

The New Covenant from a Dispensational Perspective (Jeremiah 31:31-40)

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The New Covenant is the last of the eight covenants in the Bible that God made with man. The Edenic Covenant was made with Adam and Eve. The Adamic and Noahic Covenants were made with all mankind. The Abrahamic, Mosaic, Land, and Davidic Covenants were made with Israel. The New Covenant was also made with Israel, so it is a distinctly Jewish covenant in essence, but its outworking from its institution has been to the Jew first but also to the Gentile. Because the Jewish nation rejected Jesus of Nazareth as her Messiah, His Kingdom is now in its "suspended state", which is the church age. Therefore, the blessings of the New Covenant have accrued to both Jews and Gentiles in the church, to find their final fulfillment in the Messianic Kingdom, with Jewish distinctiveness, but with residual blessings to Gentiles (in a similar way to Gentile blessings from the Abrahamic Covenant as we find in Genesis 12:3). The institution of the New Covenant was made by Jesus Christ Himself at the Last Supper, as recorded in Matthew 26:28, and confirmed in Hebrews 12:24. Jesus does not say that He was laying the groundwork for the future institution of the New Covenant, although in "the final fulfillment sense" that is true. Rather, the institution of the New Covenant was made at the time of the shedding of His sinless blood. To further support this thesis, we shall examine five portions of Scripture.

1. Exposition of Jeremiah 31:31-34
 - a. Nine times in these verses, God makes a statement of divine initiative.
 - b. 31:31, "the days are coming", future from Jeremiah's day
 - c. "new covenant", there is only one new covenant, some have posited two, one for Israel and one for the church, but the Bible integrates the references to it, and they can be harmonized
 - d. "with the house of Israel and the house of Judah", the parties to the covenant as one, this speaks of the reunification of the nation which had been divided—the northern tribes (Israel) had long been in captivity, and the southern tribes (Judah) were going into captivity imminently
 - e. 31:32, "not according to the covenant" God made with Moses in the sense that it was conditional and temporary
 - f. "which they broke", the failure of the Mosaic covenant was the fault of sinful man, the covenant itself was perfect, holy, and good
 - g. "I was a husband to them", Israel is referenced as the wife of YHWH
 - h. 31:33, the law of God under the New Covenant would be written internally and not externally one, this portends the coming and indwelling of God the Holy Spirit
 - i. 31:32-33, Cf. Hosea 1:4-2:1

- j. 31:34, "every man" refers to the future time (Messianic Kingdom) when all Israel is saved and she can truly be called "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16), again as with the prior verse all of this blessing is extended to believing Gentiles also
- k. "their iniquity...their sin" (that national sin recorded in Mark 3:28-30 is in view)
- 2. Exposition of Jeremiah 31:35-37
 - a. God reveals to Anti-Semites how to destroy Israel in five easy steps
 - i. Stop the sun from shining
 - ii. Stop the moon from giving light
 - iii. Change the ordinances of the heavenlies
 - iv. Measure heaven with precision
 - v. Search out the foundations of the earth to the core
- 3. Exposition of Jeremiah 31:38-40
 - a. These verses look to the far future, to the Messianic (Millennial) Kingdom
 - b. 31:38, "the city", Jerusalem, "shall be built for the LORD", and will be surveyed
 - c. 31:39, "Gareb" and "Goath", places uncertain, will be known in that day
 - d. 31:40, Hinnom Valley (Gehenna) shall no longer be an unclean place to burn rubbish, it shall then be holy ground, as shall be the fields around the city
- 4. Romans Chapter 11 as it Relates to Jeremiah 31:31-40
 - a. 11:1, Does the fact that Jesus instituted the New Covenant nullify the Messianic Kingdom promises? Does this mean that the unconditional promises to the Jews have now been given to the primarily Gentile church? "Certainly not!" And so we see that the Bible does not teach 'Replacement Theology.'
 - b. 11:5, God preserves a "remnant" of Jews as He promised in Jeremiah 31:35-37
 - c. 11:11, Gentiles have been grafted into the New Covenant, which was given to Israel
 - d. 11:17-18, Gentiles ought to be grateful to God and to recognize their indebtedness to the Jewish people, for apart from them there would be no salvation (John 4:22)
 - e. 11:26, "all Israel will be saved", this will be true of all the remnant that enters the Millennial Kingdom (in glorified state for those departed, raptured, and martyred during the Tribulation Days, and in flesh for those who survive the Tribulation)
 - f. 11:27 directly references Jeremiah 31:34
- 5. Hebrews 8:7-13, 9:16-22, 13:20 as it relates to Jeremiah 31:31-40
 - a. 8:7, "the first covenant" in context is the Old Covenant (correlating with Jeremiah 31:32), "a second" that does allow for once for all forgiveness of sins, the New Covenant, this was not possible under the Old Testament Law
 - b. 8:8-12 quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34, verse 12 gives complementary clarity to the original quotation

- c. 8:13, the New Covenant superseded the Old Covenant, the ceremonial law was abolished because the priesthood was changed (Hebrews 7:12, 9:11)
- d. 9:16-22, "testament" ...death of the testator", in light of Hebrews 8:7 we are dealing with two covenants of the 'same kind' but one is far greater, a covenant involving a death is a testament, therefore our Christian Bible is divided into "Old Testament" (Mosaic Covenant, death of animals) and "New Testament" (New Covenant, death of Christ), comparing with the passage in Hebrews 8, we see that the New Covenant began with Jesus' death and was ratified by His blood, Christ died once for all sins for Jews and Gentiles who believe (Hebrews 7:27), yet as we have learned the covenant was given to Israel, How do we reconcile? John 1:11-13 explains in part and we know by faith that the complete redemption of Israel under the New Covenant is still yet future
- e. 13:20, the New Covenant was ratified "through the blood" and is "everlasting" in duration, affirming Jeremiah 31:40, Praise God that He has been merciful and grafted in Gentiles also into His eternal plan!