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WHAT DO YOU MEAN ... A NEW COVENANT?

Lately we have heard a lot about the "NEW" covenant! What exactly do we mean by "new"? When we examine it more closely, this word means different things to different people. So let's understand what God means when He uses the word "new".

DIFFERENT MEANINGS

EXAMPLE 1: You are on the beach with your small son and you build him a sandcastle. After he has played with it for a while, he gets frustrated. So you erase the whole thing, flatten the sand and tell him: "Alright, now I will build you a NEW sandcastle." And you start from scratch. None of the sand you used before has to be in the new castle you build, because you scattered it all. The castle you then build may look similar to the first one, or it may be quite different. But it is "new"!

EXAMPLE 2: You own a 1958 Pontiac car. The body is still in great shape and the interior is in perfect condition. But the engine leaks oil and is generally on its last legs. Also the exhaust pipe is dropping off. Because you like the looks of the car, you ask a mechanic to fit a brand new engine, replace the gearbox and the exhaust, and service everything else that needs attention. It costs you quite a lot of money, but in the end you have a NEW car. It still looks like the old '58 Pontiac from the outside, but under the hood there is a new, powerful 1995 model engine and gearbox.

This kind of "new" is different from the previous example. It looks very similar to the old, but under the surface it is now totally different.

Example 3: You own a small car. It is fairly new and in good condition. Then someone rides into you. You are not hurt but your car is a total write-off. With the insurance money you go and buy a NEW car that is the same as the one that was destroyed. It is the same model and even has the same colour. The new car in this case is not at all different from the old one.

So ... when we talk about THE "NEW" COVENANT, which meaning of "new" do we have in mind? Do we mean "totally new" and probably very different, like the new sandcastle? Or do we mean "new" like the old Pontiac with just a new engine inside, but still looking the same on the outside? Or do we mean "new" like the "new car" we buy as a replacement with the insurance money, which has retained nothing from the old car, but which nevertheless is in all respects identical to the old car?

The church leadership in the current situation has obviously decided on the meaning of our first example, the totally new sandcastle. Wipe the old one out completely, and start totally from scratch to construct something new. That approach is evident from the repeated statement that:

"AS A PACKAGE THE OLD COVENANT IS DONE AWAY!"

But that is not the meaning of "new" that God in the Bible applies to "the new covenant". When we really understand it correctly, the relationship between the old covenant and the new covenant is very much like the relationship between the old Pontiac car, and the new Pontiac car, which on the outside looks just like the old car, but which UNDER THE HOOD has a totally new engine and a new gearbox to make it work smoothly, efficiently and correctly.

"NEW" IN THE BIBLE

Let's see what God Himself means by "new". Under different circumstances God also applies different meanings to the word "new", in line with some of our examples above. Consider the following things:

1) SATAN REBELLED and caused large-scale destruction within this universe, and destruction of this Earth in particular. So then God "RENEWED" the face of the Earth. At that point God did NOT "knock down the whole sandcastle and start again from scratch". No, at that point, starting in Genesis 1:3, God only repaired the damage, by recreating the surface of this planet, making it fit for human existence. In a sense, God took the old car, which had been in a smash-up accident, and just repaired it at a body shop, by removing all the dents, and giving it all a new coat of paint. But it was still the same car, with just the most obvious damage repaired. It could function again, even if a careful scrutiny would reveal some of the residual damage from the smash-up accident it had been involved in. Our present universe is this old car that has been repaired; but it has NOT really been replaced by a new car.

2) IN THE FUTURE God will create a new heaven and a new earth. HOW will God do that? Will it be like the body of the old car with just a new engine under the hood? No, that's not what the new heaven and the new earth will be like.

Well then, will it be like the new replacement car we bought with the insurance money, the car that is basically like the one we had before it was involved in the accident? No, that is also not what the new heaven and the new earth will be like.

Well then, will it be like the new sandcastle, which we built after totally destroying and removing the first sandcastle? YES, THAT IS WHAT THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH WILL BE LIKE! It will not just be a "new engine under the hood" when God creates the new heaven and the new earth. It will be a brand new universe in every respect.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which THE HEAVENS SHALL PASS AWAY with a great noise, and THE ELEMENTS SHALL MELT WITH FERVENT HEAT, THE EARTH ALSO and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10 AV)

Peter is clearly stating that this entire universe is going to pass away; it is going to be destroyed and it will disappear! That includes this planet earth. This earth is going to be COMPLETELY BURNED UP!

Seeing then that ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE DISSOLVED, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, (2 Peter 3:11 AV)

Peter clearly meant to convey to us that this present universe is going to disappear! The universe is currently running down, and in due time God will remove every trace of this universe ever having existed.

Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein THE HEAVENS BEING ON FIRE SHALL BE DISSOLVED, AND THE ELEMENTS SHALL MELT WITH FERVENT HEAT? (2 Peter 3:12 AV)

Peter had no doubts that this present universe would be "dissolved" and it would disappear. The Apostle John had exactly the same understanding.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for THE FIRST HEAVEN AND THE FIRST EARTH WERE PASSED AWAY; and there was no more sea. (Revelation 21:1 AV)

John saw a vision in which this whole present universe, including our earth, just passed away; it disappeared! THEN it was replaced by a NEW universe, including a NEW earth. That new earth may or may not have the same diameter as our present earth? At any rate, it is to this totally and completely NEW earth, whatever its dimensions may be, to which the NEW Jerusalem will come down. That NEW Jerusalem will be the "home base" for the entire Family of God for all future eternity.

And I John saw the holy city, NEW Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:2 AV)

So how does God go about creating a NEW heaven and a NEW earth and the NEW Jerusalem? Does God just put a new engine and a new gearbox under the hood of the old universe? Or does God knock down the entire first sandcastle, scatter all the sand that had been used in that construction, and THEN build a totally new sandcastle, without regard to what the previous one had looked like?

YES, THAT IS WHAT GOD IS GOING TO DO!

God will create a totally new universe with a totally new earth at its centre, and to that new earth God will transport a totally New Jerusalem, one that has no real relationship to the Old Jerusalem. When we will see the New Jerusalem, there will be nothing in it or about it that would make us think of the present city of Jerusalem in the Middle East.

The "lake of fire" that we have always known about is going to be a whole lot bigger than we have always thought! That "lake of fire" will burn up this entire present universe, and everything in it! That is when the wicked become ashes under the feet of those who will be spirit beings (see Malachi 4:3). ONLY spirit beings will survive that universe-engulfing fire.

So, to summarize thus far, where God only "renewed" the universe after "the accident which had smashed it up" (i.e. Satan's rebellion), in the future God will totally destroy this entire universe, and create a new one from scratch!

Let's look at another example of God making things "new".

3) After God had created mankind, people perverted their ways. HOW DID GOD "RENEW" HUMANITY to resolve this problem? Did God just wipe out every human being on Earth and then create a new set of original parents? No, that is not the way God did it. In that case God did not start all over again from scratch. He preserved 8 human beings alive, and through them started a "new" age of humanity. In effect, God kept "the chassis" of the car He already had (i.e. Noah and his family), and God just overhauled all of the inside of the car, under the hood.

There are more examples, where for this present age, God "renews" by just modifying things under the hood, without changing the exterior too much. The examples themselves are not important. But what it shows us is that FOR THIS PRESENT AGE, when things don't go as God desired (because God gave us a free will that enables us to act in ways that are hostile towards God and His goals), then God usually only resorts to "changing things under the hood", but without actually knocking down EVERYTHING and starting all over again from the beginning.

So, when things go wrong, why does God in this present age not simply knock down the whole sandcastle and start all over again?

Here is the reason.

GOD NEVER FAILS! God never gives up. That is true even though God has given us human beings a free will, which is capable of going contrary to God's desires. The thing that God has purposed WILL be achieved, even if it requires stones to speak out, something Jesus Christ referred to.

And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, THE STONES WOULD IMMEDIATELY CRY OUT. (Luke 19:40)

The point Jesus Christ was here making is that ABSOLUTELY NOTHING can ever stop God from achieving His purposes. And God never does anything in vain. Think about this for a while.

Take the example of JONAH. God had decided that He wanted JONAH to preach to Nineveh. There was no way that it wasn't going to happen as God wanted. Take the words of PAUL. Paul knew that he simply HAD TO PREACH! God had decided that Paul had to do it!

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! (1 Corinthians 9:16)

Or take the example of SATAN. Satan has to do EXACTLY what God wants in those cases where God wants something specific. In many situations God probably allows Satan a certain amount of scope, but always within very specific parameters. But remember the book of Job, where God spelled out EXACT limits for Satan. God is always in total and supreme control of everything.

And so God will never scrap something that He intended to produce certain results or goals, until those results or goals have been produced. To scrap something and start all over, is a way of saying that God's first attempt didn't work, that God has to try again and do a better job this time. And THAT will never be the case.

Can we understand that to imply that God will just knock down the whole first sandcastle, flatten everything and then start all over again, is to imply that God couldn't control things properly the first time around? Can we see this?

This is the way things are for this present age of man. But that has nothing to do with the NEW heaven and the NEW earth that God has planned for the future.

When God created this universe, after they (God the Father and Jesus Christ!) had already created angels, it was with a very explicit purpose in mind! God created this universe for the very explicit purpose of it being THE TRAINING GROUND for both, the angels and also human beings. It was NOT God's intention that the universe They created at that point in time would actually be the one that would be God's dwelling place for all future eternity! It was to be nothing more than a training ground, or a testing ground for the training program They were about to set into motion. But after all the testing it would be knocked down and replaced by a better universe.

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands. THEY SHALL PERISH, but thou shalt endure: yea, ALL OF THEM SHALL WAX OLD LIKE A GARMENT; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and THEY SHALL BE CHANGED: (Psalm 102:25-26 AV)

The Jewish translation of this verse reads:

(102-27) They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and THEY SHALL PASS AWAY; (Psalm 102:26 JPS)

Paul expressed this as follows to the Hebrews:

And AS A VESTURE SHALT THOU FOLD THEM UP, AND THEY SHALL BE CHANGED: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. (Hebrews 1:12 AV)

So once that training ground has fulfilled its purpose (i.e. after the last mortal human beings have finally completed the training), THEN the training ground can and will be knocked down like that sandcastle. And ONLY THEN will God create the universe that will be the dwelling place for the whole Family of God for all future eternity. The first universe was created specifically as an environment for physical life forms. The new universe will be created specifically as a dwelling place for spirit beings.

So when God completely destroys and knocks down this entire present universe, that is not because God has given up. It was simply never God's intention in the first place that this first universe would exist after it had fulfilled its intended purpose.

God NEVER gives up! And God's purposes are never defeated!

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ: (Philippians 1:6)

Any work God begins He will also finish! With God there will not be any "unfinished business" in the end. Yes, there are things that have at present not yet been completed in God's plan. But there will never be projects that God started and then gave up as a bad job. When God starts a project it is as good as achieved!

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, [even] God, who quickeneth the dead, and CALLETH THOSE THINGS WHICH BE NOT AS THOUGH THEY WERE. (Romans 4:17)

So to summarize this point: when God in this present age does do something "new", it is always in some way still connected to what was "old". God utilizes the "old" to help produce the "new". But that does not apply to the living environment God has planned for His Family for all future eternity.

As long as God is dealing with mortal man, God only "renews" things that need attention, like putting a new engine under the hood of the old car.

Now let's look at the matter of God's laws for a moment.

GOD'S LAWS AND COVENANTS

The law of God is an expression of the mind of God. It reveals to us how God thinks. It is an expression of the love of God. It is what God means by "love". The ten commandments, all ten, are a specific application of the eternal law of God to the physical environment in which we physical, mortal human

beings exist. The law of God is eternal, and it will exist for ever. The ten commandments, on the other hand, will only exist as long as there are physical, mortal human beings. When there are no more mortal human beings, then the ten commandments will cease to be in force, because they are merely a specific application of the law of God to the human environment.

The law of God has never in any way been dependent on the existence of any covenant. God's law has always existed, even as God has always existed. But the ten commandments have only existed as long as human beings have existed, and they will be in force only as long as there is human life. The existence of the ten commandments has nothing to do with any covenant. They all, including the Sabbath, came into existence when God created Adam and Eve.

A covenant is simply an agreement between two parties. In their simplest form, the covenants between God and human beings take the form of:

God says: IF you will do "this", THEN I will do "that".

The "this" refers to conditions God lays down. The "that" refers to blessings God promises to grant if the conditions are met.

Realize that the covenant, any covenant, did not bring the "this" and "that" into existence. A covenant does not really bring "new" things into existence. It really makes reference to EXISTING CONDITIONS in the human sphere. It doesn't create laws; it makes reference to existing laws. It MUST make reference to existing laws, in order for people to evaluate what they are committing to.

Next, the conditions God requires for any covenant are not chosen at random or on impulse. They are always an expression of the same mind. GOD NEVER CHANGES THE RULES OF THE GAME!

For I [am] the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. (Malachi 3:6)

God is dependable. We can count on God being consistent. Anyone who thinks otherwise simply does not understand the mind of God. Now obviously, we don't understand the mind of God perfectly. But the whole Bible is an expression of the mind of God. And we really can understand a great deal about how God thinks and works, because God has chosen to reveal this to us through the Bible. And one thing that is very clearly revealed is that God is consistent and absolutely reliable.

As we now examine the actual words used in the Bible in connection with the "new" covenant, we should be fairly confident as to how God works, and what we can expect from God. So now let's look at the word for "new" that is used in the Old Testament.

THE HEBREW WORD FOR "NEW"

There is one Scripture in the O.T. that specifically refers to a new covenant being made. It is in Jeremiah chapter 31.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: (Jeremiah 31:31)

The word here translated "new" is the Hebrew adjective "chadash". It is used 53 times in the O.T. and always translated as "new" or as "new thing" except once, in Job 20:29, where it is translated as "fresh".

But this adjective is actually formed from the verb "chadash" (same transliterated spelling), which is used ten times in the O.T..

A look at these ten places where THE VERB "CHADASH" is used makes quite clear what meaning God is conveying through this verb. In seven places it is translated as "renew" and in the three other places it is translated as "repair". Let's briefly notice these passages. I have rendered the translation of "chadash" in capital letters for easier recognition.

1 Samuel 11:14 = ... and RENEW the kingdom there (in Gilgal);

2 Chronicles 15:8 = ... and RENEWED the altar of the LORD;

Job 10:17 = ... thou RENEWEST thy witnesses against me;

Psalms 51:10 = ... and RENEW a right spirit within me;

Psalms 103:5 = ... thy youth IS RENEWED like the eagle's;

Psalms 104:30 = ... thou RENEWEST the face of the earth;

Lamentations 5:21 = ... RENEW our days as of old;

2 Chronicles 24:4 = ... TO REPAIR the house of the LORD;

2 Chronicles 24:12 = ... TO REPAIR the house of the LORD;

Isaiah 61:4 = ... they SHALL REPAIR the waste cities.

These are all the places where the verb "chadash" is used. They make clear that THE MEANING IS ALWAYS "TO REPAIR" OR "TO RENEW".

Etymologically this verb has the primary sense of cutting or polishing (a sword). It is defined in Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon as: "... the signification of NEWNESS appears to proceed from that of a sharp polished splendid sword". It always implies that SOMETHING THAT IS ALREADY IN EXISTENCE IS GOING TO BE WORKED ON AND IMPROVED IN SOME WAY. It is never a matter of rejecting everything that went before (i.e. totally knocking down the first sandcastle, throwing it away and then starting something that has no connection with what went before). It is always a matter of "putting a new engine and gearbox under the hood of that old '58 Pontiac", improving on what has run down and fallen into a bad state. Now the adjective formed from this verb has the same meanings as the verb.

Back to Jeremiah 31:31. God is telling us that at a future date He will make with the house of Judah and with the house of Israel "A RENEWED OR REPAIRED COVENANT". It will be "renewed" just like the face of the earth is renewed, and like a person's youth may be renewed. It will be repaired like the ruined cities will be repaired, and like God's house will be repaired.

NOWHERE IN THIS PASSAGE DO WE GET THE MEANING OF "AS A PACKAGE THE OLD COVENANT IS OBSOLETE AND IS TO BE DISCARDED"! IT IS ONLY GOING TO BE RENEWED OR UPGRADED!

Now let's look at where the New Testament speaks about the new covenant.

THE GREEK WORDS FOR "NEW"

The new covenant is spoken about in several places. However the word "new" is only used in four verses in connection with "covenant", all four being in the Book of Hebrews. Notice these places:

For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make A NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: (Hebrews 8:8)

In that he saith, A NEW [COVENANT], he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old [is] ready to vanish away. (Hebrews 8:13)

And for this cause he is the mediator of THE NEW TESTAMENT, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions [that were] under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:15)

In these three verses the Greek word translated "new" is "KAINOS".

And to Jesus the mediator of THE NEW COVENANT, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than [that of] Abel. (Hebrews 12:24)

Here the Greek word translated "new" is "NEOS".

These are the only four verses in the N.T. that talk about the "new covenant". Let's examine these two Greek words more closely.

"KAINOS" means: fresh in quality, unworn, thus "new".

VINE'S DICTIONARY defines it as:

unaccustomed or unused, NOT NEW IN TIME OR RECENT BUT NEW AS TO FORM OR QUALITY, OF DIFFERENT NATURE FROM WHAT IS ACCUSTOMED AS OLD.

"NEOS" means: new in time, i.e. young, youthful.

VINE'S DICTIONARY defines it as:

NEW IN RESPECT OF TIME, THAT WHICH IS RECENT, thus used of the young.

As we can see, Hebrews 8:8 is a quotation from Jeremiah 31:31. Since Paul used the word "kainos" to quote this verse from Jeremiah in the Greek language, it means that Paul equated the Greek word "kainos" with the Hebrew word "chadash".

So where God tells us ORIGINALLY in the Hebrew language in Jeremiah that the "new" covenant is a way of "renewing" or "repairing" the old covenant, Paul in the Greek language expresses THE RESULT that this "renewing" achieves; it will be something fresh in quality, unused, new in quality and form, but without necessarily being recent or new in the sense of time. Can we understand this?

I think that it is IMPORTANT to note that, when Paul is quoting Jeremiah, he was inspired to use the word "kainos" and NOT the word "neos". You see, the covenant God made with Israel is going to RENEWED; it is going to be repaired; it is going to receive a fresh and unused quality, thereby giving it a

new form. But in one way of looking at it, it is not really going to be "new in the sense of time". It only provides a new engine under the hood of the old car.

Abraham was judged by God according to the terms and conditions of the new covenant. So were Isaac and Jacob. So was David, who asked God to "renew" a right spirit within him. So were all the people who are listed as examples of faith in Hebrews chapter 11 (which chapter follows these references to the new covenant). Understand that EVERYONE who is going to be in the first resurrection will have been judged by God under the terms and conditions of the new covenant. God never changes the rules of the game. Those who will be in the first resurrection will all have been required by God to meet the same conditions, no matter at what time of human history they have lived.

But Paul also used the word "neos", not when actually quoting Jeremiah, but when he wants to shift the focus onto the mediator of the covenant. So let's now look at that.

And to JESUS THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW [NEOS] COVENANT, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than [that of] Abel. (Hebrews 12:24)

The verse starts with the word "and". This means we need to look at the previous verses to get the context. The context in this section is NOT the new covenant or its terms and conditions! Notice this:

To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect," (Hebrews 12:23 AV)

The focus is that we have DIRECT ACCESS to the throne of God. Hebrews 12:22 tells us that we have access to the heavenly Jerusalem (everyone in the first resurrection will have access to that). Hebrews 12:23 tells us that we have access to becoming a part of "the church (i.e. the called out ones) of the first born ones", meaning that we are being given access to be in the first resurrection.

And Hebrews 12:24 then tells us that we have access to appear before the mediator of the covenant that is "new in respect of time". The reason why Paul states it this way is because the focus is on THE MEDIATOR. Moses was the mediator of the old covenant. Approximately 1500 years later Jesus Christ became the mediator of the "new" covenant. It is "new in time" because there is a new mediator.

Please study this very carefully in your own Bible! Compare chapter 8 of Hebrews with chapter 12 of Hebrews.

In chapter 8 the focus is on describing the new covenant itself, what it is all about. Paul explains that the main difference is that this "new" covenant will enable people to have the Holy Spirit, which will write God's laws into their hearts and consciences. Here Paul specifically used the Greek word that means "new in quality" and "different in nature" but not necessarily new in time.

In chapter 12 the new covenant is not the focus at all! Here Paul has basically already concluded his whole thesis. Chapter 13 consists of some general comments that don't have any direct bearing on the thought-flow Paul developed in the first 12 chapters. Can we see that? So by Hebrews 12:24 Paul is wrapping up his concluding remarks for the whole picture he had drawn in the preceding 12 chapters. In these concluding remarks Paul focuses on the magnitude of our calling and the incredible access God has given us, to become a part of the very government of God (the reference to Mount Zion and to the New Jerusalem in Hebrews 12:22), to be in the first resurrection (verse 23) and to Jesus Christ Himself, the mediator of the new covenant, whose sacrifice has made this access possible (verse 24). In verse 24 the focus is clearly on THE MEDIATOR, not on the covenant itself. And this mediator is certainly "new in

time", since the previous mediator had been Moses.

Now in Hebrews 9:15 the focus is also on the mediator, rather than on the covenant itself. As we saw above, there Paul used the Greek word "kainos". And obviously, Christ is the mediator of this covenant that is "fresh in quality" and "different in nature" from the old one.

So when the focus is on Jesus Christ as the mediator, then Paul used both terms, "fresh in quality", as well as "new in time". But when the focus is on the actual covenant itself, directly referring to what was said in Jeremiah 31:31, then Paul only used the term "fresh in quality".

With this understanding in mind, we are ready to look at Hebrews 8:13. Notice this verse again:

In that he saith, A new [covenant], he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old [is] ready to vanish away. (Hebrews 8:13)

Here is the Greek text transliterated into our alphabet:

en to legein kainen pepalaioken ten proten to de palaiousmenon kai geraskon eggus aphanismou
(Hebrews 8:13)

Let's break this down into its phrases:

- en to legein = in the saying as to him (i.e. to Israel)
- kainen = a new (accusative feminine singular, referring to 'diatheke', a covenant, feminine gender);
- pepalaioken ten proten = he has made the first old;
- de = now, but, and;
- to palaiousmenon = the which is become old;
- kai geraskon = and waxes aged;
- eggus aphanismou = is near unto vanishing away.

In this verse Paul was making several very clear contrasts, which are somewhat lost in the English translation. I have broken the verse up into its parts, so we can see these contrasts more clearly. So notice:

- "pepalaioken" is in contrast to "kainen", i.e. "KAINOS"; i.e. old in quality as compared to new in quality;
- "palaiousmenon" is the opposite of the word "NEOS"; i.e. old in respect of time as compared to new in respect of time;
- "geraskon" is the opposite of the word "KAINOS"; i.e. old in quality as compared to new in quality.

Can we see what Paul has done in this verse? By using the phrase "palaiousmenon kai geraskon" Paul has made clear that the new covenant is new in the sense of BOTH GREEK WORDS. This message is lost on us in the English translation of this expression as "decays and waxes old". To us that seems like

a needless repetition, but in N.T. Greek this presents a contrast to both of the Greek words that mean "new". In his other references to the new covenant Paul explains HOW and WHY both Greek words apply. That is something we have already discussed.

We have now looked at all of the places in the New Testament where we find the expression "new covenant". We have also looked at how God works, and what God means by making something "new" in this present age.

So when it comes to "the NEW covenant" here is what we find:

In the Old Testament God made a covenant with the nation of Israel. That covenant spelled out certain conditions for Israel to abide by. Israel was to obey all of God's laws. In return God would pour out blessings upon the people of Israel. THE OBEDIENCE to God's laws that was required of Israel amounted to THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE of that '58 Pontiac car. The blessings God would give them were going to be not only on the outside, but also "under the hood". But the people of Israel never took care of that car, never serviced it, etc.. And so for the new covenant God has changed and renewed many things "under the hood". On the outside the manifestation of obedience to God's laws will still look the same (the body looks like that old car), but there is a totally new engine driving that car. Under the hood there are now better promises (access to eternal life) and a far more efficient engine (the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us live by the intent of God's laws).

So when we, as individual Christians, cruise down the freeway of life, other people may see nothing more than an old '58 Pontiac, but we ourselves know that under the hood we have access to a powerful new engine that has been supercharged by the infusion of the Holy Spirit.

With the new covenant the requirements God has put upon us human beings are the exact same requirements which God had set before ancient Israel: obedience to His laws and His ways. That obedience is what manifests on the outside. But where that first covenant had a relatively weak engine (people trying to live by God's laws on their own strength), the new covenant has a much better engine.

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