

καὶ τὸ ποτήριον ὡσαύτως μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, λέγων, Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον.

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

Exploring the Bible (2023)

The New Covenant

Seminar Notes

De la misma manera, tomó la copa después de cenar y dijo: —Esta copa es el nuevo pacto en mi sangre, que es derramada por ustedes.

וְכֵן גַם־אֶת־הַכּוֹס לָקַח אַחֲרַי אֲכָלִים וַיֹּאמֶר הַכּוֹס הַזֶּה הִיא הַבְּרִית הַחֲדָשָׁה בְּדַמִּי הַשְּׂפוּךְ בְּעַדְכֶם:

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| <i>The Covenants: God’s Agreements with Human Beings</i> | 2 |
| <i>If You Will, Then I Will: The Mosaic Covenant</i> | 11 |
| <i>I Will Make a New Covenant: The Beginning of the End</i> | 13 |
| <i>I Have Come to Fulfill: Jesus and the New Covenant</i> | 15 |
| <i>No Longer Under a Guardian: Paul and the New Covenant</i> | 18 |
| <i>How Should We Then Live?</i> | 22 |

The Covenants: God's Agreements with Human Beings

If we want to understand the story being told throughout the Bible, and if we want to know where we fit into that story, we must familiarize ourselves with the covenants that make up that story.

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

An **agreement** between at least two parties that specifies requirements for at least one party. These requirements for at least one party often contain **blessings** and **curses** for **obedience** and **failure**.

TYPES OF COVENANTS

Conditional

These covenants **require something** from all parties to keep the covenant **alive** and **intact**.

Unconditional

These covenants **do not have requirements** for all parties to keep the covenant **alive** and **intact**. One of the parties has the responsibility of **fulfilling the covenant** for all parties.

THE LANGUAGE OF COVENANTS

Hebrew: berith (ברית)

Greek: diathēkē (διαθήκη)

Latin: testamentum

English: covenant/testament

Google Dictionary definition of testament

1. *a person's will, especially the part relating to personal property.*
2. *something that serves as a sign or evidence of a specified fact, event, or quality.*
3. *(in biblical use) a covenant or dispensation*
 - a. *a division of the Bible.*

Luke 22:20

Greek: καὶ τὸ ποτήριον ὡσαύτως μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, λέγων, Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον.

Latin Vulgate: similiter et calicem postquam cenavit dicens hic est calix **novum testamentum** in sanguine meo quod pro vobis funditur

Tyndale: Lykewyse also when they had supped he toke the cup sayinge: This cup is **the newe testament** in my bloud which shall for you be shedde.

Exploring the Bible 2023: *The New Covenant* – Seminar Notes

NIV: In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is **the new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you.

2 Corinthians 3:14

Greek: ἀλλ’ ἐπωρώθη τὰ νοήματα αὐτῶν. ἄχρι γὰρ τῆς σήμερον ἡμέρας τὸ αὐτὸ κάλυμμα ἐπὶ τῆ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης μένει, μὴ ἀνακαλυπτόμενον ὅτι ἐν Χριστῷ καταργεῖται

Latin Vulgate: sed obtusi sunt sensus eorum usque in hodiernum enim diem id ipsum velamen in lectione **veteris testamenti** manet non revelatum quoniam in Christo evacuatur

Tyndale: But their myndes were blinded. For untill this daye remayneth the same coveringe vntake awaye in **the olde testamet** when they reade it which in Christ is put awaye.

NIV: But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when **the old covenant** is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.

THE BIBLICAL COVENANTS

Noah (The Noahic Covenant)

Genesis 8:20-9:17

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. ²¹ The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

²² “As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”

^{9:1} Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. ² The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth, and on all the birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground, and on all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands. ³ Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

⁴ “But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. ⁵ And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being.

⁶ “Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind.

⁷ As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.”

Exploring the Bible 2023: *The New Covenant* – Seminar Notes

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ⁹ “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you ¹⁰ and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. ¹¹ I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

¹² And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: ¹³ I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. ¹⁶ Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”

¹⁷ So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”

- » *What was the promise in the Noahic covenant?*
- » *Who was this promise made to?*

Abraham (The Abrahamic Covenant)

Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.

² “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

- » *What was God going to do with/for Abraham?*

Genesis 15:1-21

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”

² But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

⁴ Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” ⁵ He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

⁶ Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Exploring the Bible 2023: *The New Covenant* – Seminar Notes

⁷ He also said to him, “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.”

⁸ But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?”

⁹ So the LORD said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.”

¹⁰ Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. ¹¹ Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. ¹³ Then the LORD said to him, “Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. ¹⁴ But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”

¹⁷ When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, ²⁰ Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, ²¹ Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.”

» *What was the promise God had made to Abraham?*

» *How did God show Abraham that he was making a covenant with him?*

Genesis 17:1-21

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am God Almighty; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. ² Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.”

³ Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, ⁴ “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵ No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶ I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. ⁷ I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. ⁸ The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”

⁹ Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. ¹⁰ This is my covenant with you and your descendants after

you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹² For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. ¹³ Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

¹⁵ God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

¹⁷ Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!”

¹⁹ Then God said, “Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. ²⁰ And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. ²¹ But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year.”

- » *When was “righteousness” credited to Abraham?*
- » *Do we have anything today like the “sign of the covenant” the Israelites had back then?*
- » *Who was the one establishing the covenant with Abraham and his descendants?*

Moses (The Mosaic Covenant)

Exodus 19:1-8

On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on that very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai. ² After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.

³ Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ⁴ ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

⁷ So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak. ⁸ The people all responded together, “We will do everything the LORD has said.” So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD.

- » *What were the Israelites going to be if they kept the covenant?*

Exodus 24:1-8

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance,² but Moses alone is to approach the LORD; the others must not come near. And the people may not come up with him.”

³ When Moses went and told the people all the LORD’s words and laws, they responded with one voice, “Everything the LORD has said we will do.”⁴ Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.

He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel.⁵ Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD.⁶ Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he splashed against the altar.⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, “We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey.”

⁸ Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

- » *Why did the Israelites give burnt offerings and sacrifices to God?*
- » *What did the Israelites say they were going to do with what God had said in the Book of the Covenant?*

David (The Davidic Covenant)

2 Samuel 7:8-16, 27-29

“Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel.⁹ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth.¹⁰ And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning¹¹ and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

“ ‘The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you:¹² When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom.¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands.¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’ ”

²⁷“Lord Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, ‘I will build a house for you.’ So your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. ²⁸Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. ²⁹Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, Sovereign Lord, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever.”

- » *How as a king and a kingdom going to be established?*
- » *How does David respond to the promises made by God?*

Jesus (The New Covenant)

Jeremiah 31:31-34

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. ³³“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

- » *What was going to be different about the “new” covenant?*
- » *How will God relate to wickedness and sins in the new covenant?*

Luke 22:20

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

- » *What does it mean for the new covenant to be “in Jesus’s blood?”*

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

- » *What is the relationship between “proclaiming the Lord’s death” and the new covenant?*

2 Corinthians 3:6-18

He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

⁷ Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹ If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ¹⁰ For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. ¹¹ And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

- » *How does the letter "kill" but the Spirit "give life?"*
- » *Why is the new covenant more glorious than the old?*
- » *What is the relationship between "freedom" and the new covenant?*

Hebrews 8:1-13

Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, ² and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.

³ Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. ⁴ If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. ⁵ They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." ⁶ But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.

⁷ For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. ⁸ But God found fault with the people and said: "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ⁹ It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. ¹⁰ This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be

their God, and they will be my people. ¹¹ No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹² For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

¹³ By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.

- » *What are the “better promises” that the new covenant is established upon?*
- » *What was “wrong” with the old covenant?*
- » *What does it mean that the old covenant is obsolete?*

Hebrews 9:11-15

But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. ¹² He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. ¹³ The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

¹⁵ For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

- » *What does the blood of Christ do that the blood of goats, bulls, and the ashes of a heifer could not do?*
- » *What was the relationship between Jesus’s death and the sins committed under the old covenant?*

Hebrews 12:18-24

You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; ¹⁹ to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, ²⁰ because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.” ²¹ The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.”

²² But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

- » *What does it mean that Jesus is the “mediator” of the new covenant?*

If You Will, Then I Will: The Mosaic Covenant

The Mosaic Covenant—different than the Noahic, Abrahamic, and Davidic covenants—was a covenant whereby the human beings involved would either prosper or languish as those who had been called to be a kingdom of priests to the world based on their obedience to the covenant requirements.

Exodus 19:5-6

“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

» *What does a “kingdom of priests” and a “holy nation” do?*

Leviticus 25:18-19

“Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. ¹⁹ Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety.”

» *What does “obeying God’s laws” have to do with remaining in the covenant?*

Joshua 1:3-9

I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. ⁴ Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. ⁵ No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶ Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

⁷ “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

» *How was Joshua—and the nation of Israel—going to be prosperous and successful?*

Psalms 1

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, ² but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates

Exploring the Bible 2023: *The New Covenant* – Seminar Notes

on his law day and night. ³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.

⁴ *Not so the wicked!* They are like chaff that the wind blows away. ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

⁶ *For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.*

» *How would someone in David's day know if someone else was setting themselves up to be blessed by God or not?*

I Will Make a New Covenant: The Beginning of the End

Built within the structure of the biblical storyline is the reality that the old covenant was made to come to an end.

GOD’S COVENANT WITH ANCIENT ISRAEL WAS WITH *ANCIENT ISRAEL*

Exodus 19:3

Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to **the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel.**”

Leviticus 26:46

These are the decrees, the laws and the regulations that the LORD established at Mount Sinai between himself and **the Israelites through Moses.**

Deuteronomy 4:1a

Now, **Israel**, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach **you.**

1 Kings 8:9

There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with **the Israelites** after they came out of Egypt.

Psalms 147:19-20

He has revealed his word to **Jacob**, his laws and decrees to **Israel**. He has done this for **no other nation; they** do not know his law. Praise the LORD.

» *If the old covenant was made with Israel, who was it not made with?*

Jeremiah 31:27-30

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will plant the kingdoms of Israel and Judah with the offspring of people and of animals. ²⁸ Just as I watched over them to uproot and tear down, and to overthrow, destroy and bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant,” declares the LORD. ²⁹ “In those days people will no longer say, ‘The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’

³⁰ Instead, everyone will die for their own sin; whoever eats sour grapes—their own teeth will be set on edge.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ANCIENT ISRAEL WAS *TEMPORARY*

Matthew 5:17

Do not think that I have come to **abolish** the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to **abolish** them but to **fulfill** them.

Matthew 12:6

I tell you that something **greater** than the temple **is here**.

Romans 10:4

Christ is **the culmination of the law** so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Galatians 3:24-25

So the law was our guardian **until Christ came** that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

Hebrews 8:13

By calling **this covenant “new,”** he has made **the first one obsolete**; and what is obsolete and outdated **will soon disappear**.

» *If the old covenant was temporary, what does that mean for us today?*

I Have Come to Fulfill: Jesus and the New Covenant

The plan was always for the old covenant to come to an end and Jesus is the one who was able to make that happen through his fulfillment of the old and his establishment of the new.

Matthew 5:17-20

“Do not think that I have come to **abolish** the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to **abolish** them but to **fulfill** them. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ **For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.**

- » *What is the relationship between the words “abolish” and “fulfill?”*
- » *How can anyone surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees?*

Matthew 12:1-8

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. ² When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, “Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.”

³ He answered, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴ He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. ⁵ Or haven’t you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? ⁶ **I tell you that something greater than the temple is here.** ⁷ If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸ **For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.**”

- » *What was the temple?*
- » *How could Jesus be greater than the temple?*
- » *What does it mean that Jesus saw himself as Lord of the Sabbath?*

John 1:14-18

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ”) ¹⁶ **Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.** ¹⁷ **For the law was given through Moses;**

grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

» *What's the difference between "the law" and "grace?"*

John 2:13-22

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵ So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ To those who sold doves he said, *"Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!"* ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

⁸ The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, *"Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."*

²⁰ They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" ²¹ *But the temple he had spoken of was his body.* ²² *After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.*

» *What does it mean that Jesus saw himself as somehow related to the temple?*

John 19:28-30

Later, knowing that *everything had now been finished*, and so that *Scripture would be fulfilled*, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. ³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, *"It is finished."* With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

» *What was the "it" that was "finished?"*

Hebrews 8:6-8, 13

But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.

⁷ For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. ⁸ But God found fault with the people and said: "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

¹³ By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.

- » *How is the ministry that Jesus is the mediator of superior to the old?*
- » *What was wrong with the old covenant?*
- » *What does it mean that the old covenant was obsolete and soon disappearing?*

No Longer Under a Guardian: Paul and the New Covenant

The one family of God that was promised to Abraham is being fulfilled through those who trust Jesus and find freedom within the new covenant.

Galatians 1:6-9

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! ⁹ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!

- » *What is "the gospel?"*
- » *Why would someone be under God's curse if they're preaching a different gospel?*

Galatians 2:11-14

When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹² For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³ The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

¹⁴ When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

- » *What was the "circumcision group?"*
- » *Why was Peter (Cephas) "afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group?"*

Galatians 2:19-21

"For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

- » *Can righteousness be gained through obeying the law?*
- » *What does the grace of God have to do with righteousness and the law?*

Galatians 3:1-14

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ²I would like to learn just one thing from you: *Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard?* ³Are you so foolish? *After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?* ⁴Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? ⁵So again I ask, *does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?* ⁶So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

⁷Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. ⁸Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” ⁹So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

¹⁰For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” ¹¹Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.” ¹²The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.” ¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” ¹⁴He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

- » *Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by believing what you heard?*
- » *When did God say that Abraham was righteous?*
- » *Is there any benefit to relying on the works of the law?*

Galatians 3:19-22

Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator. ²⁰A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one.

²¹Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. ²²But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

- » *Why was the law given?*
- » *Was the law somehow against what God was doing?*
- » *How has God given to his people what he has promised?*

Galatians 3:21-4:7

Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

^{4:1} What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. ² The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. ³ So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. ⁴ But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. ⁶ Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

- » *The law was a guardian until when?*
- » *Who has the privilege of being considered as part of God's family?*
- » *Why did anyone have to be redeemed from the law?*

Galatians 4:21-31

Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? ²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. ²³ His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise.

²⁴ These things are being taken figuratively: **The women represent two covenants.** One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. ²⁵ Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, **because she is in slavery with her children.** ²⁶ **But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother.** ²⁷ For it is written: "Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband."

²⁸ Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. ²⁹ At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. ³⁰ But what does Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." ³¹ **Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.**

- » *What are the main identifying markers for the two covenants?*
- » *What's the promise that the Galatian's then and us now are a part of?*

Galatians 5:1-12

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

² Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. ³ Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. ⁴ You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. ⁵ For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

⁷ You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? ⁸ That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. ⁹ “A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.” ¹⁰ I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. ¹¹ Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. ¹² As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

- » *What does Paul mean with the idea of “letting themselves be circumcised?”*
- » *What is the only thing that counts in the new covenant?*

How Should We Then Live?

There is but one guiding question for those of us who are in the new covenant: Is this loving?

John 15:9-17

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

» *What is Jesus’s command for those in the new covenant?*

1 John 2:3-11

We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. ⁴ Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. ⁵ But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

⁷ Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. ⁸ Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

⁹ Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. ¹⁰ Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. ¹¹ But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

» *How is love made complete in us?*

» *Is it possible to be living in the light while hating a brother or sister?*

1 John 4:7-21

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one

another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

¹³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. ¹⁷ This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹ And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

- » *What does love look like?*
- » *If you were going to describe God in just one way, what would it be?*
- » *What is the relationship between loving God and loving your brother and sister?*

1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, **but do not have love**, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, **but do not have love**, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, **but do not have love**, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is **patient**, love is **kind**. It **does not envy**, it **does not boast**, it is **not proud**. ⁵ It **does not dishonor others**, it is **not self-seeking**, it is **not easily angered**, it **keeps no record of wrongs**. ⁶ Love **does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth**. ⁷ It **always protects**, **always trusts**, **always hopes**, **always perseveres**.

⁸ **Love never fails**. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. **But the greatest of these is love**.

- » *What is someone without love?*
- » *How would you describe what love is and what love is not?*

» *Why is love greater than faith and hope?*

Galatians 5:13-26

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. **But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.** ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: **“Love your neighbor as yourself.”** ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

¹⁶ So I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. ¹⁸ **But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. **I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

²² **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,** ²³ **gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.** ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

- » *How is the entire law fulfilled?*
- » *Can you be led by the Spirit and under the law?*
- » *Why do you think Paul listed “love” first among the other fruit of the Spirit?*
- » *What is love?*

Romans 13:8-10

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: **“Love your neighbor as yourself.”** ¹⁰ **Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.**

- » *If you are being led by the Spirit and loving other people would there ever be any reason for you to put yourself under the requirements of the law?*

1 Corinthians 16:14

Do everything in love.

- » *Is this possible?*