

Covenant and the Bible Part 4

Here it is our 4th week on the concept of covenant and how it helps us understand the Bible. In the first week, we sought to define what a covenant is and what the 2 major kinds of covenants in the ancient world are. In the second week, we looked at how both the 10 Commandments and the Book of Deuteronomy follow the form of Suzerain-Vassal covenants from the Ancient Near East (ANE). Last week, we examined the covenant lawsuit formula found in Deuteronomy and Isaiah as it highlighted the failure of Israel and was the backdrop for the New Covenant. This week, we will be studying the New Covenant.

CORRECTION: I previously overstated how many times the word “covenant” is used in the Bible. This is due to a glitch I discovered in my Bible software program that was multiplying the results by 3. I said in weeks 14 & 15 the following:

The word covenant is used 957 times in 295 verses in the ESV translation of the Bible. The two key words used to translate “covenant” in the Bible are **berit** (OT Hebrew) and **diatheke** (NT Greek). **Berit** is used 858 times in 266 verses and **diatheke** is used 99 times in 30 verses.

The word is actually used 319 times in 295 verses in the ESV translation of the Bible. The Hebrew word **berit** is used 286 times and the Greek word **diatheke** is used 33 times in 30 verses. I don’t believe this takes away from the importance of this concept in the Bible at all.

Now, this week I wanted to pick up from where we left off last week in my making the statement that the New Covenant finds much of its roots in the covenant lawsuits handed to Israel by the prophets. As a sample, we saw last week that Isaiah 1 was a covenant lawsuit to introduce his whole collection of prophecies. Remember the structure of covenant lawsuits from last week:

Covenant	Covenant Lawsuit
Title – Great King	Title – Judge
Historical Prologue	Historical Review
Stipulations	Indictments – Stipulations Broken
Witnesses	Witnesses – included in Indictments
Blessings	Promise of Blessing
Curses	Curses Invoked (famine or exile)
Oath	Oath to Carry Out Judgment

The New Covenant that we find described by the prophets of the Old Testament comes to Israel and us as a promise of blessing. Although the Sinai Covenant given through Moses was a conditional covenant and involved stipulations, the New Covenant is radically different since it is unconditional and therefore does not require obedience to stipulations. As a matter of fact, as we will see, the New Covenant promises the forgiveness of the previously broken covenants. This is a massively important idea to

grasp since this is the **GOSPEL** or **Good News** about the Lord Jesus. Jesus is himself the New Covenant.

I. The New Covenant in Isaiah

Isaiah 42:1-12 Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; 3 a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law. 5 Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: 6 "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; **I will give you as a covenant for the people**, a light for the nations, 7 to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. 8 I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. 9 Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." 10 Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the end of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants. 11 Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; let the habitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains. 12 Let them give glory to the LORD, and declare his praise in the coastlands.

Isaiah 49:1-13 Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. 2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away. 3 And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." 4 But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God." 5 And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him- for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength- 6 he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." 7 Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you." 8 Thus says the LORD: "In a time of favor I have answered you; in a day of salvation I have helped you; **I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people**, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages, 9 saying to the prisoners, 'Come out,' to those who are in darkness, 'Appear.' They shall feed along the ways; on all bare heights shall be their pasture; 10 they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them. 11 And I will make all my mountains a

road, and my highways shall be raised up. 12 Behold, these shall come from afar, and behold, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene." 13 Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! for the LORD has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.

Isaiah 54:1 -55:7 "Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," says the LORD. 2 "Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. 3 For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities. 4 "Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. 5 For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. 6 For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. 7 For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. 8 In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer. 9 "This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you. 10 For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and **my covenant of peace shall not be removed**," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. 11 "O afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted, behold, I will set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires. 12 I will make your pinnacles of agate, your gates of carbuncles, and all your wall of precious stones. 13 All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children. 14 In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you. 15 If anyone stirs up strife, it is not from me; whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you. 16 Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy; 17 no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, declares the LORD." Isaiah 55:1 "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. 3 Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and **I will make with you an everlasting covenant**, my steadfast, sure love for David. 4 Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. 5 Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. 6 "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; 7 let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his

thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Isaiah 59:20-21 "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD. 21 "And as for me, **this is my covenant with them,**" says the LORD: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the LORD, "from this time forth and forevermore."

Isaiah 61:1-11 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; 3 to grant to those who mourn in Zion- to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. 4 They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. 5 Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks; foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers; 6 but you shall be called the priests of the LORD; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; you shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory you shall boast. 7 Instead of your shame there shall be a double portion; instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their lot; therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion; they shall have everlasting joy. 8 For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and **I will make an everlasting covenant with them.** 9 Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed. 10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11 For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

II. The New Covenant in Jeremiah

Jeremiah 31:31-40 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, **when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,** 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. 33 **But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.** 34 **And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all**

know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." 35 Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar- the LORD of hosts is his name: 36 "If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the LORD, then shall the offspring of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever." 37 Thus says the LORD: "If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, declares the LORD." 38 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when the city shall be rebuilt for the LORD from the tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 39 And the measuring line shall go out farther, straight to the hill Gareb, and shall then turn to Goah. 40 The whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be sacred to the LORD. It shall not be uprooted or overthrown anymore forever."

Jeremiah 32:36-42 "Now therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, 'It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by famine, and by pestilence': 37 Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. 38 And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 39 I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. 40 **I will make with them an everlasting covenant**, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. 41 I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul. 42 "For thus says the LORD: Just as I have brought all this great disaster upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good that I promise them.

Jeremiah 50:4-6 "In those days and in that time, declares the LORD, the people of Israel and the people of Judah shall come together, weeping as they come, and they shall seek the LORD their God. 5 They shall ask the way to Zion, with faces turned toward it, saying, 'Come, **let us join ourselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten.**' 6 "My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray, turning them away on the mountains. From mountain to hill they have gone. They have forgotten their fold.

III. The New Covenant in Ezekiel

Ezekiel 16:59-63 "For thus says the Lord GOD: I will deal with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, 60 yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and **I will establish for you an everlasting covenant.** 61 Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you take your sisters, both your elder and your younger, and I give them to you as daughters, but not on account of the covenant with you. 62 I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD, 63 that you may remember and be

confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I atone for you for all that you have done, declares the Lord GOD."

Ezekiel 34:22-27 I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23 And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24 And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken. 25 **"I will make with them a covenant of peace** and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. 26 And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. 27 And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. And they shall know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them.

Ezekiel 36:22-31 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. 23 And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. 24 I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.** 27 **And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.** 28 You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. 29 And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. 30 I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways, and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations.

Ezekiel 37:21-28 Then say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. 22 And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. 23 They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 24 "My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. 25 They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant

shall be their prince forever. 26 **I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them.** And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28 Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore."