

ESCHATOLOGY (87)

QUESTION #38 – What is the New Covenant?

The New Covenant is the last of the four prophetic covenants that God has entered into with Israel. The significance of this covenant is that this covenant guarantees that the nation Israel will someday have a converted heart. It will be this very event that will lead to the land and lineage fulfillment of the other covenants. As the Palestinian covenant emphasizes the land promises to Israel and the Davidic covenant emphasizes the seed covenant to Israel, the New covenant emphasizes the spirituality of Israel.

The central passage of Scripture in which God makes this New Covenant with Israel is Jeremiah 31:31-34 . This covenant is further confirmed from statements made by Isaiah (61:8-9) and Ezekiel (37:21-28). There are eleven observations we want to make about this important covenant:

(Observation #1) - The New Covenant is unconditional .

Notice the emphasis in Jeremiah on the “I will” statements of God. This clearly indicates that this is what God will do - 31:31, 33 (twice), and 34 (twice). Furthermore, we specifically see that the creation of a new heart assumes the existence of an old, sinful heart. Obviously the fulfillment is not conditioned on the faithfulness of Israel.

(Observation #2) - The New Covenant is Eternal .

The New Covenant is an eternal covenant which means it will be fulfilled forever (Jer. 31:35-37).

(Observation #3) - The New Covenant is Purifying .

Jeremiah 31:33 makes it clear that the nation Israel will someday be pure inwardly. There will be a national cleansing and a national salvation which is even clearly implied by Paul who wrote the Church Age book of Romans (Romans 11:25-26).

(Observation #4) - The New Covenant is National .

When the New Covenant is fulfilled **ALL** nations will recognize that the nation Israel is blessed by God—Isaiah 61:9.

(Observation #5) - The New Covenant is Forgiving .

Jeremiah 31:34b is very clear—God will forgive Israel, as a nation, of every sin she has ever committed and He will make a choice not to remember her sin. Obviously this fact makes the covenant unconditional, for if God were to hold her transgressions against her, He would never ever redeem her. However, this new covenant promises a time when God will completely forgive Israel and the prophetic information we get in Church Age instruction supports this Old Testament data (i.e. Romans 11:27).

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(Observation #6) - The New Covenant features God's Spirit.

When this New Covenant is nationally fulfilled and implemented, God's Spirit will individually indwell the Jew. A main distinction between O.T. Israel and N.T. Israel will be the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not just be "with" Israel, but will be "in" Israel (Ezekiel 36:26-28; John 14:17).

(Observation #7) - The New Covenant will feature a rebuilt Temple.

Several passages from both the O.T. and the N.T. make this clear: 1) Ezekiel 37:26-27; 2) Acts 15:16; 3) Revelation 11-12. There is a great behind the scenes momentum being built right now to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, which would indicate these events are rapidly approaching.

(Observation #8) - The New Covenant will feature a Land.

Jeremiah emphasizes this very point—32:40-41 and so does Ezekiel 34:27; 47:15-20. The New Covenant is a further development of the Abrahamic and Palestinian covenants.

(Observation #9) - The New Covenant will feature a Lineage.

Isaiah emphasizes this fact in Isaiah 61:8-9. This further develops the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants.

(Observation #10) - The New Covenant will feature blessings that are material.

This fact is brought out by Jeremiah (32:24); by Isaiah (61:7-11) and by Ezekiel (34:25-27). When this covenant is fulfilled, God's blessings will be upon Israel in many ways, including ways that are material.

(Observation #11) - The New Covenant will feature total and complete peace.

Israel has been and continues to be a war-torn area. She has longed for peace in her land, as has most of the rest of the world. This New Covenant will feature such a tranquil existence for Israel that wars will finally cease and Israel will "lie down in safety" (Hosea 2:18). This peace comes after the Great Tribulation as events move into the Millennium (Isaiah 2:4).

As with the other covenants, we may also determine that this New Covenant may be viewed as an unconditional covenant which is to be interpreted literally.

(Reason #1) - It is specifically called an everlasting covenant, not based on any conditions.
Jeremiah 31:36, 40; 32:40; 50:5

(Reason #2) - It is an "I will" covenant dependent unconditionally on God. Jeremiah 31:33

(Reason #3) - It amplifies the Abrahamic covenant, which is unconditional.

(Reason #4) - It is a salvation covenant in which God creates a new heart; she didn't earn it by works. This is pure, non-meritorious grace given to Israel.