



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## The New Covenant: God's Great Guarantee to His People

PASTOR ALEX CRAIN TEACHING FEBRUARY 11, 2016 PART 2

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**Jeremiah 31:31-34** *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and 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, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law in their inward parts, and I will write it in their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*

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“PEOPLE WHO HAVE FAITH ARE UNWILLING TO TRUST IN THEMSELVES.”  
SAINT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (354 - 430 A.D.)

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### FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- FEBRUARY 18: ACTS 11:19-30 A LEADERSHIP OF OTHERS-CENTERED LOVE
- FEBRUARY 25: ACTS 12:1-11 GOD DELIGHTS TO OVERCOME THE IMPOSSIBLE BY PRAYER

### Question: What does God promise in the New Covenant?

#### I. INNER TRANSFORMATION

This first promise meets us at our point of greatest need in light of how the Bible describes our hopeless and

helpless condition. According to Scripture, we are not spiritually dormant beings. There is no "spark of divinity" within us just waiting to be stirred. Rather, we are spiritually *dead*. We must be given a completely new heart. Consider Ephesians 2:1-5...

*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world... but God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.*

The Bible is clear that we cannot have faith in God apart from God's own merciful act of granting us that faith.

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“JESUS RAISES THE DEAD. THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR SALVATION IS TO BE SPIRITUALLY DEAD. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SMART, RICH, ATTRACTIVE, OR FUNNY. YOU JUST HAVE TO BE DEAD.” ROBERT CAPON

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*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)*

This is an utterly humbling doctrine. Many find it too hard to accept. It is far more appealing to believe that every person has the innate ability to choose to follow God. Such a notion fits well with how we typically think of ourselves. But if that were the case, why did God make a New Covenant in which the very first thing He promised is a new heart? Ezekiel 36 puts the promises of the New Covenant in exactly the same order. A new heart comes first because that is our first and greatest need as human beings. When we accept this, it gives God His rightful due. All glory in salvation belongs to Him. His choice alone (not ours) grants new life. It occurs apart from human volition. John 1:13 says that believers

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### BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR EAST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR EAST CONFERENCE ROOM

# Virginia

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are chosen by God. They are "...born not of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

### II. INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD HIMSELF

The phrase here, "I will be their God and they shall be my people..." is a recurring theme throughout Scripture. Having a right relationship with God is set forth in the Bible as mankind's ultimate good. The final book of the Bible, Revelation, actually draws to a close in chapter 21 with these words:

*"Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."* Revelation 21:3-4

Note that God does not just create forgiven individuals. He creates a new community of forgiven people. "They shall all know me... declares the LORD." In other words, we are not merely called to believe but also to belong to the New Covenant family of God. What an incredible blessing!

One of the final books of the Bible, The Epistle to the Hebrews, quotes the New Covenant promise verbatim from Jeremiah 31 saying: *And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,' then he adds, 'I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.' Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.* Hebrews 10:15-18

In response to this truth, the writer of Hebrews immediately tells us how to apply it, saying, "Since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." (Hebrews 10:19-22)

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**"HERE, GOD HIMSELF IS PORTRAYED AS OUR REWARD.  
OUR HIGHEST—OUR ENTIRE—GOOD IS TO POSSESS HIM  
AND TO BE POSSESSED BY HIM."  
SAINT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (354 - 430 A.D.)**

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**COMPARING THE OLD MOSAIC COVENANT WITH THE NEW COVENANT, ARCHBISHOP JOHN CHRYSOSTOM WROTE:  
"IN THE CASE OF STATUES, BOTH THE GOLD ONE AND CLAY ONE ARE CALLED STATUES, BUT THE ONE AS A MODEL, THE OTHER AS THE REAL STATUE."  
JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (347 - 407 A.D.)**

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We no longer have to wonder whether we are good enough to approach God. He has opened up a new and living way through His Son, Jesus. He encourages us to draw near to Him and enjoy fellowship with Him. This is the ultimate purpose for which we were created!

### III. INIQUITIES FORGIVEN

This amazing, intimate relationship with God and with fellow believers is possible because God deals with our sin. He forgives our iniquities and they are no longer a barrier.

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**"LIKE IGNORANT CHILDREN, THEY ARE CONTENT PLAYING WITH MUDDPIES IN THE SLUM BECAUSE THEY CANNOT CONCEIVE OF A HOLIDAY AT SEA.  
WE ARE FAR TOO EASILY SATISFIED."  
C.S. LEWIS (1898 - 1963 A.D.)**

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#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Which of the blessings of the New Covenant do you find most difficult to believe and apply daily?
- 2) How does Scripture say we are internally transformed with a new heart? Is it by our choice or God's?
- 3) Have you drawn near to God through Jesus Christ and been given a "true heart in full assurance of faith?"