

YHWH'S PROMISE TO ISRAEL **(AND THE GENTILES)**

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COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

For reasons that we do not understand, YHWH chose Abraham, and made a covenant with him and his offspring. The consequences of that covenant are promised to affect the entire world.

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

After Abraham went to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, and YHWH provided a ram in the thicket, the covenant was again communicated:

Genesis 22:16-18

By myself I have sworn, declares YHWH, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.

The covenant promises the following:

1. YHWH will make Abraham a great nation
2. YHWH will bless Abraham
3. YHWH will make Abraham's name great
4. YHWH will make Abraham a blessing to others
5. YHWH will bless those who bless Abraham
6. YHWH will curse those who curse Abraham
7. YHWH will bless all the families of the earth through Abraham.

RENEWED THROUGH ISAAC

Genesis 26:3-5

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

YHWH renewed and refocused His covenant through Isaac. Thus the covenant was not to be fulfilled through Ishmael, but through Isaac.

RENEWED THROUGH JACOB

Genesis 28:13-15

And behold, YHWH stood above it and said, "I am YHWH, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with

you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

YHWH now renewed and refocused His covenant through Jacob. Thus the covenant was not to be fulfilled through Esau, but through Jacob. Jacob is later renamed Israel, and his 12 sons become the forefathers of the nation of Israel.

RENEWED THROUGH DAVID

YHWH further refocuses his covenant through David. Here we see more focus on the redemptive work of the promised Messiah, and how YHWH intends to fulfill his covenant promises to the nation of Israel through the offspring of David.

2 Samuel 7:8-16

Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says YHWH of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. **And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more.** And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, YHWH declares to you that YHWH will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, **I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.** He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. **Your throne shall be established forever.’ ”**

YHWH promises that David’s throne would be established forever, and that He would plant is people, Israel, so they could live in their own land, undisturbed forever. This passage is clearly prophetic on multiple levels, speaking of the Messiah as the offspring of David, and also of the people of Israel their need for punishment because of their “iniquity” – a punishment that the Messiah would eventually bear.

THE NEW COVENANT

The “new covenant” could also just as correctly be translated as the “renewed covenant”. Just as YHWH’s original covenant with Abraham was renewed and refocused through Isaac, Jacob, and David, He promises to renew it again. This time, however, the renewal will be more dramatically refocused, since the Messiah who was only hinted at in prior covenants, is to become central to the realization of this covenant renewal.

It is a misunderstanding that the New Testament is the New Covenant, or that the New Covenant is with the Gentile “church”.

Scripture makes is clear declares that the New (or Renewed) Covenant, like the previous covenants, will be with Israel.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

“Behold, the days are coming, declares YHWH, when **I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,** not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares YHWH. For this is the covenant that I will make **with the house of Israel** after those days, declares YHWH: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. **And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.** And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know YHWH,’ **for they shall all know me,** from the least of them to the greatest, declares YHWH. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Ezekiel 36 is another prophetic passage with similar wording to Jeremiah 31:

Ezekiel 36:24–30

I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.** And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, **and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.** And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, **that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.**

From Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36, we see the following characteristics of the new covenant:

1. The new covenant is with Israel (Jer 31:31)
2. YHWH is the God of Israel & Israel will be YHWH's people (Jer 31:33, Exek 36:28)
3. The Torah will be written on their hearts (Jer 31:33)
4. Israel will all know YHWH (Jer 31:34)
5. Israel's sins will be forgiven (Jer 31:34)
6. YHWH will spiritually cleanse Israel (Ezek 36:25)
7. His Spirit will be within them (Ezek 36:26)
8. Israel will walk according to Torah (Ezek 36:27)
9. Israel will live in the land of their fathers (Ezek 36:28)
10. The nations will know who YHWH is (Ezek 36:36)

It is important to realize that the keeping of Torah is a significant aspect of the New Covenant. *YHWH will write his Torah on the hearts of the people of Israel.* They will all know Him, and their sins will be forgiven and remembered no more. Jeremiah is quoted in Hebrews 8:6-12, showing that the Messiah is the mediator of this new covenant, based on a "better promise":

Hebrews 8:6

But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

What was the better promise? Just before Jeremiah speaks of the new covenant, he makes this statement about sin / iniquity:

Jeremiah 31:30

But everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

And then, as he prophesies about the new covenant, he states that YHWH promises to forgive their iniquity:

Jeremiah 31:34

And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know YHWH,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares YHWH. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

This is also prophesied to David in 2 Samuel, speaking of the Messiah who would take upon himself the iniquity of the people:

2 Samuel 7:12–16

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my

name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. **When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men,** but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’ ”

Isaiah 53:5–6

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and YHWH has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

So the new covenant YHWH will make with Israel includes a provision for their iniquities to be forgiven forever, through the Messiah. This is an “Old Testament” theme, as well as a “New Testament” theme:

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Messiah is central to the complete and lasting forgiveness of sin. It is not surprising then that the Messiah speaks of the new covenant at the last Passover meal before his death:

Luke 22:20

And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

The Messiah, upon his death, took upon Himself the iniquities of His people, and with that act, the promises of the New Covenant began to be fulfilled. These words of the Messiah and the new covenant are referred to in Hebrews 9, the main passage in the “New Testament” that uses the term “new covenant”:

Hebrews 9:11–22

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. **Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant,** so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.” And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

The Messiah is the Mediator of the new covenant, meaning that it is through Him that YHWH fulfilled His covenant promise to His people.

Another aspect of the New Covenant is that Israel was promised His Spirit (Ezek 36:26). This promise was fulfilled in Acts 2 when Jewish people had gathered from many countries to worship in Jerusalem at Shavuot (Pentecost), as they were instructed to do in Torah.

Acts 2:1–11

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. **And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem **Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.** And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his

own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”

Although many Christians today see Pentecost as the beginning of the “church”, it is clear from Scripture that the Holy Spirit was at this time given to Jewish people (Jews and proselytes) but not yet to Gentiles. That came later when Peter was at Cornelius’ house:

Acts 10:44–47

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, **because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.** For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

The Holy Spirit is the special sign of the Renewed Covenant, just as circumcision was the sign of the original covenant with Abraham.

2 Corinthians 1:21–22

And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

2 Corinthians 5:5

He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

Ephesians 1:13–14

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Although the New Covenant has been fulfilled in part, it is not yet complete. The Messiah initiated the beginning of the New Covenant with his sacrificial death. The Holy Spirit was given as a sign of that covenant, in accordance with the promises of YHWH. But yet, at this time, not ALL of Israel knows Him. Not all of Israel follows His Torah. These things are yet to be fulfilled.

The “new covenant” really isn’t new. It is really the same covenant YHWH made with Abraham, renewed with Isaac, renewed with Jacob, and renewed with David. Now it is renewed and perfected through the Messiah.

GENTILES GRAFTED IN

The New Covenant was a renewal and refocusing of the original covenant with Abraham. The New Covenant was with the people of Israel. It was to be fulfilled through the Messiah. The sign of that covenant was the Holy Spirit. Thus, when the Holy Spirit, as the sign of that new covenant between YHWH and Israel, suddenly came upon the Gentiles, it forced a new paradigm upon the Jewish believers of that day:

Acts 11:17–18

If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

This was a new concept. Prior to this, Gentiles had to be converted to Judaism to be partakers of the promises of YHWH. This involved agreement to live by the whole torah (written and oral), ritual circumcision, baptism (mikveh), and a temple sacrifice, after which they were (at least in theory) viewed as having become totally Jewish. But now YHWH was inviting Gentiles to partake in His covenant promises with Israel, even without ritual conversion to Judaism.

In hindsight, we can see how Scriptures had always indicated that Gentiles would somehow or someday be included, beginning with the original covenant to Abraham:

Genesis 12:3 YHWH's promise to Abraham (also in Gen 18:18 and Gen 22:18)

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**"

Genesis 26:4 YHWH's promise to Isaac

I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And **in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed,**

Genesis 28:14 YHWH's promise to Jacob

Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and **in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.**

Paul, in his teaching to the growing number of Gentiles believers, makes it clear to them that they are grafted in to the root of Israel. And even though some Jews of that time had become enemies of the Gospel, the Gentiles should remember that they do not support the root, but rather the root supports them:

Romans 11:13–21

Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, **and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in** among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember **it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.** Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.

Any teaching which suggests that the present day "church" is the "spiritual Israel" or has replaced Israel, indeed exhibits the very "arrogance toward the branches" that Paul speaks against.

FUTURE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

YHWH's people, whether Jew or grafted-in Gentile, will either stand with him, or be broken off from Him, depending upon their faith or their unbelief, respectively (Romans 11:20). But in the end, "all Israel" will be saved:

Romans 11:25–29

Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: **a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.** And in this way **all Israel will be saved**, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, **they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.** For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Paul is teaching what is taught in the Prophets. Long after David has physically died, amid prophesies of punishment and isolation from YHWH for Israel's disobedience, He promises to restore the people Israel in their own land, forever:

Amos 9:11–15

"In that day **I will raise up the booth of David** that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins **and rebuild it as in the days of old**, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name," declares YHWH who does this. "Behold, the days are coming," declares YHWH, "when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant

vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. **I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them,**” says the LORD your God.

Ezekiel 37:21–28

Thus says Adonay YHWH: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. And **I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel.** And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But **I will save them from all the backslidings** in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. **“My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd.** They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. **They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob,** where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children **shall dwell there forever,** and David my servant shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. **And I will set them in their land** and multiply them, and **will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore.** My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I am YHWH who sanctifies Israel, **when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.**”

In the end, Israel, with its grafted-in Gentile branches, will dwell forever in the promised land under the rule of the Messiah in the very presence of YHWH.