

Seminar4

THE NEW COVENANT: An Explanation

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Hebrews 8:8-13

8, 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.

9, Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10, For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people

11, And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12, For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13, 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 8:8-13

The New Covenant should be for the believer the lens through which we see into the very heart of God.

THE NEW COVENANT

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. - Matthew 1:1

The book of Matthew which is the first book of the synoptic gospels opens with the genealogy of Jesus. In this account, two names are given prominence from the first verse: Abraham and David.

When we study the Old Testament, we see that a King-Priest that would emerge to eventually become Israel's and by extension the world's Messiah was promised to be a descendant of Abraham and David, respectively.

God made a promise to Abraham and cut a covenant with him confirming that his through his seed He would reclaim the nations and bless them. Many years later, the Lord spoke to David about his seed sitting on his throne forever. Though the David prophecy was directed toward Solomon, the eternal duration of his progeny's reign seemed to speak of a more divine than human character.

Mathew's Gospel and the Apostolic epistles point to Jesus Christ as the Person that fulfils both the Abrahamic and the Davidic covenant promises. It is noteworthy that the synoptic gospel of Matthew was written to a Jewish Christian audience, so they would easily have made the connection between the Old Covenant prophecies to Abraham and David and the Lord.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. – Genesis 12:1-3

After another encounter with God where He reiterated His promise to him, Abraham asked for some type of surety by which he could be fully certain that God would keep His promise. Abraham at this time was still childless and found it difficult to accept the promise of the Blessing outliving him. To bring him to a place of full conviction, God used an act that Abraham understood from his tradition and experience: [Genesis 15:8-10, 17]

When God cut the covenant with Abraham, he did not particularly qualify to enter into covenant with the Holy God; this covenant was a matter of grace on the Lord's part. Therefore, Christ entered the covenant with God on His and our behalf. The Father and Son in the Godhead entered a covenant, and we have been included in this covenant in Christ. It was a Kinship Covenant within the Godhead that was granted to Abraham. What a glorious truth!

Covenant with David (in the Mosaic covenant)

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: - 2 Samuel 7:12-14

As stated in the introduction, the “forever” dimension seems to point towards someone other than David’s immediate heir (Psalm 89:19-20, 35-37). This promise is known as “the sure mercies of David” [Isaiah 55:3-5; Acts 13:33-34].

A HISTORY OF THE SON OF GOD IN THE BIBLE

Adam

The concept of sonship of God is first seen in Genesis in Adam’s creation in the book of Genesis. [Genesis 1:26 -27; Genesis 5:1-3; Luke 3:38]. As God’s Son, Adam was meant to represent God. Have Dominion and subdue. Walk in his father’s royal authority as the reigning regent on earth. Adam was put in the garden as a priest-king but his failed in his assignment by disobeying God. The Bible narrative shows how God restores his creation to his place of sonship.

Israel and the “Suffering Servant of Yahweh”

In Exodus 4:22-23, The Lord declares that Israel is His son. As they continue in their history, Israel’s kings and judges were referred to as God’s sons. In his prophecies from Chapter 49–55, someone referred to as the "servant of Yahweh" receives the name "Israel" [49:3] and is tasked with spreading justice and good news to the nations. Afterward, we learn from Isaiah 49:7 that this servant is "despised and abhorred by the nation. In Isaiah’s treatise about this servant figure, we are brought to a pivotal point in 42v1-4 “Here is My Servant, whom I uphold, My Chosen One, in whom My soul delights. I will put My Spirit on Him, and He will bring justice to the nations.” In his gospel, Matthew alludes that this person is in fact the Lord Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of the prophecy having graciously healed a great multitude and instructed them to keep His identity hidden. [Matthew 12:15-21].

In similar fashion, John and Peter see Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of the suffering servant prophecy in Isaiah 53. [John 12:23; 1 Peter 2:24]. The New Testament scriptures show us that this Son of Eve, is Mary’s Son, who is actually the Son of the Highest. The Suffering

Servant, who embodies God's son, Israel, is revealed to be God's eternal Son: Jesus Christ. Oh, what a plan, Oh what a planner!

Jesus: The Son of God

In his introduction to his epistle to the church in Rome, Paul alludes that Jesus came to fulfil the covenant and kingship promises that were made to Abraham and David [Romans 1:1-6]. Christ is the seed of David. God's Son the true Israel. Abraham's covenant, along with David's, becomes the springboard for the New Covenant and Kingdom of God. Jesus is the New Covenant King, Lord, Saviour, Lamb, High Priest, Husband and Almighty God. Jesus is the expression and way to the Father.

The Church as God's son

One of the big talking points in the church is the relationship between the church and Israel. The nation of Israel was God's own nation by covenant and promise. Does the church replace Biblical Israel or is it an entirely separate entity. We can conclude that the church is not a replacement of Israel, but the continuation of Israel reconstituted in Christ. Christ is first and foremost the fulfilment of Israel and the church has now become the Israel of God because our union with Christ. [Galatians 6:16; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 3:6]

Understood this way, Christ is presented as God's true Son/ Israel, through whom all of God's purposes for Israel and creation are realized. Consequently, through faith in Christ, the Church, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, becomes God's new covenant people and the true Israel of God. Though we see that the title Son of God is Jewish in origin, in the Apostolic epistles, there is a transfer of the titles of Israel in the Old Testament to the Church. And of course, through its union with Christ. With Christ, we are also called God's sons. [Romans 8:19]

THE MEDIATOR (Of the New Covenant)

The mediator, was the person who witnessed the contract made between the two contracting parties, slew the victim, and sprinkled each with its blood. Mediator carries the meaning of one who acts as a guarantee so as to secure something which would otherwise not be obtained. It also means an executor. [Hebrews 9:15-17]

It is important to have a witness and an executor. Jesus is the Testator, the Witness and the Executor. Our Covenant is both a testament and a will. Without an executor a will is Idle. God made the covenant (will) but also executes it!! By His death, Jesus was the Testator, by His

resurrection He is the executor. Jesus Christ is the Mediator of this New Covenant; The Godhead guarantees the effectiveness of the Covenant.

By His Grace, we have been given an eternal inheritance. We can be sure that we will receive our inheritance because our Covenant is effective, and our executor is faithful.

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. – Hebrews 8:6

There MUST be a transition from Old Covenant thinking to New Covenant thinking in the church today, because the Church has been given a much better deal than anyone under the Old Covenant had access to.

The mediator of the Old Covenant did not physically enter the promised land. But in His mercy, the Lord granted him his request [Exodus 33:18; Deuteronomy 3:23-28; Deuteronomy 34:1-4], He saw Christ. The true Israel of God. The Glory of God [Matthew 17:3].

SURETY VS MEDIATOR

By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. – Hebrews 7:22

A mediator is one who negotiates between parties seeking mutual agreement. The Lord is not only our Mediator, He is the Surety [Guarantor] of this Better Covenant. The surety makes sure; confirms and gives ground of confidence or security like the guarantor of a rent or loan. A surety promises to pay a sum of money in the event that another person fails to fulfil an obligation. The Old Covenant Priests died; therefore, they had a temporary priesthood and death of a guarantor dissolves their eligibility to act [Hebrews 7:23-24].

The surety promises to pay the total amount owed. We must realise that Our Surety has taken responsibility for our debt, and He has actually paid it on our behalf. It is imperative that we know and accept the fact that He has paid it, so that the “debt collectors” can give up the title over us and your what belongs to us. Christ Jesus, our Surety has a blank cheque with unlimited resources in whatever realm a payment is demanded on our behalf.

On the cross, He bore on Himself every failure to meet up with God's righteousness and imaginable impediment that could limit us [Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:15]. His work on the cross gives us an unshakeable and non-negotiable guarantee. However, because our Lord lives forever [as our Intercessor, He pleads for us and repays our debts as our Surety – Hebrews 7:25; 7:16] He is able to complete and perfect all that concerns us in the New Covenant, especially our salvation.

NEW PRIESTHOOD: NEW LAW

We have established that we are not under the Old Covenant; we have been made partakers of the New Covenant that is founded on better promises. By His death, burial, resurrection and ascension, Jesus initiated and inaugurated a Covenant. With this New Covenant, comes a new priesthood.

If the priesthood of Levi and Aaron, which provided the framework for the giving of the law, could really make people perfect, there would not have been need for a new priesthood like that of Melchizedek. But since it did not get the job done, there was a change of priesthood, which brought with it a radical new kind of law. – Hebrews 7:11-12 MSG

Law is determined by Priesthood. With the coming of the New Covenant was the establishment of a new priesthood, with this priesthood came a new law; this law is called the Law of Christ. The believer in Christ is not without a Law; The believer in Christ is under the Law of Christ [Galatians 6:2; 1 Corinthians 9:21].

We are to live by love and serve one another. The reason for this is because all the commandments of the law under the Old Covenant is fulfilled in one statement, which is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" [John 13:34-35; Galatians 5:13-14].

WALK BEFORE ME...

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. - And I will make my covenant between me and thee and will multiply thee exceedingly. – Genesis 17:1-2

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him, saying, "I am God Almighty. Live in my presence and be blameless. – Genesis 17:1 [BBE]

The word 'Blameless' (or perfect) is the word used to describe the lamb that was slain for sins and atonement under the Old Covenant. This lamb was a shadow of the Lord.

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. – 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1 [cf. Ezekiel 36:24-28 MSG]

In the New Covenant, the Lord is calling us into perfection – CHRISTLIKENESS; to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. The Lord desires that we be a people who are blameless and above reproach. [1 Corinthians 1:8; Colossians 1:22]. That is why He says we should be holy. [1 Peter 1:16]. This is impossible in our own ability but as we continually receive the Grace of God [Romans 5:17] and are empowered by the Spirit of the New Covenant, we will walk before the Lord in perfection.

THE DEFINITENESS OF THE COVENANT

To confirm the fact that this covenant with us was unalterable, God gave us a promise that was bound by an oath [Hebrews 6:17-18]. A promise is a statement of intent, but an oath involves putting your integrity on the line and promising to keep your word to the highest authorities under all circumstances.

God made a commitment and put an oath on it to ensure that He would not ever break the terms of His Covenant with us [Hebrews 6:13-16]. This promise made to Abraham and David [Luke 1:68-79] has been ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ.

THE NEW COVENANT AND FULLNESS

The framework with which God deals with man is Grace, especially in the New Covenant. The fullness of the Grace message and identity message is that we fully understand the New Covenant, which must be shown against God's previous covenants in the Bible. Jesus' birth fulfilled the Abrahamic covenant (and some of the Davidic covenant).

The type of Covenant Abraham had with God was a Grant Covenant and Jesus came to ratify it with His blood, that the Blessing of Abraham might come to us, Gentiles. In God's initial offer to Abraham when he was called, it was all Blessing; "I will show you a place, I will bless you, I will make your name great." This Blessing was made viral to everyone in and by Jesus Christ. The Father's heart of love and blessing is what God has always wanted to be revealed among humanity.