

# The New Covenant

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## Jeremiah 31 ~ Hebrews 8

**T**he New Covenant (or New Testament) is a subject which has caused much confusion when it comes to Bible doctrine, because many members of the Body of Christ have erroneously mistaken it as belonging to them. The New Testament is not a set of books making up the last part of the Bible. It is a “contract” which God will make exclusively with the nation Israel.

*“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah,”* (Jeremiah 31:31; c.f. Hebrews 8:8; Ezekiel 20:37; Isaiah 59:21).

Israel is God’s covenant people (Romans 9:4; Ephesians 2:12). They were the “Old Testament” saints, and they will be the “New Testament” saints. Often we hear “New Testament Church” or “New Testament Believers” used in relation to what God is doing today; yet in doing so we neglect the great duty of “*rightly dividing the Word of truth*” (II Timothy 2:15). How is it that saints of our day can take a “contract” to be made between God and Israel and make it theirs? This is simply another case of spiritual larceny, which is a common crime against Scripture.

It is God’s objective to carry out all His purposes, laid forth under the Old Covenant, with the New. The failure of the Old Covenant was not with the covenant itself, or with God; but rather it was with the Nation of Israel itself. Israel did not fulfill her responsibilities and therefore “defaulted” the contract. Yet God shall perfect them with the New Testament (Hebrews 8:6-8; c.f. Romans 8:3). He will give them Divine enablement, by His Spirit, to accomplish all that He requires of them (Ezekiel 36:27). This is the *better* covenant with its *better* promises (Hebrews 8:6). When God establishes this New Covenant with Israel, He shall:

1. Gather Israel to their own land (Jeremiah 32:37; Ezekiel 11:17; 36:24).
2. Purge Israel’s sins (Ezekiel 11:18; 20:38; 36:25, 29; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17); and as a result, all Israel shall be saved (Romans 11:26-27).

3. Put the law in Israel's inward parts, (Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16). In this we see the primary difference between the two Covenants: the Old was written on stone, the New on their hearts. Therefore Israel shall not need to "teach every man his neighbor" in those days (Hebrews 8:11), but shall then be the witnesses to the Gentiles of which Matthew 28:19-20 speaks (c.f. Isaiah 60:3).

The New "Everlasting Covenant" (Jeremiah 32:40) fulfills the Old, thus making it obsolete (Hebrews 8:13). The Old was a shadow and figure of the New (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:5; 10:1). Israel shall regain her holy days as well as other ceremonial practices provided for under the Old (Ezekiel chapters 40-46).

The death of Israel's Messiah (Ephesians 2:12; Romans 9:4-5; 15:8; Matthew 1:21; Isaiah 53:8), is the basis of her New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15-17; Matthew 26:28). It is at this point that many make their mistake: since God made this Covenant with the blood of Christ (the same blood which paid our own sin debt), many assume that this Covenant must be ours also; but Israel's New Covenant was only a portion of the great work which Christ's blood accomplished. There was a hidden purpose, which Paul calls the *mystery* of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19), and the *mystery* of Christ (Colossians 4:3). The common ground between the Body of Christ and Israel is the blood of Christ, not Israel's special benefit (i.e., the New Covenant, with its distinctively Jewish characteristics).

Peter, James, John and Jude all wrote their epistles in harmony with this New Covenant. The blessings of this New Covenant began to be enjoyed and demonstrated after the cross on the Jewish feast of Pentecost in Acts chapter two. This was interrupted though, until God's present purpose is accomplished (Romans 11:25). Paul wrote progressively concerning this new program – "the dispensation of the grace of God" (Ephesians 3:2). In God's present purpose all covenant and national distinctions between Jew and Gentile are gone (Ephesians 2:14-15), and each believer can now enjoy the "fellowship of the mystery" (Ephesians 3:9).

In our study of the Scripture we must learn to make right division (II Timothy 2:15), leaving distinctive doctrines where we find them (i.e., where God has placed them), lest we diminish the glorious high calling of the Body of Christ by mixing teaching from other dispensational workings of God.

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