

#344 Kingdom: The Covenants And The Inner Life

The Covenants are mentioned 31 times in the New Testament alone and each time something new is added that better explains the covenants. Three main covenants are singled out. The Covenant of Abraham, The Old Covenant made at Mount Sinai through Moses and the New Covenant ratified at Calvary in the Blood of Jesus, that began with the resurrection but became effective on the Day of Pentecost.

Luke 1: 72] To show mercy toward our fathers, And **to remember His holy covenant**, [73] **The oath which He swore to Abraham our father**, [74] To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, [75] In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

It is more than interesting that the covenant that is mentioned here and several other places names the Covenant that God made with Abraham as the main reason for certain fulfillments.

Acts 3: 25] “It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and **of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham**, `AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.’ [26] “For you first, **God raised up His Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.**”

Acts 7: 8] “And He gave **him the covenant of circumcision**; and so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.

Gal 3: 16] Now **the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed**. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ. [17] What I am saying is this: **the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.**

The Law which was given through Moses did not invalidate the Covenant God made with Abraham nor does it nullify the promises that God made to Abraham. While the Covenant made with Abraham is always spoken of positively the Old Covenant Law is spoken of negatively. While the Old Covenant has passed away, the “promises” which were part of the covenant God made with Abraham are still in effect today through Jesus Christ.

Heb 8:13 When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made **the first obsolete**. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

The New Covenant has set aside the “old covenant” which has become obsolete. However, the New Covenant does NOT set aside the Covenant that God made with Abraham. There was 430 years between the Covenant that God made with Abraham and the Covenant that God made at Mount Sinai. However, the Old Covenant that God made through Moses was temporary while the other two are still in effect today. However, here again the Covenant of Circumcision has become spiritual rather than outward in the flesh.

The covenant that God made with Abraham also included his “seed.” Paul defines exactly what that means. If God had said “seeds many” it would have included all of Israel but God said Seeds, singular. Therefore, Paul said this covenant made with Abraham bypasses Israel and falls upon Jesus Christ. From this Paul concludes that the covenant God made with Abraham bypassed the Law of Moses because it was NOT based upon Law but upon the promise.

The “promise” to bless all the nations of the earth was not actually fulfilled through Abraham because the promise was really given to Jesus Christ. Exactly how is God going to bless all the nations of the earth through Jesus Christ?

Gal 3: 26] “For you first, **God raised up His Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.**”

Those who are “saved” but haven’t turned from their wicked ways are not yet recipients of the blessing God promised to Abraham. However, today we can hear ministers promising these blessings to anyone who will give money to their ministry.

It would be helpful if we could identify the promises God made to Abraham that through him all the nations would be blessed. Gal 3: 13] Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, “**CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE**”-- [14] **in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

The “promise” then is not about natural things like silver and gold and the cattle on a

thousand hills. It is not about riches, homes, automobiles, vacation cruises or stocks and bonds. The promises are about the eternal riches, the spiritual riches, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Until there is a true circumcision of the heart, the promise can easily be misinterpreted and misapplied. We are all familiar with the statement; “Jesus became a curse so we could receive the blessing.” Of course that is true but we must define the blessing as spiritual and eternal rather than as temporal and natural. Also “He became poor so we could become rich” is also true but not with carnal things.

It is essential that we move beyond the “sense knowledge” (five physical senses) of the natural mind [gnosis] into the “spiritual knowledge” [epignosis] by revelation. This transition is by the Spirit of Wisdom and the Spirit of Revelation. This is the difference between the Outer Court and the Holy Place Life and ministry.

The covenant given to Abraham was by circumcision which was outward in the flesh which was just a type of the true circumcision of the heart. Therefore, we soon discover that today a Jew is not identified by circumcision that is outward in the flesh but by that circumcision which is inward in the heart.

Rom 2: 28] For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. [29] But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; **and circumcision is that which**

is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

Phil 3: 3] for **we are the true circumcision**, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, [4] although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more

The “letter” of circumcision is outward in the flesh but the “spirit” of circumcision is inward in the heart. This “principle” of the “letter” being outward and the “spirit” being inward in the heart carries through with much of the law of Moses. Just this simple truth will reveal the error of setting up laws for the church that is living by the spirit. Of course the farther we live from the spirit and the more we live in and by the flesh, the more “law” we need. If the “inner life” is not developed there is always the danger of putting our confidence in the flesh.

The New Covenant promises to put His Laws in our mind and to write them upon our heart. In other words the New Covenant is inward in the spirit while the Old Covenant is outward in the flesh.

Then what is the significance of the circumcision of Jesus?

Col2: 9] For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form, [10] and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; [11] **and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands**, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;

In the same way that we were included in the death of Christ and included in the resurrection of Christ and in the Ascension of Christ; we are also included in the circumcision of Christ. This concludes the outward circumcision in the flesh and begins a new circumcision of the heart which was always the “true spirit” of circumcision.

Deut 30: 6] “Moreover the LORD your God **will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants**, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.

Deut 30: 8] “**And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments** which I command you today. [9] “Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers

It should be obvious that the inward circumcision of the heart is not optional if we are going to obey God and serve Him without fear all the rest of our days. The blessing promised to Abraham depends upon this inward circumcision.

This “transition” from the dominion of our five physical senses of the natural mind, of the natural man, to the dominion of the spirit, by the spiritual enlightenment of the spiritual man, must be a

reality in the next restoration. This New Covenant “dominion” is assigned to the new inner man and was not meant to be outward in the flesh or a “dominion” of the natural outward man.

While the Old Covenant was directed 100% toward the natural man and by outward laws, the New Covenant is directed 100% toward the new inner man or “new creation” and depends upon the inner laws of the Spirit of Life.

Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [2] **For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.**

The “beginning” of the New Covenant Laws in the inner man is the beginning of the New Covenant priesthood that is NOT after the law of carnal commandments or physical requirements but after the power of an indestructible Life. The Old Covenant had a priesthood after the order of Aaron but the New Covenant priesthood is after the Order of Melchizedek. The first priesthood was temporary and could not bring the church to perfection. The last and final priesthood is eternal and it can bring the church to perfection. However, it is not according to anything physical or natural but is after the power of an indestructible.

This priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek must escape entirely from Adam and the natural mind of the natural man. That means a foregoing of the commandments of the law that are directed toward the natural man and human ability. That means a laying aside of the Old Covenant, the old priesthood ministry, the old sacrifices, the old religion, and all the physical requirements. However, if we haven't FIRST experienced the power of the indestructible Life, nothing will ultimately be successful. Unless we are living by the Law of the Spirit of Life, in Christ Jesus, this may be our doctrine but none of this may be our experience.

Trying to “live” by a combination of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant laws is not just unacceptable for the church it is impossible. We must “EXCHANGE” the law of physical requirements for the Law of an indestructible Life. Jesus is the “mediator” of the New Covenant and NOT the “mediator” of some mixture. The Kingdom of God is NOT a mixture of the Old and New Covenants. Neither can the Kingdom come to the old creation but the Kingdom is directly related to the new creation. Therefore, its function in this age is inward in the heart or “within.”

Heb 8:10] “FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: **I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM UPON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.** [11] “AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, ‘KNOW THE LORD,’ FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.

Trying to live within the Laws of the Kingdom by any physical effort will fail because God has designed the Christian life to be lived by the Laws of the Spirit of Life and the Kingdom Priesthood to be lived after the Power of an Indestructible Life. Instead of the Laws of God being written on stone, they are written upon fleshly tablets of human hearts and put into the renewed

mind of the New Covenant believer. If this is NOT true in our experience we should ask “Why not?”

Mat 23: 38] **“Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!**

[Your house will be deserted.] We could say that the third Veil was torn when God left the Jewish Temple and when it was left desolate. [It is finished] God exchanged the temple made with men’s hands to seek out a new dwelling place and establish a New Covenant within the new creation, a new priesthood, a Kingdom dwelling place, new laws, a new Spirit and to release the Holy Spirit in a new measure for a new kind of ministry.

This New Dwelling Place was then built in three days which indicates that through the resurrection of Christ, God would be able to dwell “in His people.” The Old Temple made with men’s hands stood until 70 AD but it was left deserted from Calvary onward. Three days later Jesus was resurrected and blew breath into His disciples and they became the real temple of the Spirit of Christ.

We should remember that all the signs, wonders, healings, miracles, walking on water and turning the water into wine all took place under the Old Covenant. Up until Pentecost the disciples ministered according to the Old Covenant. The disciples ministered just having a limited righteousness according to the Law. All this was glorious but God has prepared something better for us.

2 Cor 3: 5] Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, **but our adequacy is from God**, [6] who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. [7] But if the **ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory**, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, [8] **how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?** [9] For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.

The Old Covenant was directed toward the natural man and the rituals were natural and could be understood by the natural mind. This priesthood after the Order of Aaron could be learned by the natural man and kept by the natural man. When Paul was just a natural man he could boast that he was blameless according to the Law.

Trying to substitute any outward law, rules, regulations for the New Covenant, which is directed 100% toward the new creation, the inner man, may be popular but that cannot be supported by God. Why? Because the Son of God became the mediator of a New covenant AND the laws of physical requirements have passed away. The Son of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Word of God, has become a live in resident and mediator of this Covenant. This is such a simple truth but multitudes have stumbled over the difference between these two covenants. The “letter” still kills and the “Spirit” still gives life. The New Covenant is related to the ministry of righteousness and life. The Old Covenant is related to the ministry of condemnation and the ministry of death. It would be difficult to get farther apart than that.

It is not clear WHEN the circumcision of the heart is experienced. Does it happen when we put no more confidence in the flesh or SO we will no longer put confidence in the flesh? Abraham put his confidence in his own ability to bring forth Ishmael. In other words Abraham's confidence was in the flesh. It was after Abraham was circumcised in his flesh that Isaac was born. However, Sarah's ability to bring forth Isaac followed Abraham's circumcision also, but this was attributed to her faith.

Heb 11:11] By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since **she considered Him faithful who had promised**; [12] therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.

We could say that Sarah's faith worked WITH Abraham's circumcision to being in the promise of God. Both were beyond the time for natural birth so the birth of Isaac is related **to a spiritual birth that is according to the promise.**

Gal 4:28 And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. [29] But as at that time he who was **born according to the flesh** persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.

Gal 3: 14] in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that **we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

The covenant made to Abraham was not a matter of solving the sin problem but was to provide for multitudes of spiritual children who are "descendants" according to the promise.

The New Covenant must also deliver us from our enemies. Luke 1 :71] Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US; [72] To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant, [73] **The oath which He swore to Abraham our father**, [74] To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, [75] In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

In the next paper I will try to show that some of the promises of the New Covenant and the promises that God made to Abraham were fulfilled in the "three days" when Jesus was preparing the Sanctuary of God. All was not accomplished by His Blood or by His death! Much was accomplished in those "three days" in the grave. Much was also provided for us by His resurrection and by His ascension to the right hand of God.

Delivering us from the hand of our enemies And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US is still a part of the New Covenant but was part of the oath He swore to Abraham.