

(Continued from sermon 18)

Now how has the Church been affected by this **New Covenant**? The New Covenant was made with Israel, *"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people,"* (Jer. 31:31, 33) just as the **Mosaic Covenant** had been, *"not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD"* (31: 32). God clearly states in this New Covenant that Israel will remain a nation, *"³⁵ I am the LORD All-Powerful. I command the sun to give light each day, the moon and stars to shine at night, and ocean waves to roar. ³⁶ I will never forget to give those commands, and I will never let Israel stop being a nation. I, the LORD, have spoken. ³⁷ Can you measure the heavens? Can you explore the depths of the earth? That's how hard it would be for me to reject Israel forever, even though they have sinned. I, the LORD, have spoken"* (35-37 CEV).

Although some of the promises of the New Covenant will not be fulfilled until Christ returns, the Church is presently enjoying some of the benefits of the **New Covenant** that began with the death of Jesus, *"²⁷ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ For this is My blood of the **new covenant**, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"* (Matthew 26:27-28).

Romans 11:11-36 (TLB):

¹¹ Does this mean that God has rejected his Jewish people forever? Of course not! His purpose was to make his salvation available to the Gentiles, and then the Jews would be jealous and begin to want God's salvation for themselves.

¹² Now if the whole world became rich as a result of God's offer of salvation, when the Jews stumbled over it and turned it down, think how much greater a blessing the world will share in later on when the Jews, too, come to Christ.

¹³ As you know, God has appointed me as a special messenger to you Gentiles. I lay great stress on this and remind the Jews about it as often as I can,

¹⁴ so that if possible I can make them want what you Gentiles have and in that way save some of them.

¹⁵ And how wonderful it will be when they become Christians! When God turned away from them it meant that he turned to the rest of the world to offer his salvation; and now it is even more wonderful when the Jews come to Christ. It will be like dead people coming back to life.

¹⁶ And since Abraham and the prophets are God's people, their children will be too. For if the roots of the tree are holy, the branches will be too.

¹⁷ But some of these branches from Abraham's tree, some of the Jews, have been broken off. And you Gentiles who were branches from, we might say, a wild olive tree, were grafted in. So now you, too, receive the blessing God has promised Abraham and his children, sharing in God's rich nourishment of his own special olive tree.

¹⁸ But you must be careful not to brag about being put in to replace the branches

that were broken off. Remember that you are important only because you are now a part of God's tree; you are just a branch, not a root.

¹⁹ "Well," you may be saying, "those branches were broken off to make room for me, so I must be pretty good."

²⁰ Watch out! Remember that those branches, the Jews, were broken off because they didn't believe God, and you are there only because you do. Do not be proud; be humble and grateful—and careful.

²¹ For if God did not spare the branches he put there in the first place, he won't spare you either.

²² Notice how God is both kind and severe. He is very hard on those who disobey, but very good to you if you continue to love and trust him. But if you don't, you too will be cut off.

²³ On the other hand, if the Jews leave their unbelief behind them and come back to God, God will graft them back into the tree again. He has the power to do it.

²⁴ For if God was willing to take you who were so far away from him—being part of a wild olive tree—and graft you into his own good tree—a very unusual thing to do—don't you see that he will be far more ready to put the Jews back again, who were there in the first place?

²⁵ I want you to know about this truth from God, dear brothers, so that you will not feel proud and start bragging. Yes, it is true that some of the Jews have set themselves against the Gospel now, but this will last only until all of you Gentiles have come to Christ—those of you who will.

²⁶ And then all Israel will be saved. Do you remember what the prophets said about this? "There shall come out of Zion a Deliverer, and he shall turn the Jews from all ungodliness.

²⁷ At that time I will take away their sins, just as I promised."

²⁸ Now many of the Jews are enemies of the Gospel. They hate it. But this has been a benefit to you, for it has resulted in God's giving his gifts to you Gentiles. Yet the Jews are still beloved of God because of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

²⁹ For God's gifts and his call can never be withdrawn; he will never go back on his promises.

³⁰ Once you were rebels against God, but when the Jews refused his gifts God was merciful to you instead.

³¹ And now the Jews are the rebels, but some day they, too, will share in God's mercy upon you.

³² For God has given them all up to sin so that he could have mercy upon all alike.

³³ Oh, what a wonderful God we have! How great are his wisdom and knowledge and riches! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his methods!

³⁴ For who among us can know the mind of the Lord? Who knows enough to be his counselor and guide?

³⁵ And who could ever offer to the Lord enough to induce him to act?

³⁶ For everything comes from God alone. Everything lives by his power, and everything is for his glory. To him be glory evermore.

Here is what Paul wrote to the early church in Ephesus:

Ephesians 2:11-22 (TLB):

¹¹ *Never forget that once you were heathen and that you were called godless and "unclean" by the Jews. (But their hearts, too, were still unclean, even though they were going through the ceremonies and rituals of the godly, for they circumcised themselves as a sign of godliness.)*

¹² *Remember that in those days you were living utterly apart from Christ; you were enemies of God's children, and he had promised you no help. You were lost, without God, without hope.*

¹³ *But now you belong to Christ Jesus, and though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought very near to him **because of what Jesus Christ has done for you with his blood.***

¹⁴ *For Christ himself is our way of peace. **He has made peace between us Jews and you Gentiles by making us all one family,** breaking down the wall of contempt that used to separate us.*

¹⁵ *By his death he ended the angry resentment between us, caused by the Jewish laws that favored the Jews and excluded the Gentiles, for he died to annul that whole system of Jewish laws. Then he took the two groups that had been opposed to each other and made them parts of himself; thus he fused us together to become one new person, and at last there was peace.*

¹⁶ *As parts of the same body, our anger against each other has disappeared, for both of us have been reconciled to God. And so the feud ended at last at the cross.*

¹⁷ *And he has brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were very far away from him, and to us Jews who were near.*

¹⁸ *Now all of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, may come to God the Father with the Holy Spirit's help because of what Christ has done for us.*

¹⁹ *Now you are no longer strangers to God and foreigners to heaven, but you are members of God's very own family, citizens of God's country, and you belong in God's household with every other Christian.*

²⁰ *What a foundation you stand on now: the apostles and the prophets; and the cornerstone of the building is Jesus Christ himself!*

²¹ *We who believe are carefully joined together with Christ as parts of a beautiful, constantly growing temple for God.*

²² *And you also are joined with him and with each other by the Spirit and are part of this dwelling place of God.*

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 (NLT):

⁴ *We are confident of all this because of our great trust in God through Christ.*

⁵ *It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God.*

⁶ *He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life.*

Hebrews 8:6-13 (NLT):

⁶ But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises.

⁷ If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it.

⁸ But when God found fault with the people, he said: “The day is coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.

⁹ This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. They did not remain faithful to my covenant, so I turned my back on them, says the LORD.

¹⁰ But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the LORD: I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

¹¹ And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, ‘You should know the LORD.’ For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already.

¹² And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.”

¹³ When God speaks of a “new” covenant, it means he has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and will soon disappear.

Hebrews 9:15 (NLT):

¹⁵ That is why he is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.

Hebrews 12:14-29 (CEV):

¹⁴ Try to live at peace with everyone! Live a clean life. If you don't, you will never see the Lord.

¹⁵ Make sure that no one misses out on God's wonderful kindness. Don't let anyone become bitter and cause trouble for the rest of you.

¹⁶ Watch out for immoral and ungodly people like Esau, who sold his future blessing for only one meal.

¹⁷ You know how he later wanted it back. But there was nothing he could do to change things, even though he begged his father and cried.

¹⁸ You have not come to a place like Mount Sinai that can be seen and touched. There is no flaming fire or dark cloud or storm

¹⁹ or trumpet sound. The people of Israel heard a voice speak. But they begged it to stop,

²⁰ because they could not obey its commands. They were even told to kill any animal that touched the mountain.

²¹ The sight was so frightening that Moses said he shook with fear.

²² You have now come to Mount Zion and to the heavenly Jerusalem. This is the

city of the living God, where thousands and thousands of angels have come to celebrate.

²³ Here you will find all of God's dearest children, whose names are written in heaven. And you will find God himself, who judges everyone. Here also are the spirits of those good people who have been made perfect.

²⁴ And Jesus is here! He is the one who makes God's new agreement with us, and his sprinkled blood says much better things than the blood of Abel.

²⁵ Make sure that you obey the one who speaks to you. The people did not escape, when they refused to obey the one who spoke to them at Mount Sinai. Do you think you can possibly escape, if you refuse to obey the one who speaks to you from heaven?

²⁶ When God spoke the first time, his voice shook only the earth. This time he has promised to shake the earth once again, and heaven too.

²⁷ The words "once again" mean that these created things will someday be shaken and removed. Then what cannot be shaken will last.

²⁸ We should be grateful that we were given a kingdom that cannot be shaken. And in this kingdom we please God by worshiping him and by showing him great honor and respect.

²⁹ Our God is like a destructive fire!

Even though the Church has been included in the New Covenant, God's promises will not be completed until Jesus returns and sets up His Millennial Kingdom. As believers in Christ we are blessed by the provisions of the New Covenant such as forgiveness of sins and the presence of the Holy Spirit living within us and one day those Jews that will come to believe in Christ will enjoy those same blessings. In this present day there is no real indication that the Spirit of Christ will one day be welcomed by one-third of the people of Israel who will confess their sin and turn to Jesus (the Messiah) for forgiveness, but it will most definitely happen,¹ [Zechariah 12:1-11](#) (CEV):

¹ This is a message from the LORD about Israel: I am the LORD! I stretched out the heavens; I put the earth on its foundations and gave breath to humans.

*² I have decided that **Jerusalem will become a bowl of wine that makes the neighboring nations drunk**. And when Jerusalem is attacked, Judah will also be attacked.*

³ But I will turn Jerusalem into a heavy stone that crushes anyone who tries to lift it. When all nations on earth surround Jerusalem,

⁴ I will make every horse panic and every rider confused. But at the same time, I will watch over Judah.

⁵ Then every clan in Judah will realize that I, the LORD All-Powerful, am their God, and that I am the source of their strength.

⁶ At that time I will let the clans of Judah be like a ball of fire in a wood pile or a fiery torch in a hay stack. Then Judah will send the surrounding nations up in smoke. And once again the city of Jerusalem will be filled with people.

⁷ But I will first give victory to Judah, so the kingdom of David and the city of Jerusalem in all of their glory won't be thought of more highly than Judah itself.

¹ Op Cit., Walvoord and Zuck, 1171, 1172.

⁸ *I, the LORD God, will protect Jerusalem. Even the weakest person there will be as strong as David, and David's kingdom will rule as though my very own angel were its leader.*

⁹ *I am determined to wipe out every nation that attacks Jerusalem.*

¹⁰ *I, the LORD, will make the descendants of David and the people of Jerusalem feel deep sorrow and pray when they see the one they pierced with a spear. They will mourn and weep for him, as parents weep over the death of their only child or their first-born.*

¹¹ *On that day the people of Jerusalem will mourn as much as everyone did for Hadad Rimmon on the flatlands near Megiddo.*

This chapter begins by making clear the mighty power of God to accomplish anything. God will destroy all nations of the earth who attempt to destroy Israel (known at the time of Zechariah as Judah and Jerusalem. “*That day*” refers to the future War of Armageddon when the armies of the nations will gather against Jerusalem, Zechariah 14:1-3 (TLB):

¹ *Watch, for the day of the Lord is coming soon!*

² *On that day the Lord will gather together the nations to fight Jerusalem; the city will be taken, the houses rifled, the loot divided, the women raped; half the population will be taken away as slaves, and half will be left in what remains of the city.*

³ *Then the Lord will go out fully armed for war, to fight against those nations.*

Jerusalem will be a bowl of wine (v. 2) is a familiar Old Testament description of **divine judgment** (Jeremiah 25:15-28). Jerusalem will also be a heavy boulder (Zechariah 12:3). The defeat of these armies attacking Israel is compared to a drunken man or one who tries to lift a weight that is beyond his ability. The nations that attack Jerusalem will be destroyed by God, and not only will the enemy be destroyed but Israel and Judah will have victory after victory, Zechariah 14:9-10 (CEV):²

⁹ *Then there will be only one LORD who rules as King and whose name is worshiped everywhere on earth.*

¹⁰⁻¹¹ *From Geba down to Rimmon south of Jerusalem, the entire country will be turned into flatlands, with Jerusalem still towering above. Then the city will be full of people, from Benjamin Gate, Old Gate Place, and Hananel Tower in the northeast part of the city over to Corner Gate in the northwest and down to King's Wine Press in the south. Jerusalem will always be secure and will never again be destroyed.*

¹² *Here is what the LORD will do to those who attack Jerusalem: While they are standing there, he will make their flesh rot and their eyes fall from their sockets and their tongues drop out.*

¹³ *The LORD will make them go into a frenzy and start attacking each*

¹⁴ *until even the people of Judah turn against those in Jerusalem. This same*

² Op Cit., Walvoord and Zuck, 1567.

terrible disaster will also strike every animal nearby, including horses, mules, camels, and donkeys. Finally, everything of value in the surrounding nations will be collected and brought to Jerusalem—gold, silver, and piles of clothing.

The odds for Israel to win this battle in their eyes will be “0.” When the tide of battle turns from total defeat to possible victory the leaders of Judah will recognize that this turnaround could only have occurred by a divine intervention from God. Israel will therefore be encouraged to trust God for a complete victory over their enemies.

This miraculous victory for Israel is described like a firepot in a woodpile and a flaming torch among sheaves of grain. The armies of the nations involved in this war with Israel will be crushed (Isaiah 47:14; Obadiah 18; Malachi 4:1). This victory comes only through and by the grace of God!

Israel’s salvation will be provided by a cleansing fountain, *“In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity”* [Zechariah 13:1 (NASB)]; and by the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit leading them to repent and invite Jesus to be their Lord and Savior (Zechariah 12:10-14). The Holy Spirit will come to the Jews in their sinful condition and lead them to repentance and faith.

The piercing in Zechariah 12:10 most likely refers to the rejection of Christ by the Jews leading to His crucifixion. *“They see”* in verse 10 probably refers to *“faith.”* The change to the third person (mourn for Him, rather than “mourn for Me”) is common in prophetic literature. The mourning for sin that is triggered by the presence of the Holy Spirit is compared to the loss of a child which psychologists today say is the most difficult loss a person can experience. I’m sure there are some exceptions, but for the most part I believe that to be true. We also see the mourning compared to the day Israel lost their beloved King Josiah. The level of mourning here can only be compared to a tragic personal loss and also a tragedy for the nation as a whole.

So, to sum up we have seen that God will bring Israel back to himself; that He would forgive and forget their sin; that He would use them to reach and teach the Gentiles. that He would establish them in Palestine forever. **This was unconditional.**³

End of Message for 8/18/14

Part 19

³ Willmington, H. L.: Willmington's Book of Bible Lists. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House, 1987.