

## The New Covenant

The promises of the New Covenant are prophesized by three major prophets who witness the fall of the divided monarchy of Israel: **Isaiah** witnesses the fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria in 722 B.C. and foretells the fall of Jerusalem, **Ezekiel** is taken in the second deportation of the Southern Kingdom in 597 B.C. by Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, and **Jeremiah** witnesses the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. but is not part of the third and final deportation. Archaeological evidence can be seen in the Nebuchadnezzar (Jerusalem) Chronicle and Babylonian Ration Tablets.

1. As you read Ezekiel's prophecy, why did God make the New Covenant? What verb do you see repeated? Find its definition in Bible dictionary – for example, search online "studylight dictionary profane."

"Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds. Their ways before me were like the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity. So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it. I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them. But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord, and yet they had to go out of his land.' But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came.

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. (Ezek 36: 17-23, ESV)

2. The provisions of the New Covenant is found in several places (Isa 59:21; 61:8-9; Jer 31:31-34; 32:40-41; Ezek 34:25-31, 36:25-28; 37:26-28). While the verses may appear scattered, you can easily find this by looking up in a concordance the word "covenant." Make a list of the provisions you observe.

"And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the Lord: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the Lord, "from this time forth and forevermore." (Isa 59:21, ESV)

For I the Lord love justice;  
I hate robbery and wrong;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
Their offspring shall be known among the nations,  
and their descendants in the midst of the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge them,  
that they are an offspring the Lord has blessed. (Isa 61:8-9, ESV)

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, 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 the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: 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 the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jer 31:31-34, ESV)

I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul. (Jer 32:40-41, ESV)

“I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will provide for them renowned plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Lord God. And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord God.” (Ezek 34:25-31, ESV)

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. (Ezek 36:25-28, ESV)

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 the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.” (Ezek 37:26-28, ESV)

3. How is the New Covenant related to the Abrahamic Covenant? How is the New Covenant related to Jesus Christ? What is the significance of the New Covenant?

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." (Gen 12:1-3, ESV)

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. (Luke 20:19-20, ESV)

## The New Covenant Teacher Notes

The promises of the New Covenant are prophesized by three major prophets who witness the fall of the divided monarchy of Israel: **Isaiah** witnesses the fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria in 722 B.C. and foretells the fall of Jerusalem, **Ezekiel** is taken in the second deportation of the Southern Kingdom in 597 B.C. by Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, and **Jeremiah** witnesses the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. but is not part of the third and final deportation. Archaeological evidence can be seen in the Nebuchadnezzar (Jerusalem) Chronicle and Babylonian Ration Tablets.

It is important to show the student that the Bible is not a book of fiction and is a historical record of God's interaction with man. The archaeological evidence can be found in the archaeological index of this ministry and the images of the artifacts may help the student see the data for himself.

1. As you read Ezekiel's prophecy, why did God make the New Covenant? What verb do you see repeated? Find its definition in Bible dictionary – for example, search online “studylight dictionary profane.”

“Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds. Their ways before me were like the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity. So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it. I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them. But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they **profaned my holy name**, in that people said of them, ‘These are the people of the Lord, and yet they had to go out of his land.’ But **I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations** to which they came.

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And **I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations**, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. (Ezek 36: 17-23, ESV)

Help the student with his observation of the text by highlighting by the example seen in the above. The repeated verb is “profane” and in the context of God's holy name.

The meaning of “profane” can be understood as: “defile and pollute as to dishonor and to treat as common or not sanctified.” There are two significant observations that can be made here:

1. Rather than recognizing God's judgment of their failure in covenant commitment as discipline and return to God in obedience, the nation of Israel continued in their disobedience and depicted God as no different from pagan gods. The nation represented YHWH, I AM WHO I AM equivalent to I AM HE WHO EXISTS, as equivalent to a dead pagan god.

2. God will clear His name and make a New Covenant, not for the sake of the nation of Israel; but, to prove that He is Holy and apart from the profane. By this act, the nations will know that God is not a common pagan god and is a living Being. When the New Covenant is inaugurated, the world will see this through His Son Jesus Christ (John 5:19-23; 14:7).

To help the student understand what profaning the name of God means, you can refer to the contrast in Malachi 3:16-18:

Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before Him **of those who feared the Lord and esteemed His name**. “They shall be mine,” says the Lord of hosts, “in the day when I make up my treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.” Then once more you shall see the **distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him**. (Mal 3:16-18, ESV)

2. The provisions of the New Covenant is found in several places (Isa 59:21; 61:8-9; Jer 31:31-34; 32:40-41; Ezek 34:25-31, 36:25-28; 37:26-28). While the verses may appear scattered, you can easily find this by looking up in a concordance the word "covenant." Make a list of the provisions you observe.

Because there are several verses to read, consider assigning a passage to a student or team of students to carefully observe what promises God makes in the covenant. Encourage them to mark up the text to aid their observation.

To aid their understanding of the covenant, list and categorize the results of each student / team on a white board.

"And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the Lord: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the Lord, "from this time forth and forevermore." (Isa 59:21, ESV)

Observable promise: God's Spirit will be upon you and God's word will be known by you and your descendants. Once the regeneration of the descendant of Abraham begins, each successive generation will be regenerated. Because this promise refers to everyone being a Believer, it is a reference to the future.

For I the Lord love justice;  
I hate robbery and wrong;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
Their offspring shall be known among the nations,  
and their descendants in the midst of the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge them,  
that they are an offspring the Lord has blessed. (Isa 61:8-9, ESV)

Observable promise: God will correct injustice and nations will recognize that Believers are people that God has blessed.

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, 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 the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: 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 the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer 31:31-34, ESV)

Observable promise: With God's law on one's heart, God will forgive all sin once and for all. This is a big departure from the Mosaic Covenant, which only forgave the Old Testament Believer's **past** sin. The New Covenant could do something that the Mosaic could not: complete forgiveness of sin – past, present, and future.

I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul. (Jer 32:40-41, ESV)

Observable promise: God will continue to do good to the people of God and install them in the Promised Land.

"I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them. They shall dwell securely,... (continues)

and none shall make them afraid. And I will provide for them renowned plantations so that they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, and no longer suffer the reproach of the nations. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, declares the Lord God. And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord God.” (Ezek 34:25-31, ESV)

Observable promise: The Promised Land will be of peace and safety and bountiful. This promise, historically impossible today, is a reference to the future.

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. (Ezek 36:25-28, ESV)

Observable promise: God will provide a new heart and spirit within Believers that will cleanse Believers of all sin. Believers will abide by God’s word and dwell in the Promised Land. The New Covenant will bestow something within the descendant of Abraham: the Holy Spirit. God’s law will be “written” on their heart.

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 the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.” (Ezek 37:26-28, ESV)

The New Covenant is an everlasting covenant establishing God’s people in the Promised Land where He will dwell among them. When God builds a Sanctuary within the nation of Israel, the whole world will know that God sanctified the nation of Israel. This promise, speaking of the sanctuary of God being in the midst of God’s people forever, is in the future.

3. How is the New Covenant related to the Abrahamic Covenant? How is the New Covenant related to Jesus Christ? What is the significance of the New Covenant?

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Help the student observe that the New Covenant elaborates on the universal blessings God promised in the Abrahamic Covenant: “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed”.

Jesus Christ’s introduction of the communion cup saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood,” indicated that He was the mediator of the New Covenant.

Initially, the New Covenant was understood to be with the physical descendants of Abraham; however, the term “descendant of Abraham,” properly understood, described those who had a genuine faith in God. Thus, the New Covenant includes and provides Gentiles, who have a faith in God, the means for salvation; Gentiles can be forgiven of their sins by faith in Jesus Christ.