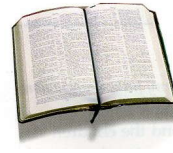




THE NEW COVENANT



HAVE CHRISTIANS HIJACKED A COVENANT INTENDED FOR ISRAEL?

Jeremiah's prophecy in chapter 31 is about God's future New Covenant for Israel - not the church. The New Covenant for the church that has been inaugurated by the Messiah, and that is up and running for all believers - Jews and Gentiles - of the church age, is taught in the other scriptures, as we will see later in this article.

Let's first look at the New Covenant promise for Israel:

31 "See, *the* days are coming,' declares YHWH, 'when I will make a new covenant with the **House of Israel and with the House of Judah**, 32 not like the covenant I made with their fathers in the day *when* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt - My covenant which they broke - although I was a husband to them,' declares YHWH.

33 " 'But this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel after those days,' declares YHWH: 'I will put My Law (*Torah-teaching*) within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.

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

(Jeremiah 31:31-34)

From this passage and several other prophecies, we can identify the main features of the New Covenant for Israel which are to be fulfilled in the Millennium.

- 1 It is an unconditional covenant involving God and both Houses of Israel. (v 31)
- 2 It is clearly distinct from, and different to, the Mosaic Covenant. (v 32)
- 3 It promises national regeneration for Israel. (v 33a).
- 4 It involves the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (v. 33b), and Ezekiel 36:27 - "I will put My Spirit within you."
- 5 It is linked to the universal regeneration of Israel. It is for all believing Jews. (v 34a). No Jew will say to another, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know Him.
- 6 It brings forgiveness and takes sin away. (v 34b) The covenant is mediated by the Messiah. (Hebrews 8:6-8, 13; & 9:15). And Israel's salvation is based on the

atonement through Messiah's sacrifice at Calvary. Old Testament believers are also covered by the death of Messiah.)

- 7 The precepts of God are engraved on their hearts of all the Israelites. (v 33)
- 8 It includes elements from the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants - regarding the promised land, and the perpetual throne of David. (Genesis 12:1-3. Psalm 69:3-4)
- 9 It will shower Israel with millennial blessings. (Ezekiel 34:25-27).
- 10 It includes a Sanctuary of God (the Millennium Temple) according to Ezekiel 37:26-28.
- 11 It will fulfil the Millennial prophecies concerning the Messiah and the Kingdom. (Luke 24:25-27)
- 12 The Mosaic Covenant contained the Law of Moses, but the New Covenant contains the Law of the Messiah (Romans 8:2 and Galatians 6:2), as Messiah will be the King over the Millennial Kingdom.

HAS THE NEW COVENANT BEEN HIJACKED BY THE CHURCH ?

A-millennialists (people who don't believe in the future literal 1,000-year kingdom), and "replacement theologians," teach that the church has replaced Israel, and therefore the promises made to Israel are fulfilled in and by the church. Yes, Replacement Theology is an attempt to hijack the New Covenant by spiritualising the prophecies and making them fit into a non-literal scheme of fulfillment. In fact, A-millennialists regard many of the endtime Bible prophecies as history.

Pre-millennialists like myself, totally reject "replacement theology" and A-millennialism.

God's prophecies for Israel will be fulfilled with literal Israel, including the New Covenant promised in Jeremiah 31.

Israel's regeneration begins early in the Great Tribulation when God pours out the Holy Spirit on all flesh. (Joel 2:28). And throughout the seven years, increasing numbers of Jews will receive Y'shua the Messiah as their Redeemer, until finally, all *believing* Israel will be saved. (Romans 11:26).

The majority, I believe, will be saved in the first half of the Tribulation. These believers will experience the promises and the provisions of the Eternal Covenant.

In the second half of the Tribulation many believers - Jews and Gentiles - will be slain because of their faith in Y'shua. These martyrs, however, will be raised to reign with Messiah in the 1,000 kingdom.)

With the establishment of the Kingdom, the Covenant with the two houses of Israel comes into effect.

Now the question is ...

WHAT IS THE NEW COVENANT THAT IS ALREADY UP AND RUNNING FOR THE CHURCH?

And how does it differ to the future New Covenant for millennial Israel?

1. The Lord Jesus, the apostle Paul, and the Book of Hebrews all speak of a New Covenant which has been inaugurated by Christ, and that it is already operating for all born again believers.

Y'shua, at the Passover meal on the night before He was crucified, indicated that His shed blood would ratify a new covenant.

“After they had eaten, *He took* the cup, saying, ‘**This cup represents the New Covenant ratified by My blood which is to be poured out for you**.’” (Luke 22:20)

And as this statement is repeated in Paul's message to the largely Gentile Corinthian church, we believe this is a covenant for the Universal Body of Christ.

“In the same way, after supper, *He also took* the cup, saying, ‘**This cup is the new covenant in My blood**; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me’.” (1 Corinthians 11:25)

The apostle Paul made it clear that the New Covenant was up and running, and that he himself was a minister of the covenant:

“Not that we are adequate in ourselves to claim anything as having come from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us competent to **serve as ministers of a New Covenant**, not of the letter of a *written Law*, but of the Spirit; for the letter of *the Law* kills, but the *Holy Spirit* gives life.” (2 Corinthians 3:5-6)

2. The writer to Hebrews compares the Jeremiah 31 prophecy with the covenant mediated and inaugurated by the Messiah:

“But now He, *Y'shua*, has received a ministry *which is much* more superior and excellent, just as the covenant of which He is Mediator *is superior to the old one*, and which has been founded on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, no occasion would have been sought for another.

“But finding fault with them, He, *YHWH*, said, ‘BEHOLD, THE DAYS ARE COMING, DECLARES *YHWH*, WHEN I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH’...

“When He speaks of “a new *covenant*,” He has made the first *covenant* obsolete; and whatever is becoming obsolete and ageing is ready to disappear - *to be dispensed with altogether*.” (Hebrews 8:6-8, 13)

“For this reason - *His sacrifice* - **He is the Mediator of a new covenant**. Because a death has taken place which redeems people from the transgressions *committed* under the first covenant, those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.” (Hebrews 9:15)

3. The Book of Hebrews was written primarily for believers of Jewish background; and the writer makes it clear that the new covenant inaugurated by Messiah was not future. It was already a reality, and all true believers have a part of it.

“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God; to myriads of angels, to the *Universal* Assembly, to the Ekklesia - *the corporate body* of ‘The Firstborn’ who are enrolled in heaven. *You have come* to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect; and *you have come* to **Y’shua the Mediator of a New Covenant** and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks *of mercy* - a more gracious message than *the blood* of Abel *which cried out for vengeance.*”
(Hebrews 12:22-24)

This leads us to conclude that the New Covenant is indeed present for the Church - for all believers saved by the atoning work of the Messiah at Calvary. This Covenant has been inaugurated by Messiah and is universal. It is also called the “Everlasting Covenant” (Hebrews 12:20), as it completes the plan of God for those saved by the Lamb, from “every tribe, tongue, people and nation.” (Revelation 5:9)

The New Covenant that YHWH will enact with Israel will also be an everlasting covenant (Ezekiel 37:26), as it completes God’s plan for the nation of Israel. The future national spiritual regeneration of “all Israel” will prepare the Redeemed of the LORD for their central role in the covenant for the Millennial kingdom.

That New Covenant will provide the eternal spiritual realities for believers on earth during the Millennium, and it will also make provision for a Sanctuary where the Sh’khinah Glory (the manifest Presence of God) will reside once more. (Ezekiel 43:4-5). Mt Zion, the Centre of Millennial worship, will become “the Joy of the whole Earth.” (Psalm 48).

And the City of God will be called *Yahweh Shammah* “Yahweh is there.” (Ez. 48:35)

Amen!