YaHoVeH's everlasting covenant with Israel. What has come to be known as the "New Testament" is in reality a **fulfillment** of that everlasting covenant. They are not two testaments or even two covenants - they are one. If we are to remain students of Truth, it becomes imperative to rid ourselves of words that continue to promote inferences which are in opposition to the Truth contained in scriptural concepts (**2Corinthians 10:5**). In YaHoVeH is the Source of LIFE (Yeshua did not raise Himself from the dead). The Essence of the Nature and Character of YaHoVeH is what constitutes that LIFE. His LIFE, as exemplified in the Life of Yeshua, IS Light (**1John 1:5**, **John 1:4**, see **Who Is The Word** scripturally). This is the LIFE that is to be a "**Light to the Nations**". From the beginning and, subsequently throughout the recorded history of scripture, the Father's unchanging, underlying motivation has been to attract mankind to LIFE - not bring life to mankind (**Psalms 72:17**). The scriptures are given to us as both a chronicle of the working out of His desire for a people to live in His LIFE and thereby become a testimony, a Light, to the rest of mankind. They are also given to show us, to define and to underscore, the difference between what is that LIFE and what is death - what is Light and what is darkness. Yeshua said in **John 17:3** that THIS IS eternal LIFE (you can not get much plainer than that) - to KNOW both the Father and the One Whom He Sent. When Moses asked YaHoVeH to show him His Glory in **Exodus 33:18-19**, the very next verses following in **Exodus 34:1-7** says that He did - beginning with the Father writing on tablets of stone with His own finger the ten things that make Him distinctive, that define **the Essence of His Nature**. Understanding His Nature is what it means to **to KNOW Him**. When Yeshua was pointedly asked, "...how do I obtain LIFE?", His answer was, "...to keep the Commandments". He then repeated those commandments so there would be no misunderstanding as to which words He was referring to (**Matthew 19:16-22**, **Luke 10:25-28**, also **Mark 10:17-21**, **Luke 18:18-22**). What He repeated were the same **Ten Words**, (referring to verse one) that were given to Moses.

Those ten things **Ya-Ho-VeH** (YaHoVeH) gave to Moses are unbreechable because they are the core of Who He Is. They are what constitute LIFE and He Never Changes. Truth will always stand - it is the same yesterday, today and forever (**Hebrews 13:8**). Everything in the *Tanakh* (re-named OT, which includes Torah) points to the fulfillment of YaHoVeH's purpose for His Family - which was the restoration of **the Kingdom** as it was in *gan edan* (Hebrew for "garden of edan"), meaning "garden of delight". The delight was in the shared expression of Life YaHoVeH had with this **first family of Hebrews** found in the expression of **echad**. It is this LIFE that YaHoVeH purposed would be manifested before the rest of mankind in a people set apart to Him by their example of obedience to His Words (**Isaiah 42:5-7**).



...the Words of LIFE

YaHoVeH swore by Himself to accomplish this purpose because there was no one higher to swear by and, thus, He ensured this Covenant He made with Himself could never be broken by man (**Genesis 22:15-18, Psalm 89:30-37**). This is the covenant fulfilled, made complete, in Yeshua - and there is nothing "new" about it. It is the same covenant that began with Adam (**Genesis 3:15**), was established in the loins of Noah (**Genesis 9:9**), was ratified before Abraham (**Genesis 22:15-18, Galatians 3:15-17**), sealed in the Kingship of David (**2Samuel 7:12-13, Psalm 89:3-4**), spoken of in **Jeremiah 31:31-33** and culminating in the Life of Yeshua (**John 7:42**); through whom, by way of His manner of LIFE, the Covenant was **fulfilled** meaning to complete and make whole - not ended) and the doorway to Life was restored for any who would **choose** to enter into **the Present Presence** by the keeping of YaHoVeH's Words (**John 14:23-24**). Please understand that this is not advocating an embrace of the man-made religion of Judaism - just acknowledging the Hebraic

information found in scripture (**Matthew 23:3**). **Then, what is so NEW about this Covenant the "Christian" religion has made such a debate over?** Words mean things. So, let us go to the words themselves and see what unfolds from them. The verse from the *Tanakh* quoted in the passage in Hebrews at the start of this article comes from **Jeremiah 31:31-33**. The Hebrew word that is translated "new" in that verse comes from the root word **chadash** and means *to make fresh, to re-new, to re-pair*. When Yeshua spoke to Peter in **Matthew 16:18** that it is on the rock of revelation that came to Peter He will **"build" His assembly**, He was referencing this verse from Jeremiah. The Greek word translated as the English "build" is **oikodomeo** which also means *to re-store by building, to re-build, to re-pair*. Yeshua was not saying He came to build something "NEW" from scratch but to **RE-store** the covenant made before Abraham and that the foundation, the rock, of that covenant would be an individual Revelation of Who He Is - the **Kinsman Redeemer** of Israel sent to restore the Kingdom among YaHoVeH's family as it was in the beginning with Adam.

"But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a **better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises." Hebrews 8:6**

Good, better, best. That's the kind of thinking Westerners entertain when we come across a word like this. In our system of thought, when something is "better" it implies movement away from something inferior and toward something different; such as: I once lived in a house with one bedroom, but as my family grew, I got rid of the old house and moved into a better one with more rooms, better suited to my ever-expanding family. If this is the kind of thought behind the covenant imagery in Hebrews, then the **replacement theologians** are right. The original covenant has been abandoned in favor of another "new" covenant of Christianity and the "better" one is now in place. But, since words mean things, it is imperative that we look at the original intent of what was subsequently translated into English to find out what those Hebrew authors were actually trying to convey. The author of the book of Hebrews uses the Greek word **kreitton** for this word "better" to convey the idea of something **"more useful, more serviceable, more advantageous, more excellent"**. **Kratos**, (from which **kreitton** is derived), adds the dimension of **"strength, force, power or might"** to the definition. So, the guarantee of the new covenant found in the resurrection of Yeshua is "more useful, more advantageous" or "more powerful" than what was before. It is not "better" as a **replacement** of something else - it strengthened whatever the first thing was to make its usefulness more excellent. So, we need to ask, "What is it **more** of?" And the answer comes directly from the context of this very passage in **Hebrews 8:7-12** that is quoting Jeremiah 31. This "more useful" or "more powerful" covenant is the "new" covenant spoken of in Jeremiah but, as we have already seen, that covenant is **not new** from the standpoint of replacement. It is the same covenant YaHoVeH gave Israel at Sinai, only now it has become **renewed** in the hearts of men rather than on tablets of stone. Why is it more useful or more powerful? Because it is written on my heart! YaHoVeH doesn't **replace** what He said before with something novel - He just says the same

thing through a different **manner of delivery**. Now His words are engraved on my very being. His Commandments become internal rather than external - but, **THEY ARE STILL THE SAME WORDS** with the same expectation of obedience to them. The purpose of YaHoVeH **from the beginning** has been to enable those **members of His Family** to become *partakers of His divine nature!* **His Words** define what that Nature is. The Hebrew perspective is that nothing is replaced - it is simply made better. I just took the same old house that was not serviceable for my ever expanding family and built a second story on top of it. Now, that same house has been *rebuilt or restored* so that it has more bedrooms. The load-bearing walls have been strengthened to accommodate the added force placed on them to make the over-all structure more useful. It has become "renewed" to accommodate a larger number of people - BUT IT STILL IS MY ORIGINAL HOUSE. The only thing that changed is the way it is *used* - herein we find the concept of "grace upon grace" used in **John 1:14-17**.



"In that he says, a new covenant, he has made the first old. Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away." Hebrews 8:13

The Greek word used for "new" in this verse is **kainos**, and its meaning is similar to what we find in the Hebrew as referenced in Jeremiah 31 - *recently made fresh*. The Greek word translated to English both as "old" and "decays" is **palaioo**, which means *to make ancient or to become old, to become worn with use*. This verse continues by saying it is *ready to vanish* or *near to disappearing* (from the Greek word **eggys**, meaning *near - of place and position: those who are of near access to YaHoVeH; of time: imminent and soon to come to pass*). This Greek word **eggys** has as its base the primary verb **agcho**, which gives the illustration of *anything closely enfolding, as the arms of the sea* - it does **NOT** say that it has happened yet. That will come with the marriage of the two - **the Bride**, the nation of the Blood as the carrier of the covenant and the BrideGroom, the Body of the Messiah as the fulfillment of the covenant. In that marriage these two become one (as with the mystery of a natural marriage between a man and a woman Paul speaks of in Ephesians 5). They become the one new man spoken of in **Galatians 3:28-29**, and **Ephesians 2:15**. The core from which **replacement theology** operates (the idea that grace *replaces* the Torah) requires the author of Hebrews to break the link between YaHoVeH, the Hebrew **Elohim** of Israel, and the Creator God of all. Thus, the message of the Bible **can not** be Hebraic in nature, so the author of Hebrews **can not** be expounding Hebraic theology. But, what if (as has just been shown from reading the true meaning of these words) there is no "new" covenant? What if the **restored** covenant has exactly the same content, the same features as the original? What if the only difference is how it now operates? What if the Ten Words of YaHoVeH really are not *general principles of ethical action* or **moral attitudes** but, rather, are simply the requirements of the Holy One of Israel to come into the Presence of His Excellence of Spirit? What do we do with **His Words** now? (...and there are **ten** of them - not nine).

"For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one by abolishing in His flesh the [enmity even or which is] the law of commandments [contained] in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, [so or thus] establishing peace." Ephesians 2:14-15

All of the words contained in brackets in the verse above means they do not appear in the original text. Remember that, *from a scriptural viewpoint*, there are only two categories of people - Hebrews and "others". These "others" are known as **Gentiles**, those who worship gods other than the **Elohim** of Israel. *All of scripture* was written by Hebrews, from a Hebrew mindset influenced by a Hebrew culture that saw the rest of the world from a unique **Hebrew perspective** of the One True **God of Israel**. Most English translations have to add words to try to make sense of **Sha'ul's** (the Hebrew apostle Paul's) interpretation because there is a prior commitment to replacement theology which makes it necessary to read this verse in a way that is not Hebrew. If we take out the added words, we find this verse to be more appropriately read - **"For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that in Himself he might make the two into one new man, establishing peace."** **Ephesians 2:14-15** (online Greek Interlinear Bible) If we go back to **verse 11** and read through to verse 16 by reading the context of the entire passage without adding the overlay of replacement mentality, we find two important phrases to consider. First, that the "new" (that is, the **RESTORED** covenant) is not made with anyone other than **the Hebrew house of Israel** and, second, that what was abolished was not "the law" itself, but the prohibitive effect (*enmity or opposition*) the **behavior** of the "sons of disobedience" (**verse 1-3**) had in keeping them

separated from the *God of Israel* whose Essence is portrayed in the Torah through a *higher standard of behavior* (see [the Temple](#) to find out what those behavioral ordinances expressed in the "dividing wall" were). Since the exchanged blood of Yeshua **restored the Covenant** the Father began with the first Hebrew, Adam, all men have the opportunity (by embracing the behavior expressed in the Torah) to be able to know Him and to walk in His Ways. Yeshua made peace *in His flesh* between the estrangement of YaHoVeH and His Family of Israel. What He did in His flesh was to reverse the course of **self-determination** set by Adam's choice to one of selflessness in becoming obedient to the will of the Father. In fulfilling, making complete and whole, the Covenant purposed by the Father from the beginning - to attract mankind (the Nations) to His LIFE (the Light) exemplified through a people set apart to Him - He restored the initial trajectory set by the Father's desire to see all men come to know Him (see what it means scripturally to be **Born Again**).



There is only one Covenant that the Father made with Himself so that it could not be broken by man (**Genesis 22:15-18**). Yeshua did not come to "do away" with or "destroy" or "replace" that covenant - He came to "fulfill" it - *to make it complete, to make it whole, to fill it to the brim so that nothing more can be found to put in it* (the Greek definition of "fulfill"). Yeshua came as the conduit by which that Covenant would be **imbued with Power**. Yeshua comes to restore - not to replace. What was "new" about the Covenant was not the underlying purpose the Father had determined from the beginning, but the *manner* in which that purpose was delivered to His People - *ruach hakodesh* (Hebrew for "the holiness of spirit").

*"The friendship, the secret counsel of the Father is for those who fear Him, and **He makes known to them**, His covenant." Psalm 25:14*

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