

Continuity and Discontinuity Between the Old and New Covenants

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Evangelical Theological Society Annual Meeting

San Antonio, Texas

November 18, 2004

In the first part of the paper I will make some general comments regarding the continuity and discontinuity after which I will focus on the fulfillment of Jeremiah 31 and 32 prophecies in the New Testament.

#### CONTINUITY:

##### SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE MOSAIC AND THE NEW COVENANTS

The two parties present in both covenants are Yahweh and Israel. The covenants were not meant for a divided kingdom but for the whole nation of Israel. The division of the kingdom was a temporary setback in Israel's history, which came about because of their sin. In both covenants the covenant formula,<sup>1</sup> "I will be your God, and you will be my people," is crucial. The covenant formula is present when the covenant is first made (Exod 6:7), when the covenant is retold to the new generation that will inherit the promised land (Deut 29:13), and when the new covenant is promised (Jer 31:33). The continuity of the new covenant with the Mosaic one can also be asserted from language related to the knowledge of God and his forgiveness of Israel. Yahweh delivered his people with a mighty hand, and he made a covenant with his people in order that they might know him and in the process make him known to all the surrounding nations (Exod 7:5, 16:12). To know Yahweh meant not only to know of his attributes, but it

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<sup>1</sup>See Rolf Rendtorff, *The Covenant Formula: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998).

meant obedience to his covenant. The idea of forgiveness is also key to understanding the continuity between the covenants.

"Jeremiah did not deny that sin was forgiven under the old covenant. The word used here (i.e., Jer 31:34) for 'forgive' (xls) is used throughout the Old Testament to talk about the forgiveness given by God to those who would turn from wickedness (2 Chr 7:14; Jer 5:1).<sup>2</sup> The fact that God will not remember the people's sin could be one of the brand new features of the new covenant. John Bright affirms the continuity of the covenants:

though this is called a "new" covenant, neither in its form nor in its content does it differ from the old. Like the old, it is given through divine initiative, solely on the basis of the divine grace, and it presupposes that the recipients will live in obedience to its stipulations, which are in no way changed. The difference is that now, since the stipulations are inscribed on their minds and wills, the people are enabled to conform them, and truly to be God's people. It is a new covenant in that it is made anew, renewed; but it is the people who are made new.<sup>3</sup>

#### DISCONTINUITY:

##### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MOSAIC AND THE NEW COVENANTS

One of the key features of the new covenant that points to its discontinuity with the Mosaic covenant is the internalization of the law. The fact that the new covenant will

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<sup>2</sup>Thomas Edward McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 87-88.

<sup>3</sup>John Bright, *Covenant and Promise* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 195.

not be "like" the old covenant points to a definite discontinuity. The law written on stone could be broken, and the law written on parchment could be burned, but the law written on the people's hearts seems to be unerasable. "The new gift from God is the 'internalizing' of the covenant."<sup>4</sup> Swetnam somewhat agrees with Bright, but he sees the access to the law as the key new ingredient in the new covenant. He asserts that "the 'interiority' consists in a direct contact between Torah and Israelite: God's Word acts immediately upon the faithful as individuals and as a group."<sup>5</sup>

We are not told how this interiorization of the law will be possible, but the New Testament points to the Holy Spirit as the agent who will make that possible. Martens points out that the work of the Spirit is tied in with the ability to keep the new covenant. He points out that "God was offering a new covenant, and offering also the resources of his Spirit, so that this time the covenant partner would remain faithful, would exhibit the loyalty essential to covenant."<sup>6</sup> The same idea is expressed by the prophet Ezek in 36:26-27. The change of the

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 195-96.

<sup>5</sup>James Swetnam, "Why Was Jeremiah's New Covenant New?" in *Studies on Prophecy*, SVT vol. 26 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), 115.

<sup>6</sup>Elmer Martens, *God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 220.

human heart will be possible when Yahweh puts his spirit within that person.

The newness of the new covenant could be expressed in the internalization of the law, but this law could be more than the written commandments given to Moses. It could also refer to the spirit of the law and not necessarily the letter of the law. However, the connection to the Mosaic covenant is unmistakable because of the covenant formula,<sup>7</sup> "I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer 31:33). Knowledge of God was crucial in maintaining a relationship between him and his people. Thus, under the new covenant, the knowledge of God will not come through the transference of knowledge from the teacher to the pupil. Rather, it is asserted that all will have a personal knowledge of God.<sup>8</sup> Thus, one cannot be part of the new covenant community without knowing God. It is notable that in the expression "Know the LORD!" the LXX uses the verb *ginwskw*, which means to know by observation and experience. But where the text

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<sup>7</sup>This formula was used extensively in the Pentateuch, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. See Rendtorff, *The Covenant Formula*, and Klaus Baltzer, *The Covenant Formulary in Old Testament, Jewish, and Early Christian Writings*, trans. David E. Green (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971).

<sup>8</sup>Werner E. Lemke, "Expository Articles: Jeremiah 31:31-34," *Int* 37 (April 1983): 186. He argues against an abstract intellectual knowledge, and for a willing, intimate acknowledgment of him. See also, Herbert B. Huffmon, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew *Yada'*," *BASOR* 181 (February 1966): 35.

is rendered "for they all will know me," the LXX uses the verb *oida*, which means to know by reflection.<sup>9</sup>

Another new element is the forgiveness of sin and the non remembrance of iniquity. The use of parallel constructions is not new in the Book of Comfort. The parallel verbs *ajx* and *w* go very well with the parallel nouns *~mDj* and *~taJx*: Childs explains the idea of remembrance: "God's remembering has not only a psychological effect, but an ontological one... When God forgets sin, he forgives... Memory is not identical with the action, but it is never divorced from it."<sup>10</sup> Although we are not told here how this will take place, the New Testament shows how all the promises of the new covenant come true by the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>9</sup>Emanuel Tov, *The Septuagint Translation of Jeremiah and Baruch*, HSM 8 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1976), 67.

<sup>10</sup>Brevard S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (London: SCM, 1962), 33.

## JEREMIAH 31 IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

To understand the theology of the new covenant and what it means, one must look at both the Old and the New Testaments. While the new covenant is fulfilled by Christ in the New Testament, its promise comes first in the Old Testament. The New and Old Testaments are dependent on one another, and a clear understanding of the new covenant requires a search of both testaments. The establishment of the new covenant at the LORD's Supper cannot be understood apart from the Old Testament, which must serve as the background of the New Testament events.

The Institution of the New Covenant: Luke 22

The new covenant promised by God through Jeremiah is instituted by Jesus at what we call the LORD's Supper,<sup>11</sup> and it was inaugurated by his death on the cross.

And when He had taken bread and 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 in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My

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<sup>11</sup>The terms "communion," "Eucharist," "the breaking of bread," and "Mass" are also used. While this meal has clear references to the Passover (Luke 22:15), some have suggested that it was a Qiddûš meal, a hăbûrāh meal, or an Essene meal. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*. AB 28A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 1389.

blood." (Luke 22:19-20)

While all three synoptic gospels give an account of the LORD's Supper, only Luke has the adjective *kainh*, modifying the noun *diakh*. Both Matthew and Mark have "this is My blood of the covenant" (Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24).<sup>12</sup> The Lucan formula *kainh. diakh* also occurs in 1 Cor 11:25, and since the Pauline account is considered to be the earliest, some consider the Marcan form an abbreviated form of Jesus' sayings. "The addition of the word 'new' produces an allusion to Jeremiah 31:31."<sup>13</sup> The reason the word "new" does not appear in Matthew and Mark could be due to the fact that Jesus' audience was so familiar with Jeremiah's prophecy that when Jesus spoke of a covenant, his audience immediately understands that he is speaking of none other than the new covenant. Paul includes the word "new" in his 1 Corinthians 11 discourse because he wants to make sure that his readers see a sharp contrast between the Sinai and the new covenants.<sup>14</sup> Fitzmyer affirms that the Lucan account is inspired by the Marcan one and that Luke does not depend on the Pauline

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<sup>12</sup>See Marion L. Soards, *The Special Material of Luke 22*. JSNTSup 14, 40-41, 50.

<sup>13</sup>I. Howard Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 42-43.

<sup>14</sup>Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper*, 47. See also the work by the same author, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NTGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 799-807.

parallel as others have suggested. "The vicarious and soteriological character of Jesus' reinterpretation come out still more clearly in his words over the 'cup after the meal': 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'" <sup>15</sup> The blood motif goes back to Exod 24:3-8 when the covenant between Yahweh and Israel is concluded with Moses sprinkling blood on the altar and then on the people. The phrase "new covenant" is not only an allusion to Jer 31:31 but is also a phrase taken over by the Essene community at Qumran (CD 6:19; 1QpHab 2:4-6). <sup>16</sup>

#### An Analysis of Luke 22:19-20

This passage must first be understood in the light of its immediate context as well as in the light of its wider biblical context. The institution of the Lord's Supper (vv. 19-20) is blocked in by the preparation of the Passover meal (vv. 7-13), the Passover meal (vv. 14-18), and the prediction of Judas' betrayal (vv. 21-23). The understanding of the Passover meal is crucial in understanding the institution of the Lord's Supper.

While Mark and Matthew indicate that the Passover meal takes place in the evening, Luke doesn't seem to point to the time of day except by implication if one translates *deipnazein* as

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<sup>15</sup>Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1391.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 1402.

"to have dinner" instead of the more general "to eat." What is important for Luke is *h'wfa* (Luke 22:14). Füglistner observes that the Jewish Passover was the "hour" fixed by God towards which Jesus was "consciously moved."<sup>17</sup> Verses 15-18 are classified by scholars as Luke's special source. Luke's distinguishing between the Passover meal cup in verse 17 and the Eucharistic cup of verse 20 may be to "present the Lord's Supper as now eclipsing the old Passover."<sup>18</sup>

The Institution of the Lord's Supper (22:19-20)

The institution of the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist is set within Jesus' farewell speech.<sup>19</sup> Luke's use of the Jewish Passover setting for the institution of the Lord's Supper is not accidental, but it is meant to show Jesus as the pascal lamb who will be sacrificed for the people. Some suggest that the setting indicates the importance of table fellowship as a symbol of social cohesion and shared values.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Notker Füglistner, "Passover," in *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner (New York: Crossroad, 1975), 1166.

<sup>18</sup>John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, WBC 35c (Dallas: Word, 1993), 1044. See also Donald Senior, *The Passion*, 59.

<sup>19</sup>Neyrey, *The Passion According to Luke*, 15. Characteristically, the farewell speech addresses concerns for children/followers and their subsequent unity.

<sup>20</sup>Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 402. While this could be a valuable lesson in

Luke 22:19-20 can be divided into three parts: (a) the words of interpretation, (b) the command to repeat, and (c) the new covenant.

a. The Words of Interpretation. "This is my body which is given for you," and "This cup which is poured out for you," are the words of interpretation. By saying "This is my body," Jesus identifies himself with the bread that he has just broken and given to the disciples. Luke further personalizes it by the emphasis "which is given for you." Also, the expression "for you" could be interpreted to mean "the foundation of the covenant in context of the institution of the Lord's Supper," and it certainly had "eminent soteriological meaning."<sup>21</sup> Hendriksen attempts to explain the Jesus' audience did indeed realize the meaning of his words and actions. "It is striking that in all of the instances indicated by these references the symbolical or figurative character of our Lord's language was disregarded by those who first heard it!"<sup>22</sup> The "body" could also refer back to the body of the Passover lamb. The expression "in my blood," coupled with "my body" makes an irrefutable argument that Jesus'

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pragmatics, it probably was not Luke's motivation.

<sup>21</sup>Petrus J. Gräbe, "The New Covenant: Perspectives from the Lord's supper traditions and from the Pauline letters," *Scriptura* 65 (1998), 156.

<sup>22</sup>William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 960.

language is sacrificial language. He is then identifying himself with the Passover lamb. "His own body and blood will replace the Passover lamb as the sign of the way God's kingdom will be realized from now on, even though its fullness will not be achieved until the eschaton."<sup>23</sup>

b. The command. Just as the Passover meal had to be done on a regular/yearly basis, Jesus instructs his disciples to "do this in remembrance of Me." This expression is absent in Matthew and Mark, but it is present twice in the Pauline account of both the distribution of the bread and wine (1 Cor 11:23-26).

c. The new covenant. The adjective *kainh* modifies *diakh* and is present both in Luke and Paul but absent in Matthew and Mark.<sup>24</sup> While all synoptic gospels indicate that the cup represents Jesus' blood, only Luke emphasizes that this is the "new covenant in my blood." Marshall asserts, "In Mark *to uo*, refers to the wine in the cup which represents the blood of Jesus, understood as the blood of a covenant-inaugurating sacrifice (Ex 24:8), poured out for the benefit of many."<sup>25</sup> The

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<sup>23</sup>Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1392.

<sup>24</sup>The adjective *kainh* is used to modify *diakh* in Jer 38:31 (LXX); 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; and Heb 8:8, 13, 9:15. Gräbe suggests that one should understand the adjective *kainoj* not in a chronological way, but in an eschatological one. Gräbe, 157.

<sup>25</sup>Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 805.

allusion to the promise of the new covenant in Jer 31:31 is unmistakable.<sup>26</sup> If Matthew's and Mark's accounts point back to Exod 24:8 and the ratification of the Mosaic covenant, the Lucan account as well as the Pauline account make a direct allusion to the new covenant "based on a new activity of God beyond Sinai, in which he will bestow forgiveness and bring inner renewal."<sup>27</sup> The relationship between Christ's blood and the covenant is established in all synoptic gospels. The fact that Matthew and Mark omit the adjective "new" to refer to the covenant could be because their audiences would know of which covenant they are referring.

#### Theological Analysis

The institution of the Lord's Supper has deep theological implications when understood in light of the entire canon of Scripture. With the institution of the Lord's Supper, the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (31:31) is also being instituted. The new covenant is inaugurated by Christ's dying on the cross, but it is instituted at Jesus' last Passover meal, which becomes the Lord's Supper. Although Luke is the only one

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<sup>26</sup>Contra Ravens who suggests that "Luke did not speak of a new covenant" and that "the only covenant in Luke-Acts is the one that God made with Abraham." See David Ravens, *Luke and the Restoration of Israel*, JSNTSup 119 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 202.

<sup>27</sup>Nolland, *Luke*, 1054.

to mention that the covenant being instituted is the "new" covenant, the audiences of Matthew and Mark were aware that Jesus was instituting a covenant that was new in the sense that it was not one of the covenants that were in existence since creation. The fact that Jesus chooses to institute the new covenant at the Passover meal is not an accident. First, he wants his disciples to understand that he is the fulfillment of the Mosaic covenant. Jesus first affirms this in Matt 5:17 by saying, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill." As Blaising and Block note, "Jesus fulfilled the Scripture by replicating in His own life the patterns of God's historical relations with Israel and by accomplishing in His own history the predicted events of prophecy."<sup>28</sup> But now he is presenting his body as the one which is going to be broken and his blood as that which is going to be shed. He then becomes the Passover lamb which is being sacrificed as atonement for the sins of the people.<sup>29</sup>

Second, Jesus wants his disciples to understand that a new covenant is instituted. The same covenant that was prophesied by Jeremiah is now instituted by Christ, and later the

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<sup>28</sup>Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 195.

<sup>29</sup>See J.C. Hindley, "The Mediator of a New Covenant," *IJT* 16 (1967): 121-36.

same covenant will be inaugurated in his blood. In presenting Christ's death it is clear that "Luke does present Jesus' death as a sacrifice. There are allusions to the covenant sacrifice, the sacrifice of the Passover, and a generally vicarious sacrificial death."<sup>30</sup>

Paul's Theology of the New Covenant<sup>31</sup>

Paul's theology of the new covenant can be best understood in light of his 2 Corinthians 3 writing. Paul writes his second letter to the church in Corinth a year after writing what we know as his first letter to the Corinthians.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the second letter has the same audience as the first: the church at Corinth where the apostle Paul spent at least eighteen months (Acts 18:11). In this second letter, Paul is trying to defend the gospel message from "being twisted by what Paul calls 'false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of

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<sup>30</sup>Peter M. Head, "The Self-Offering and Death of Christ as a Sacrifice in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles," in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Carlisle: Paternoster/Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 118. See also Henry S. Gehman, "An Insight and a Realization: A Study of the New Covenant," *Int* 9 (1955): 279-93.

<sup>31</sup>Since aspects of 1 Corinthians 11 were discussed with the treatment of Luke 22, this section will focus on 2 Corinthians 3.

<sup>32</sup>Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *The Theology of the Second Letter to the Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 10.

Christ.’”<sup>33</sup> After the introductory chapter and after laying down his apostolic ministry in chapter two, chapter three deals with different aspects of the new covenant.<sup>34</sup>

Paul’s Commendation 3:1-3

In his second letter to the Corinthians the apostle Paul is confronting false teachers that apparently came to Corinth bearing letters of recommendation. Subsequently, Paul affirms that he does not need a recommendation since the people to whom he ministered in Corinth are evidence that Christ indeed called him and they are the proof of the “legitimacy of his office.”<sup>35</sup> Hafemann states that “The people of God in Christ are now the true covenant people of God from among the nation Israel and from among the nations.”<sup>36</sup> Paul’s letter of recommendation

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<sup>33</sup>Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 288.

<sup>34</sup>Chapter 3 can be outlined as follows:

1. Paul’s commendation 3:1-3
2. Paul’s confidence 3:4-6
3. The glory of the new covenant 3:7-11
4. Unveiled faces 3:12-18

<sup>35</sup>Simon J. Kistemaker, *II Corinthians*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 99.

<sup>36</sup>Scott J. Hafemann, “The Spirit of the New Covenant, the Law, and the Temple of God’s Presence: Five Theses on Qumran Self-Understanding and the Contours of Paul’s Thought,” in *Evangelium Schriftauslegung Kirche: Festschrift für Peter Stuhlmacher zum 65 Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck 7 Ruprecht, 1997), 175.

is different than others since it is written by Christ as a direct result of Paul's ministry (3:2a). Furthermore, the instrument of writing is not an ink pen, but the Holy Spirit is the means of writing. Most importantly, this letter is not written on stone or even parchment but "on the tablets of human hearts" (3:3b). The allusion to Jeremiah 31 is clear. In Jer 31:33 God promises his people that he will write his law into the people's hearts. Ezekiel expresses the same idea in 36:26-27: "And I will give you a new heart, a new spirit I will put within you... And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes..." Here Paul shows that this is possible only through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (3:3), for "God prefers living hearts to dead stones because they can better communicate what the purposes of the living God are for humanity and what the presence of the life-giving spirit is able to do."<sup>37</sup>

In verse 6 Paul reiterates that it is God "who has made us competent to be ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit" (3:6a). Just as Moses has been the minister of the old covenant, Paul and his coworkers identify themselves as ministers of the new covenant.<sup>38</sup> However, "Paul is

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<sup>37</sup>David E. Garland, "The Sufficiency of Paul, Minister of the New Covenant," *CTR* 4 (1989): 26.

<sup>38</sup>The contrast between the Mosaic and the Pauline ministries is defined as a "dissimile" by Richard Hays. See Andrew G. Shead, "The New Covenant and Pauline Hermeneutics,"

not attempting to picture himself as the fulfillment of the Jewish expectation for a 'second Moses' based on Deut 18:18. There is no allusion, verbal or conceptual, to this expectation in 2 Corinthians 3 or elsewhere in the Pauline corpus."<sup>39</sup> Rather, Paul was presenting himself in a manner that reminded the people of the prophets of old.

Betz explains Christ's fulfillment of the old covenant by stating that "Christus hat den Alten Bund nicht etwa aufgehoben, sondern ihn erfüllt und damit auch für uns Christen aktuell gemacht."<sup>40</sup> The phrase "for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" has led many to conclude that 2 Corinthians 3 "describes the contrast between two different ministries: one associated with the letter (*gramma*), another with spirit (*pneuma*)."<sup>41</sup> Thomas Provence summarizes the different interpretations of this expression in the hermeneutical view, the

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in *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul's Mission*, ed. Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson (Leicester, England: Apollos, 2000), 33.

<sup>39</sup>Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 102-3.

<sup>40</sup>Otto Betz, "Der Alte und der Neue Bund Eine Betrachtung zu 2Kor 3," in *Mission an Israel in Heilsgeschichtlicher Sicht*, ed. Heinz Kremers and Erich Lubahn (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), 35.

<sup>41</sup>Sigurd Grindheim, "The Law Kills but the Gospel Gives Life: The Letter-Spirit Dualism in 2 Corinthians 3:5-18," *JSNT* 84 (2001): 97.

legal view, and the proper interpretation. The hermeneutical view has the text as being subservient to the Spirit, the legal view identifies the "letter" with the "law," and the proper interpretation sees "a person externally observing the letter of the law but internally ignoring it."<sup>42</sup> Most scholars agree that the letter/spirit contrast is set against the backdrop of Jer 31:31-34 and Ezek 36:25-27.<sup>43</sup> While many scholars see a stark contrast between the law and the Spirit, Paul does not "establish a contrast between the law itself and the Spirit... Nor is the Spirit to be read as a codeword for the gospel, so that the letter/Spirit contrast is transformed into a contrast between the law and the gospel."<sup>44</sup> Thus, the letter/Spirit contrast does not portray two distinct ways of relating to God,<sup>45</sup> but Paul shows that there is indeed a continuum between the "letter" and the Spirit. Again, the problem is not with the law but with a Spiritless law. The contrast made here by Paul is not between

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<sup>42</sup>Kistemaker, *II Corinthians*, 108.

<sup>43</sup>See Carol Kern Stockhausen, *Moses' Veil and the Glory of the New Covenant*, AB 116 (Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico: Roma, 1989), 71-75; Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 156-73; R. P. Carroll, "Inscribing the Covenant," 74.

<sup>44</sup>Scott J. Hafemann, "The 'Temple of the Spirit' as the Inaugural Fulfillment of the New Covenant within the Corinthian Correspondence," *ExAud* 12 (1996): 38.

<sup>45</sup>Contra Grindheim, "The Law Kills but the Gospel Gives Life," 102-3.

two covenants, but rather "between two distinct ministries."<sup>46</sup>

The Glory of the New Covenant 3:7-11

After Paul shows the similarities between his ministry and Moses' ministry, he now sets out to explain and clarify the letter/Spirit contrast and the superiority of the new covenant. This cannot be done apart from a deep understanding of Israel's history under Moses' leadership, "but also in its Messianic expectation."<sup>47</sup> Paul argues from Israel's history by referring to Exod 34:28-35 when the glory of God was seen on Moses' radiant face after he descended from the law-giving encounter with Yahweh.<sup>48</sup> It is undeniable that the first covenant was accompanied by glory. Thus, Paul argues that if the ministry of Moses was attended by such splendor, how much more will the new covenant ministry be attended by a glory that will not fade. The

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<sup>46</sup>Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 172-173. Murphy-O'Connor incorrectly suggests that Paul accepts the new covenant theme grudgingly. See Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The New Covenant in the Letters of Paul and the Essene Documents," in *To Touch a Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer*, ed. Maurya P. Horgan and Paul J. Kobelski (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 203.

<sup>47</sup>William David Davies, *Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come*, JBL Monograph Series 7 (Philadelphia: SBL, 1952), 7, as quoted in Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 185.

<sup>48</sup>Windisch proposes that 2 Cor 3:7-18 is a Christian midrash on Exod 34:29-35. See Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 104-5.

radiance on Moses' face faded, and there came a time when Moses needed not veil himself (Exod 34:33-35), but the glory of the present ministry received by Paul will be permanent in nature (2 Cor 3:11). Indeed, the new covenant is portrayed as superior, transcending the old, but it is clear that Paul is not suggesting that the old is made null by the new. Rather, it is reaffirmed by it. For "the old covenant is no longer the locus of the revelation of God's glory in the world; the new covenant of the new age has arrived...and God's purpose in the new covenant is...the life of the Spirit."<sup>49</sup>

Unveiled Faces 3:12-18<sup>50</sup>

The essential contrast between Moses' and Paul's ministries is presented in verses 12 and 13 where it is asserted that under the new covenant, a veil is not necessary since this veil is removed "through Christ" (v. 14). Through this, again the superiority of the new covenant is emphasized. Paul's point is simple: we are not "like Moses" (v. 12), but rather we have hope, and thus are very bold because the veil has been removed for us in Christ. The fact that in Christ the veil is removed points to a fulfillment of the old covenant in Christ.

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<sup>49</sup>Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 324.

<sup>50</sup>For an excellent treatment of the structure of 2 Cor 3:12-18 with Exod 34:33-35 as background see Belleville, *Reflections of Glory*, 179.

What is true in Paul's day has been true throughout Israel's history. Only those whose hearts have been changed by the Spirit will accept the (new) covenant redemption (in Christ) and be enabled by the Spirit to keep its stipulations as revealed in the Law.<sup>51</sup>

It is only when this veil is removed that one can see "the glory of the Lord" (v. 18). The Spirit removes the veil from the faces of those who benefit from the new covenant so that they can see the glory of God. While at the beginning of the passage Paul was comparing his ministry to that of Moses, now he compares the "experience of the believer under the new covenant to the experience of Moses."<sup>52</sup> Just like in the first covenant, the initiator of the new covenant is God, "for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (v. 18b). The superiority of Paul's ministry over Moses' then lies in that the believers "can see the glory of God in Christ Jesus, who removes the veil from the Old Testament to show ~~pasan ton boulon tou/peou~~ (Acts 20:27)."<sup>53</sup> Thus, for Paul, the believers to whom he was ministering were the people of

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<sup>51</sup>Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 368.

<sup>52</sup>Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel*, 410. See also, William J. Dumbrell, "Paul's Use of Exodus 34 in 2 Corinthians 3" in *God Who is Rich in Mercy* (Homebush, Australia: Lancer, 1986), 189. See also Guy Wagner, "Alliance de la Lettre Alliance de L'Esprit. Essai D'Analyse de 2 Corinthiens 2/14 a 3/18," *ETR* 1 (1985): 55-65.

<sup>53</sup>Peter R. Jones, "The Apostle Paul: Second Moses to the New Covenant Community," in *God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture*, ed. John Warwick Montgomery (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1974), 234.

the new covenant who benefitted from the new covenant promises because of Christ, who inaugurated the new covenant, through the Holy Spirit, who now was not just working among believers but indwelt them.

#### The New Covenant in Hebrews 8-10

Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant in 31:31-34 is quoted in full from the LXX<sup>54</sup> in Heb 8:8-12, making this the longest single quotation from the Old Testament in the New Testament.<sup>55</sup> The passage is quoted but not explained the same way Psalms 8, 40, and 95 are explained in Hebrews 2, 3, and 10 probably because the recipients of the letter/ sermon were familiar with the Old Testament text.

#### An Analysis of Hebrews 8:8-12<sup>56</sup>

The author of Hebrews makes four changes in the

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<sup>54</sup>J.C. McCullough points out that the Old Testament quotations in Hebrew follow the LXX. See J.C. McCullough, "The Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews," *NTS* 26 (1980): 363-79.

<sup>55</sup>Susanne Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews*, JSNTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990), 30.

<sup>56</sup>We will study these verses within their context, thus starting the explanation with 8:6 and then continuing with a brief discussion of chapters 9 and 10. For a detailed analysis between the MT and the LXX texts of Jer 31:31-34 see Bernard Renaud, "L'Oracle de la Nouvelle Alliance: À Propos des Divergences Entre le Texte Hébreu (Jr 31, 31-34) et le Texte Grec (38, 31-34)," in *Lectures et Relectures de la Bible: Festschrift P.-M. Bogaert*, ed. J.-M. Auwers and A. Wénin (Leuven: University Press, 1999), 85-98.

quotation of Jer 31:31-34 from Heb 8:8-12 to 10:16-17. While in 8:10 he uses  $\tau\omega\ \iota\sigma\rho\alpha\eta\lambda$ , "with the house of Israel," in 10:16 he changes it to  $\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ , "with them." It could be that the author's motivation is theological and that he moves from a specific reference to a more general one in order to emphasize that the new covenant is not for physical Israel alone. Also, while in 8:10 the laws are placed on the people's  $\delta\iota\alpha\nu\omicron\iota\alpha\iota$  "minds," and written on their  $\kappa\alpha\rho\delta\iota\alpha$  "hearts," in 10:16 the same laws are placed in the people's  $\kappa\alpha\rho\delta\iota\alpha$ , "hearts," and written on their  $\delta\iota\alpha\nu\omicron\iota\alpha\iota$ , "minds." In 10:17 the author adds  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\omega\ \alpha\mu\alpha\rho\tau\iota\omega\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omega\ \nu$ , "and their sins," a phrase synonymous with "and their iniquity" which follows and which also appears in Jer 31:34. While no explanation is given, this variant is offered in 8:12.<sup>57</sup> Finally, while 8:12 has the aorist passive  $\mu\eta\sigma\omega$ , in 10:17 the author replaces it with the future passive  $\mu\eta\sigma\sigma\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ , "I will remember." Both forms come from the same root and carry the same idea: thus the change can be said to be only stylistic.<sup>58</sup>

#### Commentary

The book of Hebrews sets out to show the superiority of Jesus over the angels, over Moses, over Melchizedek, over the

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<sup>57</sup>  $\alpha^2$ , A, and D among others.

<sup>58</sup> Richard Reid, "The Use of the Old Testament in the Epistle to the Hebrews," (Th.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1964), 61.

priests, and over all the celestial beings. The author goes on to show that the new covenant prophesied in Jeremiah and instituted by Christ during the Last Supper is superior to the old covenant that was in place since Moses' time. The citation of Jeremiah's prophecy comes immediately after the author makes reference to a better covenant whose mediator is Christ. It seems that Heb 8:1-10:18 is designed to explain the relationship of Christ's high priesthood to the better covenant introduced in 7:22. Jer 31:31-34 binds the entire argument of Heb 8:1-10:18 by its unique double use in 8:8-12 and 10:16-17. While in 8:8-12 the author supports the rejection of the old covenant in favor of the new, more superior one, the second one in 10:16-17 affirms the privileges of the people under the new priesthood of Christ. This superior covenant, which is the new covenant, has better promises (Heb 8:6). The introductory adverb-conjunction *νῦν* can be translated "but now" and "introduces a declaration set in opposition to the contrary-to-fact condition developed in verse 4"<sup>59</sup> where Jesus is introduced as priest. The adverb/conjunction construction introduces the idea that Christ's ministry is superior to that of the priests of the old covenant. Thus, Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry. The word translated "ministry" is *leitourgia*, and while in classical Greek it had no

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<sup>59</sup>William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1991), 208.

religious content, in Hebrews and in the LXX it is given a "cultic nuance" indicating that it was used for "divine service only."<sup>60</sup> The perfect tense ~~τεπει~~ suggests that Jesus obtained this ministry in the past and still possesses it in the present.<sup>61</sup> The superiority<sup>62</sup> of the new covenant is also expressed in Jesus' entrance into the heavenly sanctuary as the eternal mediator between man and God. The word ~~mesithj~~ is generally translated "mediator" and has rich theological meaning in Hebrews. Lane points out that the word is always used in the context of the new covenant which God inaugurated by Jesus' "life of perfect obedience and death."<sup>63</sup> Verse 7 points to the imperfection of the first covenant, which leaves room for a second, superior one. "Having just described the new covenant with some emphasis as 'better' (v. 6), the author prepares to justify this statement from scripture (v. 8-12)."<sup>64</sup> However, the first covenant was not flawed in and of itself, because, after

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 208.

<sup>61</sup>David J. MacLeod, "The Present Work of Christ in Hebrews," *BSac* 148 (1991): 187.

<sup>62</sup>The superiority of the new covenant is qualified by the adjectives ~~kreittonoj~~ and ~~kreittosin~~.

<sup>63</sup>Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 208.

<sup>64</sup>Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 411.

all, it was God-given. Thus, the old covenant was imperfect because the people failed to obey and follow its precepts, and "the Lord finds fault with the people of the first covenant (v.8a)."<sup>65</sup> Calvin, on the other hand, perceived that both the old covenant as well as its subjects were condemned.<sup>66</sup> After the author of Hebrews quotes Jer 31:31-34, he concludes that the first covenant has become obsolete, making the second one necessary. Hughes suggests that "the old is clearly seen as outmoded and destined to be discarded."<sup>67</sup> However, while admitting to the fact that the old covenant was obsolete, we must see the relationship between the old and the new covenants. While there is a clear discontinuity between them, a clear continuity also exists.

Verse 8 begins by stating that the problem was not with the covenant but with *autouj*, the people with whom the covenant was made.<sup>68</sup> The opening pronouncement *Idou, hmerai ercontai*, "behold,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 412.

<sup>66</sup> Jean Calvin, *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries: Hebrews and 1 & 2 Peter*, trans. William B. Johnston (Carlisle/Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Eerdmans, 1963), 109.

<sup>67</sup> Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 302.

<sup>68</sup> Contra Calvin and Hughes who state that *autouj* refers back to both the covenant and its subjects. Rather, the *autouj* points ahead to the House of Israel mentioned later in verse 8. See P.E. Hughes, *Hebrews*, 298. See also Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the*

days are coming," is referring to a future time, some time after the exile. The pronouncement did have a historical fulfillment after the exile when the people did return to their land, but it also leaves room for another spiritual fulfillment.<sup>69</sup> Hebrews 9:15 states that the recipients of the new covenant are "those who are called" to receive the promised eternal inheritance. Heb 10:16-19 defines the recipients of this inheritance as "us" to whom the Holy Spirit speaks in Jer 31:31-34 and "we" who have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus. The change from Israel and Judah in 8:8b to "them" in 10:16 supports a typological escalation from physical Jews to all believers, the ones who are called (9:15), and the ones who are sanctified (10:10, 14). If only the Jews are in God's view here, then the new covenant is only for the Jewish Christians and not for the Gentiles. Earle Ellis suggests:

It very probably underlies the conviction of early Christians that those who belong to Christ, Israel's messianic king, constitute the true Israel. Consequently, it explains the Christian application to unbelieving Jews of Scriptures originally directed to Gentiles, and, on the other hand, the application to the church of Scriptures

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*Greek New Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 670.

<sup>69</sup>Contra Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 140.

originally directed to the Jewish nation.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, the interpreter can have Old Testament Israel find fulfillment in the New Testament Christian. There is sufficient typological comparison between Israel-Judah and Christian believers in Hebrews to justify the application of Jer 31:31-34 to Christians along the old covenant-new covenant continuum. The new covenant is not brand new, however, but in many respects it contains renewed elements of the old covenant. Both covenants are initiated by God and not by the people. The people are only recipients of God's gracious covenants. Both covenants are made for the benefit of the people. In his love, God makes a covenant with his people for their physical and spiritual benefit. Both covenants had God's law as a central part of the covenant. The first covenant was written on stone while the new covenant will be written in the peoples' hearts.<sup>71</sup> However, in both cases, the people's hearts were in God's view. The goal of both covenants was to have Yahweh as the people's God and the people as his possession/inheritance. Furthermore, both covenants made provision for dealing with sin. While the Mosaic law had stipulations dealing with the sin of the people through animal

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<sup>70</sup>E. Earle Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutics in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1978), 213.

<sup>71</sup>See the section on 2 Corinthians 3.

sacrifices, the new covenant has Christ as the once and for all sacrifice. Some attempt to explain the newness of the new covenant linguistically and say that the adjective ~~kainh~~ refers to something new which was not there before,<sup>72</sup> but it is important to remember that the author of Hebrews quotes the LXX here and not the Hebrew text. The Hebrew adjective ~~hvd~~ can mean both new and renewed.<sup>73</sup> Thus, a conclusion based solely on the use of the Greek term is inadequate. It is important to note the author's choice of the verb ~~suntelesw~~, "to establish, make, finish," in place of the LXX rendering ~~diachomai~~, a verb that also occurs in Heb 8:10 and 10:16 in relation to the covenant. The verb denotes completion in passages such as Matt 7:28, Mark 13:4, Luke 4:2, Acts 21:27, and Rom 9:28, and the author might have chosen it to emphasize the completeness of the new covenant. One could argue that the verb is rooted in ~~teloj~~ and that in Hebrews it underlines the perfection of the new covenant in Christ. The verb can also suggest finality, pointing to the fact that the new

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<sup>72</sup>New bottles, Mark 2:21; new garment, Luke 5:36; new tomb, Matt 27:60.

<sup>73</sup>See Pieter A. Verhoef, "~~vd~~," in *NIDOTTE*, vol. 2, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 30-7. See also W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1984), 175 and Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. "The Old Promise and the New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34," *JETS* 15 (1972):11-23. Contra Jean Delorme, "Sacrifice, Sacerdoce, Consécration: Typologie et Analyse Sémantique du Discours," *RSR* 63 (1975): 348.

covenant is the ultimate covenant which will never be outdated, replaced, or improved.

If verse 8 shows some similarities between the covenants, verse 9 begins to articulate their differences. In describing the new covenant ~~ovkata.tn diaqhkn(h) epolhsa toi/j patrasin autwn,~~ the author is true to the Jeremiah text. The new covenant is compared to the Mosaic covenant because of its reference to Egypt.<sup>74</sup> After mentioning Israel's unfaithfulness to the old covenant, the MT states "although I was a husband to them" while the LXX reads "I rejected them." Heb 8:9 follows the LXX and also uses ~~hvelhsa,~~ "I rejected." One could argue that the establishment of the new covenant was necessary due to this rejection. On the other hand, the portrayal of God as the husband to his people Israel is quite frequent in the Old Testament (Isa 54:5; Hos 2:2).

The demonstrative pronoun ~~auth~~ at the beginning of verse 10 introduces the elements of the new covenant. The formulation of ~~ti auth h`diaqhkn,~~ "for this is the covenant," could point to the distinctiveness of this covenant from the old one. The main difference is mentioned first, that is, ~~didouj nomouj mou eij tn dianoian autwn(kai.epi.kardiaj autwn epigraw autouj),~~ "I will put my laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts." In

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<sup>74</sup>The Mosaic covenant was instituted at Sinai after Yahweh delivered Israel from the Egyptian captivity. See Exodus 1-20.

the old covenant, the law was written on tablets of stone, and thus they could be broken or lost, but under the new covenant, the law is written on people's hearts. It is interiorized. It is important to note that the change is not made in the law but in the location of the placement of the law. It was not Moses' law but God's law both with the old and the new covenants.

Gräßer notes that with the new covenant also comes the full revelation of the Torah which will now be written on people's hearts.<sup>75</sup> Rissi writes: "Die Seele wird durch das Wort durchdrungen."<sup>76</sup> According to Greidanus, "Even though Jeremiah speaks of the future internalization of the law, this does not mean the external law will be abolished; it only means God's external demands will be so much internalized that the inclination will be to obey the Torah naturally."<sup>77</sup> God is the one who initiates the covenant, and he is the one who determines the stipulations of the covenant. He gives the rules and regulations (i.e., the law) and the people are invited to submit to him and obey his law. Thus, God places his law into the mind of the beneficiary of the covenant, and he writes it on his/her

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<sup>75</sup>Erich Gräßer, *An die Hebräer* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993), 102.

<sup>76</sup>Mathias Rissi, *Die Theologie des Hebräerbriefts*, WUNT 41 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987), 94.

<sup>77</sup>Sidney Greidanus, "The Universal Dimension of Law in the Hebrew Scriptures," *SR* 14 (1985): 50.

heart. The use of the singular *diapnoian* and *kardiaj* may indicate that God is interested in each individual and that the internalization of his law is intended to take place in each individual. Thus, now the covenant is not between God and a nation but between God and an individual person.

The use of the plural *nomouj*, "laws" instead of the singular like in the MT is intriguing. Westcott suggests that the plural indicates new laws, not just the Old Testament law given at Sinai.<sup>78</sup> However, since the old law was God-given, it could not have a defect; thus a replacement due to the flaw of the law is not plausible. The problem with the old covenant was not the God-given law but with the people who failed to obey this law. Under the new covenant, God gives the people a new heart enabled to keep the covenant law.<sup>79</sup> Thus, the same law is associated with both the Old and the New Testaments and is required of Christians as the standard of holiness.

The covenant formula from the Old Testament<sup>80</sup> is quoted without any changes as *kai. esomai autoij eij qon* (*kai. autoi. esontai, moi eij*

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<sup>78</sup>Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays*, 3<sup>d</sup> ed. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1909), 223.

<sup>79</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 173. See also Motefiore, *Hebrews*, 141.

<sup>80</sup>Exod 6:7, 29:45; Lev 26:12; Deut 26:19, 27:9, 29:13; Jer 7:23, 24:7, 30:22, 32:40; Ezek 11:9, 20, 36:28; Hos 2:20, 23; Zech 8:8, 13:9.

laon, "and I will be their God, and they will be my people." Its usage is not incidental or accidental, but here it is clear that the old covenant is not rendered null by the new covenant, but rather it is being reaffirmed. In fact, the old covenant is fulfilled in the new covenant. The new heart that is part of the new covenant makes this fulfillment possible.<sup>81</sup> However, a future eschatological fulfillment is also possible:

But it is only eschatologically, with the introduction of the new heaven and the new earth, populated with the multitude of the redeemed, that this covenant promise attains its ultimate fulfillment (Rev 21:3).<sup>82</sup>

Verse 11 quotes Jer 31:34, emphasizing the superiority of knowing God through the new covenant. The double negative *οὐκ ἔτι δεῖ* emphasizes the lack of need to teach the knowledge of the Lord under the new covenant. The knowledge of God is comprehensive, and it includes the personal and experiential knowledge of God.<sup>83</sup> Spicq incorrectly interprets this as the need to eliminate religious instructors (Ezek 11:19, 36:26; Joel 2:27; Isa 11:9, 55:5; John 6:45).<sup>84</sup> It is not revealed here how the knowledge of God will indwell the members of the covenant, but Ezekiel

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<sup>81</sup>Bruce, *Hebrews*, 173-74.

<sup>82</sup>Hughes, *Hebrews*, 301.

<sup>83</sup>See Bruce, *Hebrews*, 174, and Montefiore, *Hebrews*, 141.

<sup>84</sup>Ceslas Spicq, *L'Épître aux Hébreux*, 2 vols (Paris: J. Gabala, 1952-1953), 243.

supports the argument that it is the Holy Spirit who will make this possible (Ezek 11:19). Bruce states that the knowledge of God begins with God's saving of the individual (Gal 4:9; 1 Cor 8:3, 13:12).<sup>85</sup> The new covenant is superior because it is available to all, *apo mikrou/ey megalou autwn*, "from the least of them to the greatest of them."

One of the most important elements of the new covenant is the forgiveness of sin. Forgiveness is communicated by the use of the adjective-verb phrase *ilewjesmai* "I will be merciful," in relation to the people's iniquity and by the use of negated aorist passive *mnhsqw*, "I will remember," in relation to their sin. In the LXX the adjective *ilewj* is used to describe God's mercy, and it is used in most instances in the context of God's forgiving sin (Jer 5:1, 7, 27:20, 38:34, 43:3). Under the old covenant stipulations, forgiveness was offered via animal sacrifices, but these sacrifices could not "clear the conscience of the worshiper" (Heb 9:9, 10:1). Under the new covenant, the once for all sacrifice of Christ perfects the conscience before God (Heb 7:27, 9:14, 10:14).<sup>86</sup> The forgiveness of sin is the most essential element of the new covenant, and it is linked to

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<sup>85</sup>Bruce, *Hebrews*, 174.

<sup>86</sup>Bruce, *Hebrews*, 175.

the intermediary death of Christ (Heb 9:15, 22).<sup>87</sup> Montefiore links Jer 31:31-34, Luke 22:20, and Heb 8:8-12 and states that "Jesus himself views his own death as the inaugurating sacrifice which fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecy."<sup>88</sup> If the conjunction *of* is taken as causative, then all the blessings of Heb 8:8-11 rest on the forgiveness of sin through the death of Christ.

All the aspects of the covenant depend on the person and work of Christ (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 9:15). This forgiveness is based on grace and it is founded on Christ's sacrifice. The new covenant does not make null the old covenant, but rather, it reaffirms it by fulfilling it. The author of Hebrews "understands the Old Covenant as fulfilled in the New Covenant and the Christ-event, and Old Covenant Scripture as fulfilled in the age of the New Covenant."<sup>89</sup> After all, forgiveness based on grace was also at the root of the old covenant. God in his grace made provision for the atonement of sin. But this was only a temporary injunction, until the perfect sacrifice of Christ. For "God's purpose for the law was never frustrated: it was intended to provide a faint, temporary outline of the real redemptive work of Christ, "the good things to come

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<sup>87</sup>See Spicq, *Hébreux*, 244; Hughes, *Hebrews*, 302; Bruce, *Hebrews*, 175.

<sup>88</sup>Montefiore, *Hebrews*, 142.

<sup>89</sup>Steven K. Stanley, "A New Covenant Hermeneutic: The Use of Scripture in Hebrews 8-10," *TB* 46 (1995): 206.

(10:1).”<sup>90</sup>

Continuity between the covenants is emphasized even though discontinuity exists. However, the similarities point to the fact that indeed the new covenant is not a brand new covenant but a renewal of the old.<sup>91</sup>

#### JEREMIAH 32 IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Some prophecies in Jeremiah’s Book of Comfort predict the land restoration of Israel. For example, “Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in my great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety” (Jer 32:37).

The question that must be asked is whether or not this

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<sup>90</sup>Frank Thielman, *The Law and the New Testament: The Question of Continuity* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 125-26.

<sup>91</sup>Contra Larry D. Pettegrew, “The New Covenant,” *TMSJ* 10 (1999): 251-70. See Joseph Ratzinger, “The New Covenant: A Theology of Covenant in the New Testament,” *Communio* 22 (1995): 640 and Dwight D. Swanson, “A Covenant Just Like Jacob’s: The Covenant of 11QT 29 and Jeremiah’s New Covenant,” in *New Qumran Texts and Studies*, ed. George J. Brooke and Florentino Garcia Martinez (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 281. Holmgren is wrong when he asserts that in fact the Mosaic covenant is “depicted under the guise of a ‘new’ covenant.” See Frekerick Holmgren, “A New Covenant? For Whom?” *Covenant Quarterly* 43 (1985): 39-44.

prophecy was fulfilled in the past, is being fulfilled in the present, or will be fulfilled in the future, either in this world or the new world to come. Or can we talk about a partial past fulfillment that awaits complete fulfillment in the eschaton? These questions can be somewhat answered when we look at Romans 9-11 and Paul's treatment of Israel.

#### The Restoration and Future of Israel

Bible scholars as early as the church fathers have suggested that the land promised to Abraham was not the land of Judea, but that Judea and Jerusalem were used symbolically. Origen and Jerome are just two of the church fathers that addressed this issue. Origen saw Judea and Jerusalem as symbols of "the pure land which is good and large and lies in a pure heaven, in which is the heavenly Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup> Jerome on the otherhand saw Israel's post exilic return to their land as a partial fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy with some elements of the prophecy taking place in the eschatological millennium.<sup>2</sup> To understand the Old Testament fulfillment of these prophecies, we

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<sup>1</sup>Origen as quoted in Robert L. Wilken, "The restoration of Israel in biblical prophecy," in *To See Ourselves as Others See Us: Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs (Chico: Calif.: Scholars, 1985), 446.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 448. Jerome deals extensively with the restoration of Israel in his treatment of Ezek 36-39. He says that both Jews and Christians held to a future, historical fulfillment of the land restoration prophecy.

must inspect some New Testament passages dealing with this issue.

Most scholars accept that Romans 9-11 forms a close-knit unit.<sup>3</sup> This unit covers deep theological notions that deal with Israel and the church that are beyond the scope of this work. Thus, a full examination will not be made, but since Romans 11 deals with the future of Israel and this points back to Jeremiah 32 and the promise of Israel's restoration, a short analysis is necessary.

In Romans 9 Paul emphasizes God's faithfulness to his promises even though most of Israel has rejected Jesus the Messiah. Hafemann says that "the central issue in Romans 9-11 is whether God's faithfulness to himself and to his promised redemptive, saving activity can be maintained in spite of Israel's rejection of Jesus."<sup>4</sup> The Abrahamic promise pointed to the blessing of Abraham's descendants, not based on ethnicity, but based on God's promise and their faith (Rom 9:6-8). Thielman is correct when he states that Paul is trying both to preserve the "continuity between the newly constituted people of God and the Israel of old," as well as to present the "crucial element of discontinuity between his gospel and the old way of thinking

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<sup>3</sup>For a rhetorical analysis of Romans 9-11 see Johann D. Kim, *God, Israel, and the Gentiles: Rhetoric and Situation in Romans 9-11*, SBLDS 176 (Atlanta: SBL, 2000).

<sup>4</sup>Scott Hafemann, "The Salvation of Israel in Romans 11:25-32: A Response to Krister Stendhal," *ExAud* 4 (1988): 43.

about the people of God.”<sup>5</sup> In Chapter 10, Paul continues the argument that salvation is through faith in Christ (Rom 10:17). Romans 11 points to the fact that the Jews have rejected Jesus as the Messiah and that this in turn has become a blessing for the Gentiles who are now grafted “in the nourishing root of the olive tree” because God turned to the Gentiles (Rom 11:17). However, Paul also talks about a remnant of believing Jews. In Rom 9:27-29 Paul quotes Isa 10:22-23 and 1:9 to distinguish between the believing remnant of Israel and the unbelieving Jews. What is made clear is that this remnant will only be saved as the result of God’s “election of grace” (Rom 11:5). The apostle Paul emphasizes that God has not rejected Israel completely and that “in the end all Israel will be saved” (Rom 11:26). The mystery<sup>6</sup> of God’s plan is that God reverses the *Heilsgeschichte* by hardening Israel (*pwrsij apo merou tw Israhl*) (cf. Rom 1:16) and lets the Gentiles believe in the gospel until their full number comes in.

The introductory conjunction-adverb *kai outw* in Rom 11:26 could help us better understand the meaning of this verse. Should this expression be taken in a modal sense and translated

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<sup>5</sup>Frank Thielman, “Unexpected Mercy: Echoes of a Biblical Motif in Romans 9-11,” *SJT* 47 (1994): 173-74.

<sup>6</sup>In Jewish apocalyptic literature “mystery” has a technical connotation that refers to a secret that only God can disclose. See Jennifer Glancy, “Israel vs. Israel in Romans 11:25-32,” *USQR* 45 (1991): 194.

"thus," or "and so," or should it be taken in a temporal mode and translated "only then" or "thereafter?" Most commentators take the phrase in a modal sense "since it is the most current and usual meaning of the word."<sup>7</sup> Van der Horst points to both biblical and extra-biblical material to show that the expression can have a temporal meaning (Acts 7:8, 20:11, 27:17; 1 Thess 4:16-17). Thus, Rom 11:26 can be translated as: "Then, all Israel will be saved," even though most translations opt for the modal translation of *kai.outw* making the verse: "And so, all Israel will be saved." If the meaning is temporal in nature, then this could certainly point to a future time when all Israel will be saved, and that time could be prior to or at Christ's second coming.<sup>8</sup> The temporal nuance might be better seen in the context of verse 25, which talks about the mystery that "a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fulfillment of the Gentiles has come" (Rom 11:25).<sup>9</sup> However, even if the

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<sup>7</sup>Pieter W. van der Horst, "Only then all Israel will be saved: "A short note on the meaning of *kai.outw* in Romans 11:26," *JBL* 119 (2000): 521. Fitzmyer states that the temporal meaning of *outw* is not found in Greek, while Luz and Cranfield completely deny the possibility of a temporal sense. James Dunn suggests that a temporal weight should not be excluded.

<sup>8</sup>The majority of scholars see this as an eschatological event. See William Osborne, "The Old Testament Background of Paul's 'All Israel' in Romans 11:26a," *AJT* 2 (October 1988): 283.

<sup>9</sup>Joachim Jeremias observes that *acrijou*—"until" "introduces a reference to reaching the eschatological goal."

expression *kai.outwj* is modal, a historical fulfillment of this prophecy should not be ruled out because of the intratextual and intertextual references.<sup>10</sup>

What does the phrase *pa j Vsrahl*, "all Israel," entail? Is it the community of Jewish and Gentile Christians, is it the elect within Israel, or is it the nation of Israel?<sup>11</sup> Although the first option was and still is supported by some scholars,<sup>12</sup> this view does not seem to have the support of the biblical context since Paul uses the term "Israel" ten times in Romans 9-11, and each time he refers to ethnic Israel.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless,

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As quoted in Elizabeth Johnson, *The Function of Apocalyptic and Wisdom Traditions in Romans 9-11*, SBLDS 109 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 130.

<sup>10</sup>The genitive preposition *acrij* is translated "until" and has a definite temporal nuance to it. Combined with the introductory phrase *kai.outwj* in 11:26, it points to a definite time of fulfillment and not the mode of fulfillment. See Traugott Holtz, "The Judgment on the Jews and the Salvation of all Israel: 1 Thes 2:15-16 and Rom 11:25-26," in *The Thessalonian Correspondence*, ed. Raymond F. Collins (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 291.

<sup>11</sup>A minority view is that "all Israel" refers to both hardened Israel and chosen Israel. See John G. Lodge, *Romans 9-11: A Reader-Response Analysis* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996), 196.

<sup>12</sup>See Moo, *Romans*, 720-721. Moo mentions Calvin, Jeremias, Barth, Hughes, Chilton, and Wright among those who support this view. Thielman states the "Israel in v. 26 must be understood not as ethnic Israel but as the newly constituted people of God, composed of believing Jews and Gentiles." See Thielman, "Unexpected Mercy," 170.

<sup>13</sup>Moo, *Romans*, 721.

Calvin writes:

I extend the word Israel to include all the people of God, in this sense, "When the Gentiles have come in, the Jews will at the same time return from their defection to the obedience of faith. The salvation of the whole Israel of God, which must be drawn from both, will thus be completed, and yet in such a way that the Jews, as the first born in the family of God, may obtain the first place."<sup>14</sup>

However, in 11:25, the meaning of "Israel" is most likely "ethnic Israel," for it would be unlikely that Paul would now change the meaning of "Israel" so suddenly. Plummer defines *παῖς Ἰσραὴλ*, "all Israel," as "the mass of the Jewish nation... the great body of Jacob's descendants, who shall be living when the Jews shall turn to the Lord and accept their Messiah."<sup>15</sup> Moo reaches a similar conclusion when he states that "all Israel" denotes "the corporate entity of the nation of Israel as it exists at a particular point in time."<sup>16</sup>

Holwerda classifies Romans 11 as a mystery, something

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<sup>14</sup>John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 255.

<sup>15</sup>W.S. Plummer, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1971), 553, as quoted in Charles M. Horne, "The Meaning of the Phrase 'And Thus All Israel Will Be Saved,'" *JETS* 21 (December 1978): 332.

<sup>16</sup>Moo, *Romans*, 723; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 623; Cranfield, *Romans*, 577. See also Gordon Zerbe, "Jews and Gentiles as People of the Covenant: The Background and Message of Romans 11," *Direction* 12 (July 1983): 24; James R. Edwards, *Romans*, NIBC (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1992), 275.

not yet or partially revealed. He affirms that "all Israel" refers "to Jewish Israel in its eschatological fulness."<sup>17</sup> He correctly argues that Israel's restoration can be found both in the present age as well as in an eschatological reality. Holwerda acknowledges that Paul does not lay out a "precise calendar of events because he himself did not possess one. Instead he was granted prophetic insight into the outcome of a process that the Lord had already set in motion."<sup>18</sup> Holwerda further notes that since Jewish Christians are part of the "fulness of Israel," "there is an eschatological fulness of both the Gentile world and Jewish Israel that awaits consummation."<sup>19</sup>

Can *paʿl ʾisrahel*, "all Israel," refer to the elect of ethnic Israel? This is a possibility. Paul makes the distinction that "not all who are descended from Israel [the nation] are Israel [the elect]" (Rom 9:6b). Here Paul uses the term "Israel" to mean both ethnic Israel, and the elect of ethnic Israel. Fitzmyer notes that the phrase *paʿl ʾisrahel* "all Israel" is a Hebraism for *laʿfyaʾk*, "all Israel," and it "occurs 148 times in the OT and always designates historic, ethnic Israel, usually in the synchronic sense of the generations of Israel contemporary

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<sup>17</sup>David E. Holwerda, *Jesus & Israel: One Covenant or Two?* 168-70.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 175.

with the author; but in Mal 3:22 it has a diachronic sense, 'all Israel' of every generation."<sup>20</sup>

From a spiritual perspective the church is indeed spiritual Israel, and we as the church have inherited the promises given to national Israel (Rom 9:4-9).<sup>21</sup> Our promised land is the place Jesus went to prepare for us (John 14:3) and the eternal inheritance promised in Heb 9:15 and 1 Peter 1:4, but that should not exclude the possibility of a special plan for national Israel in which God will ultimately fulfill his promise to them regarding their restoration to their promised land. Bruce states that Paul "says nothing about the restoration of an earthly Davidic kingdom, nothing about national reinstatement in the land of Israel. What he envisaged for his people was something infinitely better."<sup>22</sup> The second part of the verse is a quote from Isa 59:20-21 that speaks about a time when ungodliness will be banished. The one accomplishing this is *o' rûmnoj*, "the Deliverer," who is Jesus the Messiah.<sup>23</sup> Hendriksen

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<sup>20</sup>Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 623.

<sup>21</sup>So Calvin, Aageson, Cerfaux, Gibling, Glombitza, and Ponsot. See Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 623.

<sup>22</sup>F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 221.

<sup>23</sup>Stanley suggests that the Redeemer is not Christ but Yahweh himself. However, Morris, Best, Cranfield, Edwards, Bruce, and Schreiner state that the Redeemer is none other than Jesus. See Christopher Stanley, "The Redeemer will

maintains that Paul is writing of the elect of ethnic Israel who are even now being saved. He argues that the salvation of "all Israel" was being progressively realized in the past, and it will continue to be progressively realized until the full number of elect Gentiles and elect Jews will be realized.<sup>24</sup> For the proponent of this view the fact that "all Israel will be saved" is not a matter of future realization, but rather a living expectation today. Stendahl wrongly suggests that Rom 11:25-27 points to a time when the Jews will be saved without accepting Jesus as their Messiah, but they will be saved in a special way of salvation, a "Sonderweg."<sup>25</sup>

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come ~~or~~ *Sivn*: Romans 11:26-27 Revisited," in *Paul and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 118-42; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 421; Ernest Best, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 132; C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC vol II (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979), 578; James R. Edwards, *Romans*, NIBC (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1992), 276; F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 222; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 620. Käsemann suggests that Paul has deliberately changed the text to fit a messianic interpretation. See Reidar Hvalvik, "A 'Sonderweg' For Israel: A Critical Examination of a Current Interpretation of Romans 11:25-27," *JSNT* 38 (1990): 93.

<sup>24</sup>William Hendriksen, *Israel in Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968), 48-49. A similar position is taken by Dan Johnson who sees the remnant as the "historic foreshadowing of the future eschatological event." Dan G. Johnson, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 11," *CBQ* 46 (1984): 98.

<sup>25</sup>Reidar Hvalvik, "A 'Sonderweg' For Israel," 87-88.

The correlation to the new covenant in Jeremiah can be seen since verse 27 concludes with the promise of forgiveness of sins that is found in Jer 31:34.<sup>26</sup> Paul quotes Isa 27:9 to include the forgiveness of sin terminology in relation to the new covenant. Thus, part of God's salvation of Israel will include the forgiveness of sin. Moo explains:

Paul ties this final deliverance to the cross, where the price for these sins has been paid... Paul not only suggests when Israel's deliverance will take place; he also makes clear how it will take place: by Israel's acceptance of the gospel message about the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ.<sup>27</sup>

I conclude that "all Israel" will be saved in the eschaton, and that "all Israel" will include ethnic Israel within God's newly constituted people.<sup>28</sup> This will include a sudden mass conversion of the people of Israel. The phrase "all Israel will be saved" points to an eschatological time which will fully reveal the magnitude and grandeur of Israel's restoration. Romans 11 does not mention the land per se, but it focuses on a new covenant fulfillment for Israel's salvation. It does seem that the land restoration will be a reality when God creates the new heavens and the new earth promised by the prophet Isaiah:

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<sup>26</sup>Joseph Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 625.

<sup>27</sup>Moo, *Romans*, 729.

<sup>28</sup>As Thielman, "Unexpected Mercy," 180, and Terence L. Donaldson, "Riches for the Gentiles (Rom 11:12): Israel's Rejection and Paul's Gentile Mission," *JBL* 112 (1993): 93.

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth" (Isa 65:17).<sup>29</sup>  
In Rev 21:1 we have the fulfillment of this prophecy: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more." It is also plausible that the land restoration promise will happen before the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. This restoration will be the ultimate fulfillment of Jeremiah 32 and 33 prophecies for the nation of Israel. While a land restoration will take place, the manner and time in which will take place is not clear and a dogmatic pronouncement should not be made.

#### CONCLUSIONS

After looking at Jeremiah's Book of Comfort from both linguistic and theological aspects, I conclude that indeed the new covenant is not a brand new covenant, but it is in many respects the renewal of the old, Mosaic covenant. Furthermore, the new covenant inherits the promises of the Abrahamic and the

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<sup>29</sup>Kaiser suggests that Israel's restoration has to be a "well-defined land on this earth." See Walter Kaiser, "Evidence from Jeremiah," in *A Case for Premillennialism, A New Consensus*, ed. Donald K. Campbell and Jeffrey L. Townsend (Chicago: Moody), 107. From a Jewish perspective the land motif is critical but only in the context of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. See Paul R. Dekar, "Does the State of Israel Have Theological Significance?" *The Conrad Grebel Review* 2 (Winter 1984): 37.

Davidic covenants. Thus, the new covenant does not make null the other covenants, but it reaffirms them. One could look at the Old and New Testaments and seek to emphasize the discontinuity between them. I choose to emphasize the unity between them. This new covenant was not made absent of the people's understanding of the other covenants but with these serving as backdrop.

Jeremiah's message is a message of hope for the future both for the post-exilic community as well as for the eschatological one. Aspects of the restoration are specific in that they deal with Israel's return to their homeland and the benefits of their return, which will result in their rebuilding their economy through the buying of houses and the working the soil. However, this restoration will also have a spiritual dimension to it. The promise of the new covenant is preceded by the understanding of a personal responsibility within a covenantal relationship with Yahweh.

Jeremiah's message of hope and restoration revolves around the promise of the new covenant. There is a need for covenant because that is the way Yahweh elected to enter into a relationship with his people via covenants, a way with which the people of the ANE were familiar. This covenant must be new because the people failed to obey the first one. Jeremiah points to the discontinuity between the new and Mosaic covenants by

pointing out that it will be different than the one that followed the Exodus from Egypt. But at the same time this very idea points to one important aspect of continuity, mainly that Yahweh is the initiator of both covenants. It is not the people's goodness that brings out God's action, but it is because of God's love, grace, and mercy that he initiates a new covenant that will underlie his relationship with his people. Under this new covenant, the law will not be placed on breakable stone tablets, erasable scroll, or flammable parchment, but rather it will be interiorized. The law will be written on the hearts of the people. And this awesome task will be accomplished only with the help of the Holy Spirit's indwelling those who are part of the new covenant community.

The peak of Yahweh's promise of hope and restoration is reached in the new covenant promise of forgiveness. Although the forgiveness of sin concept was not new for the Israelite community, now this forgiveness will not be dependent on the people's sacrifice but on God alone. This new covenant and its promises are authenticated by the created order itself. The covenant God is none other than the Creator God. Just like Yahweh sustains the created order, by his grace he will sustain the new covenant stipulations. The permanence of the new covenant is also affirmed by the impossibility of the humans counting the heavens or searching the earth. The new covenant

will mean a radical transformation where God will transform that which is profane into something sanctified to the LORD.

The language of future hope is contrasted in Jeremiah with the language of past failures. The people have sinned, and their disobedience provoked sentiments of anger, wrath, and great indignation in a God who is by nature loving and merciful. However, the same God who drove them away will cause their return and restoration. Yahweh will allow them not just to dwell in the land once promised to Abraham but to dwell there in safety. The end result of Yahweh's restoration is the fulfillment of the previous covenant with Moses that asserted that God will be Israel's God and they will be his people. This covenant formula which is derived from Exod 19:5 when Yahweh gives his law to the people at Sinai is repeated three times in Jeremiah. Yahweh wants the interior of the people to change, and that is why the human heart is the object of his change. Yahweh will give his people one heart and one way in order that they will fear him. It was the fear of the LORD that was going to keep them from sinning at Sinai, and it is this same thing that God desires for his people under the new covenant. The fear of the LORD is meant for the good of the people and their descendants.

In view of the new covenant we can see that the Mosaic covenant was temporary in nature, while the new covenant is promised to be an everlasting covenant. Yet, this is not

implying that the new covenant makes the other covenants null. Promises and stipulations of the old covenants remain and are renewed in the new covenant. God's desire is still the welfare of his people, which will come to fruition under the new covenant in that Yahweh, the initiator of the covenant, will not turn away from them anymore. One of the results of the restoration will be joy. The people will rejoice because of their restoration to the land, and they will also rejoice over their restored relationship to Yahweh. Furthermore, Yahweh will rejoice to do good to the people. The fact that the new covenant will be eternal hinges on the fact that this covenant will be based on the unfailing faithfulness of Yahweh.

Jeremiah indicates that the certainty of the future restoration is just as certain as the past judgment. The judgment of Yahweh affected both the people of Israel and their physical surroundings. The desolation caused by the judgment caused these places to be inhabitable. Yahweh now promises to transform what used to be inhabitable into a haven for the people. The fields that were unworkable after judgment will now become desirable real estate. The extent of the prosperity that will come with the restoration will extend from the capital of Jerusalem to the whole of Judah and eventually will be all encompassing. Just as the judgment of Israel was purposeful and was initiated by Yahweh, so will the restoration be initiated and

accomplished by Yahweh who remains faithful to the covenant promises. God indeed still has a plan with ethnic Israel, and they will be restored to their land, but how this is done is not specifically mentioned except that it will happen in the eschaton.

Yahweh's restoration plan also includes the promises made to king David. Yahweh promised David perpetual kingship, and even though the Davidic dynasty looked like a tree that has been truncated, Yahweh now promises the resurrection of one of David's descendants to execute judgment and righteousness on the earth. This righteous king stands in stark contrast with the corrupt kings of Israel and Judah who were oppressing the poor and the needy by their corrupt rules and practices. It will be during the reign of this righteous branch that Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety. The blessings of the new covenant can also be seen in the great number of David's descendants who will be like innumerable galaxies of heaven. Even if the number of Israelites was able to be numbered after the exile, Yahweh will multiply their numbers like the sand of the sea.

The new covenant community is portrayed by Jeremiah as being part of two families, namely the family of David and the family of Levi. The monarchy and the priesthood are portrayed as two families that were chosen by Yahweh. The motivation for this

great restoration is Yahweh's love and his mercy for his people. Christ's priesthood, which is after the order of Melchizedek, supercedes that of Levi's, and now the Christians are the royal priesthood who offer spiritual sacrifices to God. The Davidic covenant is fulfilled in Christ, the Davidic king who will rule forever.

The new covenant promised through Jeremiah was instituted by Jesus at the LORD's Supper and was inaugurated by his death on the cross. Luke specifies that the covenant inaugurated by Jesus' blood is the new covenant, making the allusion to the promise of the new covenant in Jeremiah unmistakable. There is a direct relationship between Christ's blood and the covenant established in the gospels. Jesus wants his disciples to understand that he is the fulfillment of the Mosaic covenant when he affirms that he did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets but rather to fulfill them. In presenting his body as the one which is going to be broken and his blood as that which is going to be shed, he points to the fact that he becomes the Passover lamb being sacrificed as atonement for the sins of humanity.

The apostle Paul also makes a direct reference to Jeremiah 31 and the promise of the new covenant when he points out that under the new covenant the law is written on the tablets of human hearts with God's Holy Spirit as the writing instrument.

The Holy Spirit is now indwelling the new covenant believers, making possible the internalization of the law that Jeremiah promised.

The book of Hebrews quotes Jeremiah's new covenant promise after setting out to show Jesus' superiority over the angels, over Moses, over Melchizedek, over the priests, and over all the celestial beings. The passages in Hebrews explain the relationship between Christ's high priesthood and the better covenant. The superior covenant, which is the new covenant, has better promises and its superiority is expressed in Jesus' entrance into the heavenly sanctuary as the eternal mediator between man and God. The old covenant was not flawed in and of itself because, after all, it was God-given. Rather, its imperfection emerged when the people failed to obey and follow it. The new covenant is not a brand new covenant, but in many respects it contains renewed elements of the old covenant. Both covenants are initiated by Yahweh with the people being the recipients of divine grace. Both covenants have God's law as their center and have the people's hearts in view. Most importantly, both covenants have stipulations dealing with the sin of the people. God provides for the forgiveness of sin under the new covenant by the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Under the old covenant stipulations, forgiveness was offered via animal sacrifices, but these sacrifices could not

clear humanity's conscience. All aspects fo the new covenant depend on the person and work of Christ. God's forgiveness under both the old and the new covenants is based on his grace.

I conclude that indeed the new covenant is in many respects a renewed covenant that is partly fulfilled in Christ but awaits complete fulfillment in the eschaton. The mode and grandeur of this fulfillment cannot be grasped or explained, but I believe it to be a reality that the new covenant community will experience when Christ comes again.

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