

GOD'S COVENANTS

NEW COVENANT

There is a cave north of Jerusalem on the road headed east. It's called "[Jeremiah's Grotto](#)." And it was from there that *the weeping prophet, Jeremiah*, penned his [Lamentation](#) over the fall of the city of Jerusalem.

In the year 586 BC Babylon sacked the holy city and burned God's Temple. Jews who survived the siege were forced into exile. In handcuffs and chains they were made to evacuate the city and march to Babylon.

Hope had died in Judah, and Jeremiah served as its chief pallbearer. How tough it was for this man of God to sit in the mouth of that cave and watch the friends he'd grown up with, hauled off in shackles.

The Jews said good-bye to familiar streets, and to the songs of the priests, and to the Temple worship. The Prophet Jeremiah witnessed the eviction of God's people from their homeland. *No wonder he wept.*

One-thousand years earlier God revealed Himself to a man, Abram, in the city of Ur, at the heart of Babel.

God made a covenant with Abram. He would make this man a great nation - give him a new land - and Abram's Seed, or special heir, would bless the world.

Centuries later, through a covenant God made with Moses, He prepared the children of Abraham to occupy that land. He gave Israel a list of *blessings and curses*.

If Israel obeyed *God's law and sacrifices*, God would bless them abundantly. If they disobeyed, God would curse them severely... Leviticus 26 lists those curses...

"I will scatter you among the nations... your land shall be desolate... you are in your enemies' land..." And now as *Jeremiah sits in his cave writing and weeping*. He realizes the heirs of Abraham have come full circle.

Because of their disobedience God is now sending them back to where Abraham started - to the land of Babylon - the land they thought they had left for good.

It's hard to imagine the agony of the moment... *in that cave... along that road...* Yet in the midst of his weeping Jeremiah was struck by an amazing thought...

He writes in Lamentations 3, *"This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness..."* In the midst of his sorrow it hits Jeremiah, in all Israel's failures God had never given up on them - *and He wouldn't start now!* In fact, it was to Jeremiah that God delivered **a new covenant**.

Amazingly, at their lowest of lows - the great God of grace reached out to His defeated and deflated people, Israel, with **another covenant!** *Can you believe it?*

Every time we fall and can't get up, God rescues us with *new promises, new terms, new proposals...*

And this wasn't just **"A" new covenant** it was **"THE" New Covenant** - the last and ultimate promise God will make to humanity. Jeremiah 31 refers to the NC as an *"everlasting*

covenant.” That means the rest of the Bible, *and all history* is the fulfillment of this covenant.

In Judah’s darkest hour, Jeremiah knew that God’s thoughts toward the Jews were of a future and a hope.

Even in the midst of the enemy’s siege - as the walls of Jerusalem were being breeched, God was revealing to Jeremiah a new day for His people, Israel. **Jeremiah 31-33** focuses on this great, final, and **New Covenant**.

The New Covenant included three big promises... **a re-gathering of Israel to the land God had promised Abram, a regeneration of people’s hearts, and a re-establishment of God’s Kingdom and David's throne.**

Unfortunately, there’s no time to read all three chapters in Jeremiah, but let me hit the high points...

In Jeremiah 32, God orders the prophet to purchase a field. And Jeremiah obeys. He forks over 17 shekels and signs the deed. *But Jeremiah is confused!*

God was also predicting a Babylonian takeover! Jerusalem will soon be occupied by foreign armies.

Why is God asking Jeremiah to waste his money - to purchase property that’s about to be in enemy hands?

God answers Jeremiah in 32:37, “**I will gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely.**” The parcel Jeremiah is commanded to buy will be a token of God’s promise to **re-gather** Israel. The Jews will return, and Jeremiah’s kin will build on his lot.

A literal [return to the land](#) was part of the NC.

But notice what's next... God promises a [rebirth of the people's hearts](#). Jeremiah 31:33 tells us...

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

The Law of Moses was written on stone tablets. But under the NC God writes His Law on human hearts. His will gets internalized. God in-beds it in our nature. God's Spirit etches God's love into our heart of hearts.

Trae Young is the talented young point guard for the Atlanta Hawks - a new superstar. Trae is a long-range shooter, and a skilled ball handler, and adept passer.

Quincy Adams is an even younger basketball player, and he's Trae's number one fan. *Who knows if he'll ever become a superstar to anyone but his G-daddy?*

Yet every chance Quincy gets, he watches Trae play, and tries to mimic his moves, *but it doesn't help much*. Q still lacks Trae's physical abilities and dexterity.

Yet what if you took Trae's heart - *his passion and instincts for the game* - and put it into Quincy Adams?

It wouldn't add to Quincy's strength, or coordination, or speed, but it would definitely help him. It would improve his decision-making, and elevate his game.

If Quincy had Trae's heart, it wouldn't make him as good as Trae, but it would make him **a better Quincy**.

Trust me, to have a superstar's heart and instincts would go a long, long way to improving any player.

And realize, **a new heart** is the miracle of the New Covenant! God gives us **His heart!** As Christians, we still occupy our bodies, which means we never play perfectly. We still have limitations, but we do play better.

Under the Old Covenant, Israel studied the standard and tried to mimic its perfect play, but the Law didn't do much good. The Jews lacked the ability to live it out.

Yet to receive God's heart is to receive His love, His passion, His desires... and this goes a long way. In our bodies, we'll never be flawless, but God's instincts do improve our decision-making and better our game.

The NC changes a person from **inside out**. We're made righteous not by mimicking a standard, but by receiving through His Spirit, God's purity and power.

And because of our **new heart**, *the NC* gives us a **new part** to play - a new role in God's purposes.

Jeremiah 31:34 tells us, "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord."

Under the NC, every person becomes a priest.

At first, the thought of being a priest might not excite you. Being happily married to a foxy wife, the last thing I aspire to is being a priest, *in the Catholic sense*.

But that's not the kind of priest Jeremiah had in view.

Jewish priests were married men from a special tribe. They alone had the privilege of entering God's presence and beholding His glory. Yet under the NC, this changes! *Everybody now assumes a priestly role.*

No longer do we need a go-between to get to God. *Can the confessional. Burn the booth.* Now all God's people are priests. We all can go to God at all times.

Finally, the NC gives us **a new heart**, a **new part**, and we get a **new start**. Jeremiah 31:34, "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

The Mosaic Covenant dealt with sin in a limited way.

*The Law **revealed** sin - its sacrifices **covered** sin - its blessings and curses **motivated** us not to sin...* But the OC never provided a permanent resolution for sin.

Yet this is where the NC excels! As an "everlasting covenant;" for it provides a permanent solution. Rather than just cover our sin, it abolishes it. The OC blots it from God's memory. He doesn't think about it anymore.

Once, a lady in the church kept approaching the pastor with supposed messages from God. The pastor was skeptical. He decided to test the lady. The pastor told her, "When I was in college, I committed a horrible sin. The next time you talk to God, ask Him what it was, and if He tells you, I'll listen to your messages."

Weeks went by without the lady bothering the pastor with a message from God. The next time he saw her, the pastor got snarky, "Well, I assume God doesn't speak to you, since He never revealed to you my sin."

She replied, *“Oh yes, God speaks to me and when I asked Him about your horrible sin, He told me He no longer recalls what it was.”* How’s that for a profound message! **God’s forgiveness is full and forever.**

The NC gives us a **new heart, new part, new start.**

The NC promised the Jews a **return** to their land, the **regeneration** of their hearts, and the **re-establishment** of the kingdom to Israel and of its throne to David.

From his grotto, Jeremiah saw the Jewish King, the descendant and heir of David, hauled off into captivity.

And the Babylonians were incredibly cruel to King Zedekiah! They slaughtered his sons before him, and then plucked out his eyes with a hot poker... so that the last sight he saw was the death of his three sons.

And Jeremiah knew this threatened the Covenant.

God promised David he would always have an heir on the throne. But with Babylon’s conquest of the Davidic dynasty, it seemed God's covenant had been broken.

Yet in Jeremiah 33:15 God refocused His promise to David. *“I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell safely... For thus says the LORD: ‘David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel.’”* The promise was sure.

At that very moment, David had a man to sit on his throne; for Jesus the Messiah was waiting in heaven.

And it's interesting how the NT begins, Matthew 1:1, "*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David...*" Though Zedekiah's lineage halted abruptly, another branch sprouted from David's family tree.

Jesus was of the house of Abraham, and of the stock of David, and thus heir to the throne of God's kingdom.

The NC promises that Messiah will lay claim to all of God's blessings, and Israel will be an everlasting, global kingdom that will rule the world in righteousness.

In fact, God closes Jeremiah 33 by saying as sure as the day follows the night, God will fulfill His NC promises. The sun will fail to rise *before the blood relatives of Abraham, fail to return to the real land of Canaan, and be ruled over by an actual son of David.*

And not only did Jeremiah predict the NC, so did other Jewish prophets. While Jeremiah wrote among the survivors in Jerusalem, Ezekiel lived with the exiles taken to Babylon. And he too wrote of this Covenant...

Ezekiel 36:24, "*I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.*" That's the promised **re-gathering**.

After the **re-gathering**, Ezekiel mentions the spiritual **regeneration**. "*Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep*

My judgments... you shall be My people and I will be your God.”

Then in Ezekiel 37:22, the prophet mentions the **re-establishment** of the kingdom. “I will make them one nation... one king shall be king over them... David My servant shall be king...” A son of David will reign again!

And notice the order... God **re-gathers Israel to the land, He regenerates their hard hearts, then He re-establishes** the kingdom ruled by the Son of David.

Ezekiel 37 begins with a famous vision. The prophet sees a valley full of dry bones. Suddenly, the bones come together. *The arm bone connects to the shoulder bone, the leg bone connects to the hip bone, etc.*

After God assembles the skeletons, muscle and flesh cover them. But they still have no breath...

This was Israel in the first century. They'd been regathered, but not regenerated. Some of the Jews like the Pharisees showed a religious zeal, but they were like the bones in the valley - there was structure and muscle - but no life. **And this is also Israel today!**

Dry bones have been assembled. A political nation exists, and it is strong militarily. On one of our trips to Jerusalem, I saw this T-shirt, “**Don't worry America, Israel is behind you.**” Modern Israel is a miracle, but like the dry bones, it still lacks the life of God's Spirit.

And before the Kingdom can come to Israel to fulfill the NC, God's Spirit has to invade the people's hearts.

Spiritual revival is a prerequisite before the coming of the Messiah and the re-establishment of God's Kingdom.

And that's true in both the 1st and 21st centuries!

Toward the end of the OT, patriotic leaders like Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah led the Jews back from Babel. Israel grew again in structure and muscle.

Jerusalem was rebuilt, along with the Temple.

The nation had *re-gathered* from exile, and now they were expecting *the re-establishment of their kingdom*.

This was Nicodemus' mindset in John 3 when he came to Jesus by night. It was the first "*Nick-at-Nite*."

Nicodemus was a rabbi - a respected Jewish scholar schooled in the prophecies of Jeremiah and the OT.

And Nicodemus was thinking *New Covenant*. He had Kingdom expectations. *Understand Nicodemus' logic...*

Israel had been *re-gathered* to their land. In his mind, he saw the sect of Pharisees and took their renewed zeal for the Law of Moses as proof of a revival - a *regeneration* - the "*new heart*" promised by the NC.

In Nicodemus' mind, and in Jewish thinking at the time, all that remained for the NC to be fulfilled was for Messiah to overthrow the Roman government, and set up a Jewish kingdom. Jesus knew Nick's mindset, and answered his question before he asked it, "*Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"

Jesus was saying, recall the three stages of the NC.

The **re-gathering** and **re-establishment** were the bookends. Jews had returned to the land and a Jewish kingdom will be established, in between there's **revival**.

And Nicodemus had mistaken *religious zeal* for *spiritual regeneration*. Here Jesus is saying, "**Hold your horses, Nicodemus! Rethink what you're calling "a new heart."** *Self-righteousness isn't God's righteousness.*

Jesus is warning Nicodemus, in his desire for *the Kingdom*, he shouldn't skip over spiritual life. "**A new heart**" is more than *moralism or legalism or religiosity*.

You can major on the do's and don'ts - mind your Ps and Qs - cross your "T"s and dot your "I"s... And still be sinful to the core. Religious folk are often the most proud. *In fact, the Jews were proud of their pedigree...*

They were the children of Abraham, and Abraham was the chosen of God. They thought **that fact** alone made them right with God. But Jesus warns, "**It's not about your first birth. You've got to be born again!**"

Rather than pride, "**a new heart**" spawns love - **love for God and love for others**. The Pharisees were religious without love - *clean on the outside, but filthy on the inside*. The NC changed mankind inside out.

Jesus said, "**You must be born again!**" That's more than turning over a new leaf or mending your ways.

That's not just a reformation, it's transformation. New birth is becoming something different than you were.

Take a pig - you can dress that oinker up like a little boy, and feed him like a boy, and treat him like a boy, but trust me, he's

still a pig. And the first time he gets around a mud puddle he's going to jump right in.

You can't betray your nature, and be something that your not (at least not for long), and the same is true spiritually! To follow Jesus you've got to be reborn.

You need a heart transplant. God takes out our defiant nature and replaces it with a compliant nature.

And to help him understand, Jesus takes Nicodemus back to the OT. He explains to him, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." That's a quote right out of Ezekiel 36, that God will "sprinkle clean water" and "put a new spirit within you" - the *New Covenant* produces a new person.

Jesus goes on to say, "That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born again."

Notice, Jesus says, "*Flesh is flesh...*" Just trying harder - just turning over a new leaf, is never enough...

Our own goodness won't cut it. We have to be born again. God's Spirit alone can purify us on the inside.

Jesus ends his conversation with Nicodemus with a rebuke. Nic was a biblical scholar - he should've known these truths. Jesus said, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?" *Jesus took the teacher to school...* And here's the Master's chief point, *The New Covenant wasn't ready to be fulfilled, not yet.*

Messiah won't sit on the throne of David and set up God's earthly Kingdom until spiritual revival comes to Israel first.

Before God's Kingdom comes *tangibly*, it first has to come *spiritually*. Remember Luke 17, the Pharisee asked Jesus, *when will the Kingdom of God come?* Jesus replied, "The kingdom does not come with outward observation... the kingdom of God is within you." You won't see a political Kingdom, until the King rules in your heart and the Jews are born again.

This is exactly what Jesus declared at the end of Matthew 23. The Lord Jesus is on the Mount of Olives.

He's looking over Jerusalem and sees into the future. With tears rolling down His cheeks He predicts the destruction of the holy city, and He quotes Psalm 118, "Your house is left desolate, for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, "*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!*" Jesus is saying He won't return to establish God's Kingdom on Earth until Israel is ready to welcome Him as their Messiah.

When the Jewish people again sing Psalm 118 and mean it with their heart; then Jesus will come as King.

Revelation 19 fast-forwards to that future moment. Jesus is on a war horse. He's coming to Earth to judge evil and establish His Kingdom. And tatted down His thigh is His title: "King of kings and Lord of lords."

That's how we'll see King Jesus when He's revealed in all His glory. *But now, Jesus is the "King of hearts."*

The New Covenant requires the Messiah to rule over God's people spiritually, before He reigns politically.

All this was also in Jesus' thinking the night before His crucifixion. He didn't just come into the world to gain our forgiveness. *Jesus was far more ambitious!*

In the upper room, our Lord Jesus took the Passover Cup and gave it new meaning. He ushered in new terms and a new relationship between God and man.

He invited His disciples, **“Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins...”** And today, when we join Jesus in communion and drink that cup, we're celebrating **a new heart, a new part, and a new start.**

But that's not all. Jesus had more on His mind. As I said, He's far more ambitious than just our forgiveness.

He adds, **“I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.”** *Hear what Jesus is saying,* the new birth is a means to an end. The NC isn't complete until we live with Jesus in His coming Kingdom.

King Jesus is toasting the day when He returns to this earth, and we join Him in His forever kingdom!

And like all God's covenants, the NC was dedicated with blood. Jesus held the wine in His hand and said it symbolized the blood He would shed the next day.

Remember, when Moses ratified the OC, he took hot blood from a sacrifice and sprinkled it on the people.

Now when you join Jesus in His New Covenant, His blood gets *spiritually sprinkled* on your believing **heart.**

Hebrews 10:22 tells us to *draw near in faith*, “having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience...”

So let me summarize what we’ve learned. Here’s the NC: Israel is **re-gathered** to their land. The hearts of the people are **regenerated** (which included **a new heart, a new part, and a new start.**) **Then** King Jesus returns to Earth to end man’s rebellion, by **re-establishing** *David’s throne* and *God’s eternal kingdom*.

Now it’s time to play a game. It’s the “**what if**” game. I want to blow your mind with a very real possibility!

What if in 32 AD, Israel, as a nation, had formally accepted Jesus as their Messiah. Rather than reject the apostles’ witness, **what if the Jews had believed?**

Would the dominoes have fallen? Israel had been **re-gathered** to the land. If the Jews had believed they would’ve been **re-born...** next comes the Kingdom!

Would Jesus have returned in the first century, and set in motion the biblical prophecies covering the last days? *I believe so!* At least, I believe that’s what the early Church believed! They expected God’s kingdom.

After Jesus’ resurrection and before His ascension, He hung out on earth for forty days. It was Q&A time for the disciples. And guess what they ask? Acts 1:6, “**Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?**” *Why that question?* **Well, connect the dots!**

God’s earthly kingdom was next on the NC checklist.

Re-gathering: check. **Regeneration:** well, the disciples who asked the question were born again.... In their mind all that was left was the coming Kingdom!

And Jesus gave them an interesting answer, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses...” Notice, the Lord doesn’t say God’s kingdom is right around the corner, but neither does He say it’s not! His answer is sort of “**a definite maybe.**”

In essence, He says, timing is the Father’s business, power is the Spirit’s business, witness is our business. *So, don’t stick your nose in somebody else’s business.*

But when we study how the disciples preached the Gospel, it was as if they believed the Kingdom and Jesus’ Second Coming were on the immediate horizon.

Remember at Pentecost, Peter stands up in the power of the Spirit and quotes **Joel 2**. It’s a prophecy, not just about the Spirit being poured out on Israel...

But Joel also speaks of End Times’ judgment, “**blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD...**”

Quoting Joel was proof Peter had the last days on his mind. Peter figured Jesus had gone to heaven for a few days of R&R, but it wouldn’t be long before He returned to punish the evil men who had crucified Him.

Peter is thinking, once the nation of Israel receives their Messiah, Jesus will return and overthrow Rome.

A few days later in Acts 3, Peter preaches to the Jews again, and read carefully his invitation, “Repent... and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that **He may send Jesus Christ**, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things...”

In essence, Peter invites them into the Kingdom Age.

He’s saying, “Repent, so God will send us Jesus, Who will bring us the restoration of all things...”

In Peter's mind, the conversion of Israel would’ve brought Jesus back, launched the establishment of God’s Kingdom, and restored all that sin had damaged.

And Peter is preaching in the Temple, calling out the Jewish leaders. He’s offering the nation as a whole a prophetic realization. He refers to, “times of refreshing.”

Often we equate this term with personal revival, but that’s not how a first-century Jew would’ve understood the phrase. It was a prophetic term for the Kingdom Age when Messiah will come to rights all wrongs, and return the world to a peaceful and perfect garden.

Peter is offering the Jews a thousand years of paradise. What the OT calls God’s millennial kingdom.

Perhaps this is what Peter meant in 2 Peter 3:12 when he spoke of “**hastening the coming of the day of God...**” *How do you hasten Jesus’ return?* Apparently, Peter thought if the

nation received Jesus and were *“born again”* the kingdom would’ve come at that time.

People familiar with Revelation might say, *“But what about the rapture, the Antichrist, his one-world government, his desecration of the Temple, his demand to be worshipped... all the Bible predicts prior to Jesus’ second coming?”* Well, history reveals that ancient Rome had possible fulfillments for all the above

Rome possessed a global government... Any of its first-century emperors would’ve made a dandy Antichrist... And a Temple abomination was even in the works...

In 40 AD, the Emperor Caligula dispatched a legion of soldiers to Palestine, with a statue of his likeness.

Orders were given to erect his *abomination of desolation* in the Temple’s Holy of Holies, and require the Jews to worship his image. The reason it failed was he died while it was in route, and the ship turned back.

Imagine though **the great what-if...** *Peter preaches on Pentecost, there’s national repentance in Israel, the rapture occurs, the world is plunged into seven years of Great Tribulation, and Jesus returns at His second coming to make all things new... around 40 AD!*

I know it’s a hypothetical - but I believe if the Jews had accepted the offer of the New Covenant preached by the apostles, God was prepared to set in motion the end-time prophecies, and establish His kingdom **then!**

Instead, Israel rejected the covenant Jesus made with His own blood and remained under the curse of the Mosaic

Covenant. This was an epic tragedy for the Jews, *but a very good turn of events for you and me...*

For Paul explains in Romans 11, Israel's unbelief is what allowed the Gentiles the opportunity to be saved.

Last week we spoke of the amazing prophecy in Daniel 9. The chapter that puts Messiah **"on the clock."**

It predicted to the very day when Jesus would appear to Israel... *If you weren't here check it out...*

According to Daniel 9, 70 weeks of 7 years, are set aside to fulfill God's objectives for Israel. Six purposes are to be accomplished in a total of 490 years.

Read Daniel 9 carefully, and you'll see that only one of the six objectives has been fulfilled. On the cross Jesus made **"reconciliation for iniquity,"** but He's not yet made **"an end to sins,"** or **"brought in everlasting righteousness,"** or **"sealed up vision and prophecy."** All these purposes are still to be accomplished yet future.

According to Daniel, 483 years occurred from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem's walls to the coming of Messiah to Israel. That prophecy was fulfilled the day when Jesus made His Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem

After the 69 weeks, Messiah is **"cut off"** or executed. That happened in 32 AD with Jesus' crucifixion.

Daniel 9 mentions another event that occurs after the 69 weeks... The fall of Jerusalem, which occurred in 70 AD. The crucifixion and the fall of Jerusalem come after the 69 weeks but before the 70th week of 7 years.

That means a 2000 year gap exists in the prophecy.

An unspecified period of time lies between the coming of Messiah to Israel and the final seven years when God rights all wrongs. As Daniel puts it, He'll "finish the transgression" or "snuff out man's rebellion."

This final seven years is what the Bible calls "Great Tribulation." It's the judgment when God shakes all that can be shaken. Global cataclysms rock the planet...

And two goals get accomplished in this time period... A wicked world is punished, and Israel will be purified.

In fact, it's the fulfillment of these End Time events that finally open the eyes of Jews and the nation Israel.

Zechariah 12:10 tells us when Messiah returns, Israel will turn to Jesus - repent and receive the NC. "I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."

Romans 11:26 predicts that at the end of the age, "All Israel will be saved." Every Jew alive at the end of time will believe in Jesus and enter this New Covenant.

So, let's *put it all together...* Jesus came to initiate a NC with Israel. It was paid for on the cross and offered to Israel by the first Apostles. But He's still waiting for the Jews to accept its terms - *to receive a new heart!*

And once Israel bites on God's offer, Jesus will return to end the revolt that started in Eden and set up His kingdom on

planet Earth... Right now the dry bones are assembled. Even flesh and muscle have been attached. But the breath of God's Spirit is still absent.

Mostly, Jews remain in unbelief. And here's God's dilemma... *He's got a good covenant, but no takers!*

It's like the single guy who plans the ultimate date...

Starry sky, soft music, a candlelight dinner on the rooftop, a luxurious setting, a gourmet meal... But your date backs out at the last minute. *What do you do?*

Let it all go to waste? Not hardly.

You pull out your little black book and call your second choice... or third choice ... or fourth choice if need be! And this is exactly, literally what God did!

Don't be offended that you were God's second choice. Paul told the Romans, the Gospel comes *"for the Jew first, and also for the Greek."* After the rebellion at Babel, God's salvation became a family business, *"Abraham and sons."* God had a plan to redeem **the whole world** through the Seed of Abraham, or Jesus!

And that's what He's doing now... This is the mystery not seen in God's previous plans. All the covenants from Abraham to Moses to David targeted the Jews.

Even the New Covenant was originally intended for Israel... until they rejected Jesus, and now in His grace, God has opened the party even to us pagan Gentiles!

Recall Jesus' parable about the man who hosted a banquet. Everyone he invited had an excuse why they couldn't come.

So he told his servants to bring in “the poor, and the maimed, and the lame, and the blind.”

Don't be offended, but that's God's description of us.

When the Jews rejected the NC, God opened it up to “whosoever will” - to **the whosoEVERS!** That's us.

We're the ones nobody wanted, *but God included us!* Don't be too proud to think of yourself as a down-and-outer - in need of grace. The people God rejects are those who think they deserve His love. The *proud* and the *self-righteous* are the people who miss out.

Today, God is waiting on the Jews to receive the new covenant, but while He waits, God is actively targeting the Gentiles. *Now is our time. It's our day of salvation.*

God is taking Gentiles from all nations, tribes, and races - and along with believing Jews - He's turning people who were once divided and enemies into His **New Covenant Community**. *He calls it His Church.*

And that's what we'll look at in our final installment of God's Covenants - **The New Covenant and the Church.**