

Yeshua: His Better Covenant ~ Part 5a
Messianic Jews 9:15-22
Letter to the Messianic Jews

In my last post, we examined **Messianic Jews 9:11-14** concerning **The Eternal Heavenly Sacrifice of Yeshua**. In this post, we look at **Messianic Jews 9:15-22 ~ The New Covenant Validated by the Death of Yeshua**.

The New Covenant Validated by the Death of Yeshua

¹⁵ It is because of this death that he is mediator of a new covenant [or will]. Because a death has occurred which sets people free from the transgressions committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promised eternal inheritance. ¹⁶ For where there is a will, there must necessarily be produced evidence of its maker's death, ¹⁷ since a will goes into effect only upon death; it never has force while its maker is still alive. ¹⁸ This is why the first covenant too was inaugurated with blood. ¹⁹ After Moshe had proclaimed every command of the Torah to all the people, he took the blood of the calves with some water and used scarlet wool and hyssop to sprinkle both the scroll itself and all the people; ²⁰ and he said, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has ordained for you." ²¹ Likewise, he sprinkled with the blood both the Tent and all the things used in its ceremonies. ²² In fact, according to the Torah, almost everything is purified with blood; indeed, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." ~ Hebrews 9:15-22 (CJB)

This is one of the most challenging passages in the letter for most of us Gentiles. However, it would not be troublesome to those who read the message for the first time, for its methods of argument and expression and categories of thought would be familiar to them. As a result, I need to once again, break this passage up into two parts. In this post, we will cover verses 15-18.

As we have seen, the idea of the **Covenant** is fundamental to the thought of the author, that is the relationship between God and humanity. The **First Covenant** was dependent on them keeping the law; as soon as they broke the law, the covenant became ineffective. The essential meaning of the **New Covenant**, which **Yeshua** inaugurated, is that humanity should have access to and fellowship with God. Unfortunately, we come to the **New Covenant** already stained by our sin nature. So, the author of **Messianic Jews** has a great thought and says that the sacrifice of **Yeshua** is retroactive. That is to say; it is useful to wipe out the sins of humanity committed under the **Old Covenant** and to inaugurate the fellowship promised under the **New Covenant**.

It may be helpful to remember that the Letter to the **Messianic Jews** was written after the destruction of the **Temple** in 70 CE. No **Old Covenant** sacrifices could be made.

Yeshua's relationship to the **New Covenant** is, first, that *he is mediator new covenant* of it and second, that his *death* inaugurated it. However, His death has a function not only in relation to the **New Covenant** but also with regard to *the First Covenant*: it *sets people free from* their *transgressions* of it by being an effective death that pays the penalty for sin once and for all, whereas the death of animals offered as sin offerings gives only temporary remission.

The *promised eternal inheritance* can be traced through the **Tanakh** as it outlines one of its major themes. God promised **Adam** everlasting life, conditional on obedience. God's covenant with **Noach** includes many promises and is called eternal. God promised **Avraham** and his seed the Land of Israel forever, and the term *inherit* is first used in the Bible in connection with this promise (see Genesis 15:7). God's promises to **Avraham** are reconfirmed in the covenant with **Moshe**, but people's sins disqualified them from receiving what had been promised. Those who accept **Yeshua's** once-for-all dealing with sin, as explained in these chapters, *may receive the promised eternal inheritance*.

A modern reader may be able more easily to grasp the author's argument by thinking in terms of *wills*, but the context is that of *covenants* as outlined in the **Tanakh**, where the Hebrew word "*b'rit*" must be translated **covenant** and cannot be rendered as *will*.

There must necessarily be produced the evidence of its maker's death. For wills this is self-evident; but it is also true for God's covenants, insofar as sacrifices are stand-ins for the death of the one offering them. **Noach** offered sacrifices (Genesis 8:20, 9:9). In the case of **Avraham**, there were actual sacrifices (Genesis 15:9, 17-18) as well as the symbolism of the blood shed at circumcision (Genesis 17:11). The author himself discusses the **Mosaic** sacrifices (Exodus 24:1-8) in verses 18-22.

As we know, a *will* is one-sided, but a *covenant* is two-sided. Obviously it was not God, who set the terms of these covenants, who died. Instead, it was, in all instances, the receiver of God's covenant who died ~ not actually, but symbolically through identification with the shed blood. In the **Mosaic Covenant**, the dead animals represent the people of Israel as having died to their former sinful way of life; while the sprinkled blood represents the new life offered through the *covenant* (*the life is in the blood* ~ Leviticus 17:11).

Our sins have been covered by the **Blood of Yeshua**. They are forgiven and forgotten.

In my next post, we'll continue our mini-series on **Yeshua: His Better Covenant** we will pick back up at verse 19 in **Messianic Jews 9:15-22** concerning **The New Covenant Validated by the Death of Yeshua**.