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*Series: Covenant: God's Way of Relationship*



*Teaching Sermon: "Jesus Christ: The Covenant of Consummation Part One"*

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*Live Tele-service, December 13, 2020*

### **Jesus Christ: The Covenant of Consummation**

Under the old covenant the people of God failed miserably and ultimately experienced expulsion from the land of promise at the time of the exile. The end of the Davidic monarchy and the devastation of Jerusalem fulfilled the covenantal curse of the Davidic covenant. Expulsion from the land reversed the benefit of the Abrahamic covenant, and though formally circumcised, Abraham's descendants were now treated as uncircumcised. They were cast out. The people experienced the curses of the Mosaic covenant and with the casting out, we can only think of the casting out of the garden of God resulting from Adam's sin.

Certainly, for God to achieve His ultimate purpose to redeem a people for Himself, something better and more effective had to be in the making. And it was. While God's prophets insisted on the inevitability of God's judgment on covenant-breakers, they also declared hope beyond devastation. The people fail, but God does not. He will be glorified and He will not be thwarted.

The prophets spoke of a return to the land of promise, of the restoration of acceptable worship, of a renewal of a regal messianic line. Above all, they anticipated a new covenant relationship. By means of this new covenant relationship with His people, God would bring to fruition His commitment to redeem a people for Himself and so consummate the covenant.

The new covenant uniquely gathers together the various strands of covenantal promise throughout history. It supersedes God's previous covenantal administrations and achieves in Jesus Christ the essence of the covenantal principle: "I will be your God, and you shall be My people." We will come to discover that it is Jesus Christ who consummates the covenant while inaugurating something new, better, and fulfilling.

Let's look at Jeremiah 31. Jeremiah insisted that judgment was inevitable for Israel. Unrepentant sin would bring the devastation of covenantal curse. Not only would particular privileges be removed, but the judgment would involve the complete reversal of God's sovereign election procedures. The people of God become "not My people" and will be cast out of the land of promise. Is there no hope?

Yes, there is hope. Jeremiah also announced that beyond this decree of destruction would come a new covenant, also found in Ezekiel 36. Through Jeremiah, God declares that **He will bring His people back to the land** given to their forefathers (Jere. 30.3) Out of all the lands to which the Lord had driven them in His anger, He will bring them back so they may dwell safely in Palestine. (Jer. 32.37; Jer. 50.5) God will bring judgment on Babylon and bring Israel back to its "pasture land." (Jer. 50.6-19; Ezekiel 37.21, 26)

Not only will His people return to the land of promise, but they will be **restored to God's blessing**. This restoration includes fields once declared desolate (Jer. 32.43), the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem for the Lord (Jer. 31.38-40), the resurrectional activity of the Spirit of God in the valley of dry bones (Ezek. 37.12, 26) as God opens the graves of Israel and put His Spirit within them, and what was dead will be brought to life so as to accomplish a complete renovation.

Along with that, **God will fulfill all the promises of the covenants established earlier with His people**. The required obedience to God's law will find consummate fulfillment under the provisions of the new covenant (Jer. 31.33). Possession of the land as promised will become a solid, unshakeable reality. David will be king over Israel, and the nation will walk according to the statutes of the Mosaic covenant. (Ezek. 37.24, 25) The redemptive intentions of God displayed throughout the ages would come to fruition in completeness.

What is unique to the new covenant is the **internalized inscription of the law of God**. God will put His fear in the hearts of His people so that they won't turn away from Him (Jer. 32.40). He will put His Spirit within them (Ezek. 37.14). He will cleanse them (Ezek. 37.23). He will give them new hearts and inscribe the Law on their hearts (Jer. 31.33). God's people will no more walk after the imagination or stubbornness of their evil hearts (Jer. 3.17).

In the new covenant, believers are to fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6.2) as they bear one another's burdens, loving one another in obedience to the commandments of Christ. The believer is to look into the perfect law of liberty (James 1.25) for he will be judged by the law of liberty (James 2.12). The believer is granted grace to obey through faith which works by love. The outworking of grace in the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5) will show what is truly in the heart. Thus by the work of God's Holy Spirit, participants in the new covenant will be transformed from within their hearts and renewed internally so as to please God and find blessing and peace.

This peace is also achieved in the **pardon or full forgiveness of all sins and iniquities**. (Jer. 31.34) No sin will be found. (Jer. 50.20) God will cleanse His people by pardoning them fully. (Jer. 33.8) Sin will not be merely covered, but cleansed, and not for a limited time period but for all time.

A hallmark of the new covenant is the **merging of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the northern and southern kingdoms**. The promise of the new covenant extends to both (Jer. 31.31). Israel will come together with the sons of Judah seeking the Lord (Jer. 50.4; Ezek. 37.15). One shepherd-king of the Davidic line will rule over a reunited nation (Ezek. 34.23). People bound in the new covenant to the God of the covenant are also bound inseparably with one another.

Like the Abrahamic (Gen 17.7; Psalm 105.10), Mosaic (Ex. 40.15; Lev. 16.34; 24.8; Isaiah 24.5), and Davidic (2 Samuel 7.13, 16; Ps. 89.3, 4; 132.11, 12), the new covenant is characterized as everlasting, but with an eschatological dimension added. It is not only new; it is the last covenant. It will never be superseded by a subsequent covenant. This covenant will not be forgotten (Jer. 50.5). In other words, this is it. Jesus Christ is the final word. The other covenants are everlasting only insofar as they find their realization in the new covenant in Christ. The new covenant in Christ reflects **a new dimension** in God's redemptive working, the establishment of something superior accomplished by a superior Mediator.

The concept of newness implies a break with the past but does not imply that it stands in absolute contradiction to previous covenants. There is a continuity. For example, in the Mosaic covenant, the law was written on stone, but now it will be written on the heart. Sin was covered in the old, but now in the new, sin will be cleansed. Sin was passed over in the old, but not removed. In the new covenant the Blood of Jesus removes sin in the framework of God's just administration of the world. (1 John 1.9) David ruled over Israel, but Jesus will rule over all.

In the new covenant, **the actual replaces the typical.** (all of Hebrews) The new covenant is the real deal, the substance of the shadow, the once-for-all time accomplishment of something far-reaching and irrevocable. It is radical. It goes to the root. Persistent disobedience of the people intended to be blessed by God effectually rendered the promises of blessing null and void, but in the new covenant, the promises are "Yes" and "amen." The new covenant cannot fail to achieve God's intended goal of heaping redemptive blessing and restoration on its participants. Next time, God willing, we will look at these redemptive blessings.

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**"And to you and your descendants I will give the land of your sojourn--all the land of Canaan-- as an eternal possession; and I will be their God." Genesis 17:8**

**"And He told me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give freely from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son." Revelation 21:6, 7.**

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