

THE NEW COVENANT

Background

Definition: The word **covenant** means “to cut”. It signifies a binding commitment in which one is accountable to God to keep their promise on pain of death for violation of it (cf. Jer. 34:18).

God relates to His people through covenants. Israel alone is the NATION with whom God has had covenant relationship (cf. Rom. 9:4). In Scripture, there are 4 major unconditional covenants: (Abrahamic, Land, Davidic, and New) and one conditional covenant: (Mosaic).

Because the people could not keep the Old Covenant (Mosaic Law), God promised to one day enter into a New Covenant with Israel. The New Covenant is essentially directed to Israel. However, the Church participates in the spiritual blessings of it, but not the physical land promises, etc.

“The term ‘covenant’ is defined by the Old Testament. And ‘New Covenant’ is defined by Jeremiah 31.” – **S. Lewis Johnson**

The only place in the OT that specifically names the NEW COVENANT as “new” is found in **Jeremiah 31:31**. However, there are many other references to this covenant in the OT (cf. Deut. 29:4, 30:6, Isa. 42:6, 49:8, 54:10, 55:3, 59:20-21, 61:8-9, Jer. 24:4-7, 31:31-40, 32:37-41, 50:4-5, Ezek. 11:17-21, 16:60-63, 18:31, 34:25-26, 36:22-38, 37:21-28, Hos. 2:18-20, Zech. 9:11, 12:10). In the New Testament, there are 5 texts that actually mention the New Covenant (cf. Lk. 22:20, 1 Cor. 11:25, 2 Cor. 3:6, Heb. 8:8, 9:15). However, there are at least 7 other clear references to it (cf. Mt. 26:28, Mk. 14:24, Rom. 11:27, Heb. 8:10, 13, 10:16, 12:24).

Two Key Old Testament Texts on the New Covenant

1. Jeremiah 31:31-40

Provisions of the New Covenant include: **1.** God’s law in minds and written on hearts – cf. Jer. 31:33, **2.** A relationship of their God/My people – cf. Jer. 31:33, **3.** All will know the LORD – cf. Jer. 31:34, **4.** Permanent forgiveness of sin – cf. Jer. 31:34, **5.** Continued national existence of Israel – cf. Jer. 31:35-37, and **6.** Jerusalem to be rebuilt and never again destroyed – cf. Jer. 31:38-40.

2. Ezekiel 36:24-38

Provisions of the New Covenant Include: **1.** Restoration to the land – cf. Ezek. 36:24,
2. Cleansing from sin – cf. Ezek. 36:25, **3.** A responsive new heart – cf. Ezek. 36:26, **4.** God’s indwelling Spirit that causes obedience – cf. Ezek. 36:27, **5.** Relationship of My people/your God – cf. Ezek. 36:28, and
6. Material prosperity and fruitfulness – cf. Ezek. 36:29-36.

* The New Covenant was RATIFIED by the blood of Jesus (cf. Lk. 22:20, 1 Cor. 11:25).

Two Key New Testament Texts on the New Covenant

1. 2 Cor. 3:1-18

The Old Covenant is contrasted with the New Covenant. The New Covenant is superior by virtue of the Spirit Who gives life which endures. The SPIRIT is key to the ministries of the New Covenant. The Holy Spirit changes people from the inside; brings intimacy of relationship with God; and effects eternal forgiveness. The New Covenant was INAUGURATED with the Church on the Day of Pentecost with the coming of the Spirit (cf. Acts 2) and will be CONSUMMATED with Israel at the Second Coming (cf. Rom. 11:25-27).

2. Hebrews 7-10

The NEW and BETTER COVENANT: Jesus is the guarantee of a BETTER covenant – cf. Heb. 7:22, the New Covenant has BETTER promises – cf. Heb. 8:6-13, the New Covenant relates to a BETTER sanctuary – cf. Heb. 9:1-14, the New Covenant is ratified with a BETTER sacrifice – cf. Heb. 9:15-28, and the New Covenant achieves BETTER results – cf. Heb. 10:1-18.

FOUR Unconditional Covenants

1) Genesis 12:3

Abrahamic Covenant

Land – Seed – Blessing

The Abrahamic Covenant is the “Mother of all covenants,” as the other three unconditional covenants amplify what is stated in the Abrahamic Covenant.

2) Deut. 30:1-8

Land Covenant

3) 2 Sam. 7:14-16

Davidic Covenant

4) Jer. 31:31-34

New Covenant

The New Covenant was ratified by the CROSS of Christ and ultimately mediates ALL God's blessings – spiritual and physical. The Church today partakes of the spiritual blessings.

The Old Covenant (Mosaic Law)

Ex. 19-24

*Conditional in nature

*Faith expressed in following

*Blessings enjoyed in following

*Served as a “middle wall of separation”, keeping the Gentiles from God's covenant blessings– (cf. Eph. 2-3)

*Was a temporary covenant

The **CROSS** has broken down the MIDDLE WALL OF SEPARATION so that Gentiles can now also enjoy God's spiritual blessings.

The **Church** now enjoys spiritual blessings.

Israel will, in the future, (in conversion) enjoy all these spiritual AND physical blessings.