



# Links Players

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## Better Than Most

*Truly I tell you, among those born of women, there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist, yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matthew 11:11, NIV)*

If you have been a golf fan over the last couple of decades, then you are familiar with the moment I am about to relive.

As we all know, Gary Koch is a very accomplished golfer. He has also been a long-time broadcast contributor with NBC and a fixture on the signature island-hole 17th at TPC Sawgrass, which hosts the PGA Tour's showcase tournament, The Players Championship.

In (2001), golf's most outstanding player, Tiger Woods, was in a precarious scenario putting from the back fringe to a front hole location with a very severe slope halfway between his ball and the hole.

In a back-and-forth conversation with Hall of Fame anchor Johnny Miller, Gary says: "Johnny, I have seen a number of players putt from the back of this green, and the results have not been good." After Tiger's putt gets to the crest of the slope, he says, "Johnny, that is better than most." Then as the ball rolls at perfect speed down the slope and toward the hole, he says again, "That is better than most." Then as the ball rolls in the cup and Woods gives one of his signature fist-pumps, Koch announces one more time, "Better than most!"

Let's flip the script. It is no longer World Golf Hall of Famer Johnny Miller, but the focus is now on John [the baptizer], the one sent to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. Jesus now has the microphone, and his words in today's verse will forever impact the Christ-believing world.

Jesus said of those born of women that no man had been greater than John [the Baptist], but all those who are least in the kingdom of heaven would be greater. That is a startling truth—anyone born into the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist.

In our human understanding, there is no way to comprehend this amazing statement; however, in the plans, promises, and fulfillment of a new covenant through Jesus and the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit, we may grasp something of its significance, even if only dimly.

Speaking through Jeremiah several hundred years before its fulfillment, the Holy Spirit promised a better covenant greater than the old covenant given through Moses. This new covenant would be available to all, not just ethnic Israelites.

We now understand that this amazing promise was made possible through Jesus' death and resurrection. When Jesus ascended, he and the Father sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in believers' hearts. This "better than" reality is the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts, among many other benefits. We who live on this side of Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection live our lives in the promised new covenant, a covenant unspeakably better than the old one.

Let's summarize it through one key verse connecting the dots from Moses to Jeremiah to Jesus to the church. "By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear." (Hebrews 8:13)

The Old Covenant had its perfect time and place, but it was never meant to be permanent. While it was in place as God's law for his people, he told his children that one day he would pour out his Spirit and write his laws on their hearts, going beyond writing his laws in stone. This could only happen after Jesus gave his life as the ultimate sacrifice at the cross.

In other words, if you have put your faith in Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit will inhabit, lead, and guide you. You and I are in a new and better covenant. And that is not just "better than most," but better than every Old Covenant reality.

**Prayer – Holy Spirit, teach me to fully understand all that makes our relationship even greater than what you had with the great men and women of faith under the Old Covenant.**

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Josh Nelson

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