

Thursday Evening Bible Study

Series: the End Times – Bible prophecy about future events and periods

Teaching Summary for Week 21 (draft)

The Kingdom and the Covenants

Part 5. The New Covenant

The New Covenant is an unconditional, eternal, literal covenant, based on the shedding of blood, whereby the Lord re-affirms the promises to Abraham of **future blessings** for Israel and all the nations of the earth.

The most complete account of the New Covenant is found in chapter 31 of the book of Jeremiah.

Jer 31:31-34

*31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when **I will** make a **new covenant** with the **house of Israel and with the house of Judah**, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. 33 "But this is the covenant which **I will** make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "**I will** put **My law within them** and on their heart I will write it; and **I will be their God, and they shall be My people**. 34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' **for they will all know Me**, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for **I will forgive** their iniquity, and their sin **I will** remember no more."*

Provisions of the New Covenant

The following provisions are specified for Israel, the people of the New Covenant, to be fulfilled in the millennium, the period of the New Covenant.

1. The new covenant is an unconditional, grace covenant resting on the “I will” of the Lord. Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 16:60-63. It arises out of the Lord’s everlasting love and grace.
2. The new covenant is an everlasting covenant. Isa 61:4-8; Eze 37:26; Jer 31:35-37.
3. The new covenant includes the promise of the Lord to give Israel a renewed mind and heart. Jer 31:33; Isa 59:21.
4. Israel will be restored to the land, Jer 32:37; 33:11; Eze 11:17; 36:28-35; 37:21, 22, 25.
5. The new covenant provides for Israel to be restored to the Lord’s favor and blessing. Hosea 2:19-20; Isa 61:9.
6. As a result of the blood of the new covenant, the Lord will also forgive them of all their sins. Jer 31:34b; Mic 7:18-20.
7. The nation will also receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Compare Jeremiah 31:3 with Ezekiel 36:27. Also Isa 59:20-21.

8. They will have the full teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, and they will all know the will of God. Ignorance will be removed and there will be universal knowledge of God, Jer 31:34.
9. Israel will be blessed materially in the promised land, Eze 34:25-28.
10. The city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt.
11. The sanctuary (Temple) will be rebuilt in Jerusalem as the center of worship, Eze 37:26-28.
12. War shall cease and peace shall reign; Eze 37:26; Hos 2:18.

This is also a feature of the millennial kingdom according to Isaiah 2:1-4 and Micah 4:1-4. This shows that Israel will receive the blessings of the new covenant in the future millennium.

13. The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation for all of the blessings of the New Covenant, Zech 9:10-11; Mat 26:26-29. .

In Matthew 26:28 and Mark 14:24, the evangelists emphasize the relationship between the blood of New Covenant and salvation –the forgiveness of sins.

This is for many: Israel certainly, but also for the Gentiles.

Of course, the blood of the New Covenant also has a prophetic significance.

The New Covenant would be instituted with our Lord's death on the cross.

The requirement for a death to occur in order for a covenant to be established in explained in the book of Hebrews, Heb 9:15-22.

So the New Covenant was instituted with the death of the Lord. Whosoever – Jew or Gentile – would believe in Christ in His death and resurrection would receive the blessings of the salvation which was wrought by His blood.

Eph 1:7-8

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us.

However, this New Covenant was promised to the nation of Israel. It includes both salvation blessings (forgiveness of sins, regeneration, and the indwelling of the Spirit) and earthly blessings (the land, prosperity, peace and so forth).

Israel as a nation will not receive the blessings of the New Covenant until the Second Advent of Christ.

Rom 11:25-27

25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery — so that you will not be wise in your own estimation — that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

*"THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."*

*27 "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,
WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."*

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In other words, there is a fundamental difference between the institution of the covenant and the realization of its benefits.

By His death, Christ laid the foundation for Israel's New Covenant – but Israel will not receive its benefits until the second coming of their Messiah.

The New Covenant and the Church

The first and pivotal point is the fact that the Church is NOT Israel.

The church is NOT now fulfilling Israel's New Covenant.

The New Covenant made with Israel includes both spiritual and earthly blessings.

The church is receiving salvation, the forgiveness of sins, and the indwelling of the Spirit. But we are not under the New Covenant.

While the church is receiving spiritual blessings of the New Covenant, we are NOT receiving the earthly blessings. The church is not promised a land to inherit, material blessings on the earth, or protection from war.

The church is receiving these spiritual blessings courtesy of the grace of God.

The church is also receiving blessings associated with the Abrahamic Covenant by faith – without being under or fulfilling that covenant.

Gal 3:13-14

13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us — for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE" — 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

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Finally, the timing for the fulfillment of the New Covenant as set forth in the Scriptures precludes the church from fulfilling it.

Again, Romans 11:25-27 spells it out clearly.

Israel will not see the New Covenant fulfilled until the fullness of the church is completed (“the fullness of the Gentiles has come in”) and the Messiah returns (“the Deliverer will come from Zion”).

By the way, in between these two events there will be what Jeremiah calls “the time of Jacob’s trouble” – the Tribulation period. But more on that later.

Jer 30:7

*7 'Alas! for that day is great,
There is none like it;
And it is the time of Jacob's distress,
But he will be saved from it.*

So then.....what IS the relationship of the church to the New Covenant?

The question arises mainly because Jer 31:31-34 is quoted in the book of Hebrews:

Heb 8:6-13

6 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.

*7 For **A** if that first **covenant** had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. **8** For finding fault with them, He says,*

*"**A** BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD,*

***1** WHEN I WILL EFFECT **B** A NEW COVENANT
WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;*

***9** **A** NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS
ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND
TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT;
FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT,
AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.*

10 *"A FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL*

AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:

1 *I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS,
AND I WILL WRITE THEM **B** ON THEIR HEARTS.
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD,
AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.*

11 *"A AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN,
AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,'
FOR **B** ALL WILL KNOW ME,
FROM **1** THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.*

12 *"A FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES,
B AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE."*

13 **1** *When He said, "**A** A new **covenant**," He has made the first obsolete. **B** But
whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is **2** ready to disappear.*

This passage needs to be read carefully.

Nowhere in this passage does it say that the New Covenant is being fulfilled now, or that it is being fulfilled by the church.

It does say that the old Mosaic Covenant was not faultless and that Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant. That covenant – the New Covenant – has been enacted on better promises.

In other words, the New Covenant was instituted by the death of the Lord, but the blessings that were promised by the New Covenant have not been realized yet.

So when the Lord effected the New Covenant, He made the first (Mosaic Covenant) obsolete.

And that's it.

There is nothing said in Hebrews 8 about the church fulfilling the New Covenant.

This does not mean that the church is completely unrelated to the New Covenant.

1 Cor 11:23-26

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

The apostle Paul instituted the Lord's Supper for the church, and he quotes the words that our Lord spoke to the disciples in the Upper Room.

The New Covenant was made with the house of Israel and Judah. Yet the church (made up of Jew and Gentile) has a share in a portion of the benefits that flow from the enactment of that covenant at the death of Christ.

After all, the Lord promised Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that all the families of the earth would be blessed by the seed of Abraham.

Gen 22:18

18 " In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

The New Covenant is Israel's covenant, but on the basis of the blood of Christ, the blood of the new covenant, all the nations of the earth will be blessed with the blessings of salvation.

The significance for Eschatology

The Bible foresees a future literal fulfillment of the New Covenant. This guarantees certain things about Israel's future:

1. Israel must be planted in the promised land and receive it as her permanent possession.
2. Thus, Israel must be preserved as a nation and **a people**.
3. Israel must receive a national conversion marked by the forgiveness of sins and a new heart.
4. These things must take place after the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, returns to earth with His Second Coming.
5. Israel must experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to ensure their full obedience and full knowledge of the Lord and His will.
6. Israel must receive bountiful material blessings from the hand of the Lord.
7. The city and the temple must be rebuilt, and Jerusalem will be the center of a regenerated glorious earth.
8. The Messiah who shed His blood to establish the New Covenant must personally come back to earth to perform the regeneration, salvation and blessing for the nation of Israel.

These events are all future, and are all promised in the New Covenant.

When Israel receives all of these blessings, the promised kingdom will be ushered in.

Summary

We have now completed our series on the Lord's unconditional Covenants with Israel.

These covenants as a group testify to seven great features of Israel in the end times:

1. A **nation** forever
2. A **land** forever
3. A **King** forever
4. A **throne** forever
5. A **kingdom** forever
6. A **New Covenant** forever
7. Great **blessings** forever

Part 6. The future Messianic Kingdom in Old Testament prophecy

We will start this subject next week.

If you would like to read ahead, consult the handout from page 442 of "Things to Come" by Dwight Pentecost.