



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Divine Purpose

TRANSCRIPT

Biblical Doctrine of Historical Covenants (7): The New Covenant – II

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks tonight for the prophetic word, which so marvelously unfolds for us the divine purpose of the ages. And we thank Thee for the privilege of pondering it, studying it, and coming to an understanding of at least parts of it. We pray, Lord, that our understanding may grow as we attempt to think through all of the things that Thou art doing in the past, in the future, and also in the present. We ask of Thy blessing upon us as we study tonight the New Covenant. Enable us to understand and profit from what we study.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] For those of you who may be here for the first time tonight, let me just briefly review what we have done with reference to the New Covenant. We made a few comments concerning the historical situation that the New Covenant prophecy served. It was designed to be a comfort to the children of Israel really specifically due to the particular time in their history when it would have been an encouragement to them to hear the New Covenant. We looked briefly at the passage in Jeremiah 31:31 through 34, which is the basic passage of the New Covenant in the sense that it's the only passage in

the Old Testament that uses the term the New Covenant although we suggested that there were sixteen or seventeen passages in all that made reference to that covenant.

We looked at the structure of the passage. Its very well constructed, well set out prophecy. And we saw that at the conclusion the forgiveness of sins was essentially the foundation of the prophecy; that the issue of the forgiveness of sins was that there should be universal knowledge of God. And the ultimate goal of that prophecy was stated in the beginning, and that is that those who are responsive to the New Covenant would have communion with God. We looked at some other passages in the Old Testament, which set forth features of the New Covenant and also of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenant: For these three covenants make up the great three unconditional covenants of Old Testament prophecy.

We looked at Ezekiel chapter 37, verse 21 through verse 28, just briefly in order to show simply this; that that one passage has within it references to the New Covenant, the Davidic covenant, and the Abrahamic covenant. We then turned briefly to the New Testament and looked at Matthew chapter 26, verse 26 through 29, where the Lord Jesus using that terminology from Jeremiah 31, ratified the New Covenant by anticipation. Of course, it was ratified in the blood that was shed on the cross, but the last Passover and first Lord's Supper was an anticipation of what would take place at the cross. And when he took the cup and said “This cup is the New Testament or a New Covenant in my blood which was shed for many for the remission of sins,” he was in anticipation of what he was doing ratifying the New Covenant. So we looked at Matthew 26:26 through 29, in that respect; made a few comments concerning it.

And one comment I would like to expound upon because, as I thought about it afterwards, I probably gave the wrong impression because I didn't give enough information. When the Lord Jesus said, “This cup is the New Covenant in my blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins,” I made reference to the fact that “many” was a reference to the nation Israel. Well, there are different ways of understanding that

“many” and I should say a further word about it. In fact, I’m not really sure that that is the precise force of that “many,” although there are a number who feel that it is so. In the light of the context and in the light of the use of the expression in Isaiah 53, it’s 11 and 12, which is undoubtedly the passage that the Lord Jesus was relying upon when he said, “This covenant is the New Covenant in my blood which is shed for many for remission of sins.” I simply said that that “many” was a reference to the nation Israel.

Now, there are other ways of understanding it. These are the passages in Isaiah 53:11 and 12. Listen to the expression, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many.”

Now, that particular combination there, verses 11 and 12, is undoubtedly that which lies back of our Lord’s statement at the last Passover and first Lord’s Supper. There is a body of opinion that the term “many” is the Hebraic way, phonetic way, of saying “all” and that’s a very distinct possibility. In fact, I think, I had made reference to my notes, but they weren’t my most recent notes on this particular point. And I had come to the conclusion, really as I had thought about it afterwards, I disagreed with myself when I said that on the spur of the moment. You didn’t go back and think it through, but it is a Semitic way of expressing “all,” one and many. So I really think that probably that’s the force of the expression. “That is shed for many,” is reference for “all” according to Semitic usage. But as we know once we say that “the blood is shed for all” then we have to ask ourselves a question does our Lord mean all in the sense of without exception or all without distinction. And then again in the light of the context and in the light of the way the New Testament develops this theme. I really don’t have any doubt in my mind what he meant was it’s shed for all, if that’s the meaning of many, in the sense of all without distinction not all without exception. In other words, the blood is shed not simply for

Jews but also for Gentiles. And as the New Testament develops we learn from the New Testament historical developments that when our Lord says “many” if he meant “all,” he said it in such a way that it would comprehend what later took place when that generation from Israel rejected the Messiah and God called the Apostle Paul to minister to the Gentiles and that ministry went out to the whole world. So that, I think, is probably the reference of the expression, “he shed his blood for the many.” I think that, furthermore, when we read the rest of the New Testament that particular meaning becomes very obviously the force. The New Testament expands this into both Jews and Gentiles.

I made reference also to one other thing that, I think, is rather important to remember because it has to do with when the New Covenant is fulfilled, and that is that the statement in Matthew and Mark in chapter 26, and then in Markan parallel passage, make it quite plain that our Lord anticipates a period of time between the ratification of the covenant and its fulfillment because he says in verse 29 of Matthew chapter 26, “But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it New with you in my Father’s kingdom.” That, it seems to me, is an indication of the fact that our Lord does not expect an immediate fulfillment of the New Covenant, fulfillment, not necessarily some aspect of the New Testament being fulfilled, but fulfillment of the whole of the New Covenant.

Now, we may take a look briefly at Romans chapter 11, verse 25 through verse 27. As I remember, we also just took a rather brief look at it last week and I wanted to make one point out of this particular passage. If you’re interested in further comment or two, listen to KRLD at seven o’clock Sunday morning and this week, I believe, these verses are going to be discussed, verse 25 through 27, and particular stress will be made on the clause of verse 26, “And so all Israel shall be saved,” but I will go on and point out that when the apostle says, “As it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” That he refers to the Davidic covenant. And

then in verse 27, “For this is my covenant unto them.” That is an expression that is traceable to Genesis chapter 17 in verse 4, which as you know from its context is a reference to the Abrahamic covenant. And then the last expression of verse 27, “When I shall take away their sins,” is related to the New Covenant. So this composite citation which the apostle puts together in verse 26 and 27, you can call it a merger of Old Testament passages to use modern business terminology today. He merged Genesis chapter 17, and Isaiah chapter 59, verse 20 and 21, and Jeremiah chapter 31, into a prophecy that comprehends all three of the unconditional covenants and says that it is at that time that they shall be fulfilled and it’s quite obvious he’s referring to the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let’s turn now to the Epistle to the Hebrews and we’ll spend our time tonight taking a look briefly at the Epistle to the Hebrews and then we’ll try to answer these relevant theological questions that are of some importance for understanding the purpose of the ages.

Hebrews, you know that you that if you have listened to the Hebrews tapes you will remember that several times I have cited the statement made to me many years ago by Donald Grey Barnhouse who used to say when he taught the Epistle to the Hebrews in a brief session, “The Book of Hebrews was written to the Hebrews to teach the Hebrews that they should no longer be Hebrews.” [Laughter] Well, if we can keep that in our minds, I think we do have a reliable approach to the Epistle to the Hebrews. If you read through the Epistle to the Hebrews, you will see that it hangs on three great prophetic utterances. Probably, this book in all the books in the New Testament most heavily relies upon the Old Testament Scriptures and three great passages around which he builds his argument are Psalm 110 in verse 4, “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek,” in which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews sets forth a new priesthood that provides divine and eternal mediation. And then he argues on the basis of Psalm 40, verses 7 through 9, in Hebrews chapter 10, of about a new sacrifice which

provides divine redemption that is permanent. And, finally, in Jeremiah chapter 31, verse 31 through 34, he gathers a great deal of his thought around the New Covenant which provides promises of a perfect communion with God. So if you can understand these four passages, particularly, I said four, these three passages. You know it's interesting, there is another passage that could be put with this and that's Psalm 2, because he makes a heavy reliance upon that as well. But these, I think, are the three that are most closely associated with his argument. So Psalm 110, a new priesthood, Psalm 40, a new sacrifice and Jeremiah 31, a New Covenant. So think of those things as you read the Epistle to the Hebrews and, I think, you'll understand it a whole lot better.

Let's turn to chapter 8, and we're going to I'll just read through this chapter rather quickly and make a rather brief comment about it, Hebrews chapter 8. The author writes, “Now of the things which we are speaking this is the chief point.” I'm going to as I go through make a few changes because I'm thinking in my mind about the Greek text and your translation if it's a modern one will probably agree generally with what I'm saying. If you have an Authorized Version, you can listen to the changes that I make.

“We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.”

Now, you can see that, essentially, what he’s trying to say that if the Lord Jesus was here in the flesh at the time that he was here in the flesh he wouldn’t be a priest because you had to be of a certain family in order to be a priest and as he will say or as he has just said in chapter 7, “Our Lord was of the tribe of Judah and not of the tribe of Levi.” So he was disqualified from the priesthood. That is the Levitical priesthood. His priesthood is of a higher order. It’s after the order of Melchizedek.

Now, having said that he’s the mediator of a better covenant than the Mosaic and established upon better promises. He then cites the passage from Jeremiah. He says in order to show that the Mosaic covenant was not the better covenant and could not bring redemption as the New Covenant does. He says.

“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, ‘Behold, the days come,’ saith the Lord, ‘when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not,’ saith the Lord. ‘For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ saith the Lord; ‘I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.’”

So he’s simply saying the old was inferior verses 7 and 8, the New is superior and his conclusion is reached in verse 13, “In that he saith, ‘A New Covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.’” The

author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, incidentally, always writes from the standpoint of the Old Testament. In other words, the tabernacle is standing in his thinking as he expounds the Old Testament. So he says this when you read in the Old Testament that a New Covenant is going to be made. That very fact means that the old covenant is an inferior covenant that is going to be done away with and that's why he says, “In that he saith, ‘A New Covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.’”

You can see this is a not only a clever argument but it's a convincing argument, the kind of thing that you have seen take place in your experience so often. Many of you when televisions were first invented and you managed to scrape a bit of money together, you got a TV set and then shortly thereafter, I don't remember the time sequence, they started making color TV and the minute they made color TV your TV waxed old and so you wanted one of the new ones. You go into the store, you men, and you buy a suit and you can tell its age largely by the lapel. If the lapel stretched out to the shoulder, you can be pretty sure that at least at certain periods in our masculine history that that's an old suit or now if you see one very thin you know that's an old suit. They are kind of going this way now it seems as I look at the things that appear in the papers. But you can tell the new and old by its style. It's that kind of thing that we read about here.

He says, “In that he saith.” And, incidentally, in this chapter he does not settle the question of whether the New Covenant promises are really applicable to us. The only thing he says is that he cites this lengthy passage, it's a New Covenant. In other words, the whole of the argument rests upon the adjective “new.” In fact, in the Greek text that's made even more prominent by the fact that he only cites the word “new.” He says, “In that he saith *kainas*,” just that one word. He doesn't bother to say now the New Covenant is enforced or anything like that. It's just simply that one word which he takes out of that lengthy quotation, “In the saying *kainas* he has made over the first”



Now, that which is waxing old and aged is near under vanishing away. So he's saying the minute that Jeremiah said a New Covenant would be given, the Mosaic covenant they knew would come to its end one day.

Now, of course, he's going to quote this in the tenth chapter and then he will let us know that he really thought that those promises are our promises that belong to us today. So let's turn over to the tenth chapter.

You know, you read the Bible for different reasons and in different ways and sometimes certain truths, biblical truths, that just so happen to be taught in the passage that some people say they are taught or in which you may have think they are taught but in the tenth chapter in the fifteenth verse after pointing out there is a new sacrifice which takes away sin verse 14, says, “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” He then says, “Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,’ saith the Lord, ‘I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.’”

Now, I'm going to stop for just a moment and say something and you'll just have to take my word for it but I can assure you I'm telling you the absolute exegetical theological truth. You can see if you look at Jeremiah 31, and if you look at the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews that what the author has done in verse 15 and 16, is to cite the beginning of the prophecy so you would locate it in your mind and then cite the end of it and he's dropped out everything in between. He cited it in the eighth chapter but he omits it here. He says, “Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, ‘This is the covenant (Now this is the beginning) that I will make with them after those days,’ saith the Lord, ‘I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds.’” If you are putting this on the board, I would write the Greek text out like this and put in the sign of an ellipse because he leaves out a whole section and then verse 17, that little word “and” I don't have time to talk about this in detail. Some of the

individuals have got a Greek text. See like Rick here he doesn't understand it too well but he's got it open and so I just have to say that the little word “and” there is a word that often in certain contexts, argumentative ones like this, can be rendered “then” and, as a matter of fact, in this case that's likely. But even if it were not the question that comes up is this part of the quotation or not. So we don't have to deal with the details. I simply want to say that the fact that he says in verse 15, 16, let's see 15, “Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before.” What do we expect him to say when he comes to the last line of the prophecy? Well, you'd expect him if he says after that he said before then you expect him to say then he said such and such and all the commentators of the Greek text will point out that that is the case. So we should read then verse 17, “Then he says or then he had said their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

Now, the interesting thing about this particular passage is that some of my friends, I think, have overlooked this because they have not studied the use of the Old Testament and the New Testament too well. They have based their argument that we are not under that, we do not actually possess the promises of the New Covenant today because of chapter 8, forgetting that the author quotes Jeremiah 31 in chapter 10, and it's obvious that there he does apply the forgiveness of sins from that covenant to us today. So he says then he says I'm supplying that he says or he has said, “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.” And then finally the conclusion, “Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.” No more remembrance of sin no more offering no more conscience of sin and this is the last of the decisive words of the argument of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Now, there's one other passage in Hebrews chapter 13, in which the New Covenant is referred to verse 20 and verse 21. The term “new” is not used but it seems quite plainly to be a reference to it. Verse 20 and 21, “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the

blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” This is the author’s final word in the form of a public prayer for the sanctifying power of the covenant.

Now, if you just had the term everlasting covenant you might want to contend that this was a reference to the eternal covenant of redemption made between the persons of the trinity, but in the light of the fact that through the epistle he has argued from Jeremiah chapter 31, and the eighth chapter and the tenth chapter, as a matter of fact, the ninth chapter as well in the twelfth chapter just before this exegetical opinion is properly, I think, strongly behind the idea that when he says the everlasting covenant here he’s referring to the New Covenant. It is an everlasting covenant. So he talks here the way in which the New Covenant is the ground of sanctifying power in the believer’s life.

Now, for sake of time let’s turn to our question, the relevant theological question. We have a hotly disputed passage and we’ll try to solve some of the problems that individuals have. And, first of all, we’ll talk about the addressees or the recipients of the covenant.

Now, I think, it would be good to keep in mind Jeremiah 31, verse 31 through verse 34. So I’m going to turn back to this passage and read verse 31, “Behold, the days come,’ saith the Lord, ‘that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.’” So if we ask ourselves the question right at the beginning with whom is the New Covenant made? Well the text is plain. The New Covenant is made with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

Now, the fact that it is made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, however, does not limit its availability to the entities named any more than that if you were to say today well its made with them and it’s limited to them. I would say all right with whom was the Abrahamic covenant made. Well you would have to say it was made

with Abraham. Is it limited to Abraham? Well, no as a matter of fact the covenant is quite plainly stated had to do with Abraham and his seed.

Now, the New Covenant is an expansion of the Abrahamic and also of the Davidic covenant. We could say the same thing with reference to the Davidic covenant. The covenant was made with David. Was it only made with David? No, there're others also who share in the blessings of that Davidic covenant and so likewise in connection with the New Covenant there're others that share in the promises of the New Covenant. It is the opinion of some premillineal interpreters that the church participates in the promises by virtue of the fact that the seed included believers of all ages. One of these premillennialist writes so were the benefits of the New Covenant applicable to all believers for the same reason.

George N. H. Peters demonstrated that we have divided references to a renewed Abrahamic covenant conjoined with the Davidic as being a distinguishing characteristic of and fundamental the the messianic period. He goes on to say it need only be noted that the New Covenant also was part of the messianic era. Here then was a new footing for old stalemates. The New Covenant was indeed addressed to revive national Israel the future but, nonetheless, by virtue of the specific linkage with the Abrahamic and Davidic promises contained in them all it was proper to speak of a Gentile participation then and in the future. The Gentiles would be adopted and grafted into God's covenant with national Israel.

Now, we didn't look at the details of Romans 11, because we're going to look at that later on but remember its in that well-known prophecy, well known in Believers Chapel, where it is stated that Gentile believers are grafted into the olive tree and become fellow partakers of the fat root of the olive tree. So then what the Old Testament intoned by the doctrine of the seed as the covenantal hymn by whom all blessings can alone come that the New Testament may explain in its shed for many for the remission of sin including all who are related to our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

Capital B: The Newness of the New Covenant. There's some justification for regarding the New Covenant as a renewed covenant and not really an absolutely new one at all. The basis for that opinion is the fact that the word *chadash* which is the word that is used for which is the word that means “new” and in *chadashab* means New Covenant is a term that often refers to that which is renewed. For example, it was used of the new moon, which is not a new moon but a renewed new moon. In fact, we use that usage ourselves for the term “new.” Each month we say there is a new moon but it's not really a new moon. It's a renewed newness that we see in the moon. So it's possible to regard that newness of the New Covenant as a renewed covenant. That is an expansion of ratification of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenant.

So let's enumerate some of the things that are in it. The New Covenant provides a redemptive basis for the covenantal revelation. That's one thing. It provides a universal knowledge of God or it offers a universal knowledge of God, a universal peace and nature in the absence of military hardwares is involved. I have Scripture reference to solve this but we don't have time to deal with them tonight trying to cover all this at one time. Fourth, it's a universal material prosperity is given. Fifth, an everlasting sanctuary in Israel will be found, Ezekiel 37, verse 26 and 28. And sixth, there will be a universal possession of the spirit of God, Joel 2, points that out and other places also. And seventh, it may also be called better since it will not have the limiting features of the Mosaic covenant which is characterized by a modern term [Inaudible]. God intended that the Mosaic covenant could come to this end and because of that it's a mutable covenant not an eternal covenant not an everlasting covenant. So the New Covenant is comprehensive more effective more spiritual more glorious than the old. In fact, so much so that in comparison it would appear as if it were totally unlike the old at all. Yet in truth, it was related to it very closely in the progress of divine revelation.

Capital C, we're coming to the major question: The New Covenant and the covenantal revelation. What's the relation between the New Covenant and the line of

covenantal revelation in the Bible? In general, the relation is this. There is continuity in the covenantal revelation in the Scriptures continuity in the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and the New Covenant. The continuity includes the same God, same divine fellowship, same seed, same people, same forgiveness of sins. The discontinuity well, we just talked about the discontinuity in all of things that are going to come to pass to the New Covenant. So we'll drop it with that.

Now, let's come to the question that, I think, many really think is the difficult question and that is the New Covenant and the church. How is the church related to the New Covenant? Does the church participate in the covenantal blessing of the New Covenant and if so how?

Now, of course, there are different viewpoints. So let me set them out. First of all, there is postmillennial interpretation. To give you an example, Charles Hodge, fine theologian, called by some the great theologian of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Mr. Hodge was a postmillennialist. He felt that the fulfillment of the New Covenant was to be expected in the later part of the inter-advent age. That is between the first coming and the second coming in blessing upon believing Jews, but it was to be fulfilled to Israel at the conclusion of the millennial age at which time after which time the Lord Jesus would come to the earth. For remember in postmillennialism, the doctrine is that the preaching of the gospel will spread the knowledge of God over the face of the earth and then following a brief period of difficulty the Lord Jesus would come after the millennial reign on the earth. Well, Hodge believed that there was a level of fulfillment of this covenant to Israel who as Jeremiah says, “The house of Israel the house of Judah,” but it would be after the kingdom of God upon the earth says the postmillennial viewpoint.

General amillennial interpretation. Amillennialism essentially means that there will be no kingdom of God upon the earth. The kingdom of God is present now. It's a heavenly reality and a spiritual reality, generally speaking. I think one of the men who's well known as an amillennialist. He regards the church as Israel and transfers the

promises of the New Covenant from the house of Israel and the house of Judah to believers of Christ today in the church. He writes this, “For the gospel age in which we are living, is that day foretold by the prophets when the law of God shall be written in the hearts of men and when the spirit of God abiding in their hearts will enable them to keep it.” Now, this particular individual who’s a reformed scholar just like Hodge but he differs from Hodge in denying that the promises are national and Israel transferring them to believers of this age both Jews and Gentiles that characteristic of amillennialism.

Now, in premillennialism there are several forms of premillennialism. All of the premillennial interpreters regard the complete fulfillment of the New Covenant is future from the standpoint of this age and all of students regard the covenant as fulfilled to Israel. In other words, Israel shall have the promises in the kingdom of God upon the earth, but they differ over the details. For example, the Scofield Bible how many of you have a Scofield Bible by the way? There are quite a few of you have a Scofield Bible. Some of you thought it was the apostolic Bible, I know. I never thought that but, you know, it’s a funny thing people criticize the Scofield Bible by saying the people who read the Scofield Bible, it’s just the notes are inspired. I never found an individual in forty years, forty-five years, in the Christian church whoever believed the notes in the Scofield Bible were inspired. The Bible teachers like to say that but it’s very unfair dishonest kind of remark if you really bothered to ask people what they believed who have Scofield Bible’s. I was greatly helped by the Scofield Bible. It was put in my hand. There’s a lot of useful information in it and it’s still a useful Bible to read. In fact, I’ve got some friends who are so weak in theology and I say read the Scofield Bible then come for an advanced course or something else because it’s very useful but it’s not inspired.

In the Scofield Bible, it’s stated that the New Covenant has a two-fold application. First, to Israel in the kingdom and second to the church in the present age. But the Scofield Bible does not explain in detail how this can be true. That is that it has a two-fold application first to Israel and the kingdom and second to the church today. It doesn’t

explain. It just says that. J. N. Darby represents another view. Mr. Darby was a dispensationalist, one of the original dispensationalists. In fact, many people would say that the theology of Dallas Theological Seminary is Darbyism and in one sense that's probably true; that is, he represents the beginning and, particularly, its widespread dissemination, ultimately, imbibed by people who founded Dallas Theological Seminary. He was one of the leaders of the brethren. He held that the New Covenant belonged solely to Israel in both the Old and New Testaments but he thought that the church participated in the benefits of Christ's sacrifice by grace. So he said the covenant is with Israel and the house of Judah but the church participates by grace. They are not really part of the covenant but by grace that is God's dispensing grace they enter into the benefits of it. “We enjoy indeed,” wrote Darby, “all the essential privileges of the New Covenant. Its foundation being laid on God's part in the blood of Christ but we do so in spirit not according to the letter.” In other words, it's not really our covenant but we get the benefits of it.

Now, you can see how a man like that held that because while in the Old Testament it says the covenant is made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah in the New Testament our Lord establishes the New Covenant. Paul says he's a minister of the New Covenant and the New Testament obviously sets out that we have the benefits of it. A third viewpoint is represented by Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, a strong dispensationalist, and he has been followed in this by Dr. Walvoord, the former president, and at least until relatively recently Dr. Charles Ryrie, who is professor of systematic theology at Dallas SMU. These three men, Dr. Ryrie, I think, reneged, revoked his opinion later but so far as I know has not written down. I give him credit for having changed his mind, but in his early books, he follows this view. And Dr. Chafer and Dr. Walvoord and Dr. Ryrie affirmed that there were two New Covenants, a New Covenant for the church and a New Covenant for Israel.



Now, I know exactly why those men did that. They found this a very difficult thing to handle with dispensationalism as they understood it. The Old Testament says the covenants made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. The New Testament makes it plain that we inherit its benefits, but if we have a view of the strictest form of separation between Israel and the church then we have a problem. And so the problem was resolved by Dr. Walvoord, Dr. Chafer, and Dr. Ryrie, for a time by affirming two New Covenants and that way you can avoid the mixing of the promises and also the mixing of Israel and the church. So Israel has a New Covenant and so does the church have a New Covenant. In my opinion, this is the council of despair. The term New Covenant is introduced into the New Testament without any modifying explanation. The Lord Jesus does not say this is the new New Covenant in my blood which is shed for the remission of sins. He says this is the New Covenant.

Now, any student of Scripture would seem to me would immediately in his mind go back to Jeremiah 31. That's what he was talking about. He introduces it without any modifying explanation. It's surely to be expected that we should give it the meaning that it had in the Old Testament just as we give the term kingdom in the New Testament the meaning that it had in the Old Testament and many other biblical expressions. That's the way to handle all of these terms. This view has the advantage of this Dr. Walvoord says, “this view has the advantage of not complicating the promises given expressly Israel with the promises given to the church. Probably to my mind indicating that the wish was father to the thought of two New Covenants.

One might also ask, what is the content of this New Covenant? This new New Covenant -- what's its content? We apposite a new New Covenant but it's not described anywhere in the New Testament. Its contents are not described and it's never specifically spelled out and applied to the church. I think you can see that this is a kind of interpretation that sound hermeneutics could never accept. Dr. Walvoord likes the idea since this delivers him from the necessity of explaining may partake of the blessings

covenanted to Israel in Jeremiah 31:34. He escapes the implications of the citation of Jeremiah 31:34, and Hebrews 8, by noting the author only wanted to make one point, namely, that the old covenant has been done away with. That's made by the statement of verse 13, that we looked at remember? Where the author said, “if the new he made the old, old.” But this, however, will not aid this not aid him in the interpretation of 10:15 through 17, and it won't aid him in Hebrews chapter 12, verse 24, and it won't aid him in chapter 13, verse 20 and 21. So the new New Covenant presents a way out of the problem. So assigning some of the difficult texts to that covenant, the old New Covenant may be limited to Israel. All of these and purposes are very strong dispensationalists.

Now, let me say that I don't think that dispensationalism is altogether wrong. There are lots of people who seem to take that view. I don't think that. There are lots of things that the dispensationalists say that are very true and some very helpful things are said by them, but at the same time dispensationalists are human beings and they err in their interpretation. And let me hasten to say I probably do too. I don't know where. You understand. [Laughter] But knowing that I'm a man and a fallible man, I know that somewhere my thinking is a bit askew maybe quite a bit askew. When we get to heaven, we'll settle all of these questions and we will see where we stand and probably all of us will have to learn a bit more theology. It's humbling isn't it to realize that the persons who are in heaven already understand. They know more theology than any theologian on the face of the earth already. That's rather humbling but true.

Now, all of these are dispensationalists. I'm going to suggest to you another form of premillennialism, which to me is better able to satisfy the claims of Scripture. I tend to the view that the New Covenant is as I've been trying to set out simply a further expansion or renewal of earlier covenants which specifically included blessings for Gentile believers. The Abrahamic covenant, the Davidic covenant, the New Covenant have provisions for other believers of other nationalities than Israel. So that what we have in the Abrahamic covenant spelled out about the seed, “In thy seed shall the families of

the earth be blessed.” It’s spelled out through the Old Testament in the promised salvation of Gentiles. So that the promises of the unconditional covenant from the beginning have provisions for Gentile salvation, but even though they had provisions for Gentile salvation the covenant belonged to Abraham and to his seed. The covenant belonged to Abraham and his ethnic seed. They belonged to Israel. That’s why Paul after he fell after he uses his illustration of the olive tree in Romans chapter 11 in verse 23 and 24, those of you who were awake Sunday morning and turned to KRLD and were still awake near the end of the program in verse 23 and 24, I set forth Paul’s logic the divine logic from his illustration. This is it. They too, that is national Israel, if they abide not still in unbelief shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again just like they were again. For he said, “If you were cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature,” and remember he’s talking of the Gentiles as he says up here in verse 13, “For I speak to you Gentiles.” So verse 24, “For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into,” not the olive tree, not the olive tree, “their own olive tree?” It’s Israel’s olive tree. It’s not a Gentile olive tree. It’s Israel’s olive tree and Gentiles are grafted into it as unnatural branches. It’s their olive tree.

And, I think, it’s last Sunday morning I cited Professor Achtmeyer of Union Seminary with just a recent commentary in the Epistle to the Romans, if you’re going to get the blessing of divine redemption you’ve got to get it through Abraham. A review of the books said, “he didn’t know whether that’s really true or not,” but it is true. You have to get it through Abraham.

So the New Covenant is the expansion of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenant specifically setting out the redemptive basis and blessings that issue from the historical covenantal revelation. Gentile participation was set out from the beginning. The manner of the participation underwent a change with the formation of the church after the abrogation of the Mosaic law. In the Old Testament days, a Gentile had to come into

Israel be circumcised, be put under the Mosaic law, but after the cross the law having been done away with as Acts 15, makes very plain, Acts 10, to tell the story plainly.

Now, the Gentiles come into the possessions of the blessings of the olive tree without being put on the Mosaic Law. The most significant passage that gives in detail Gentile participation in the Old Testament promises is that passage in Romans 11, but you'll find it in Ephesians chapter 2, and Ephesians chapter 3, and you'll have allusions to it in other places as well. So how important that is because that clarifies that relationship of all believers to the New Covenant. We do possess the blessings but mind you we're still Gentile believers, and Israel is still when they believe an israelitish believer. That national ethnic distinction is maintained on through the word of God. In Romans 11, picture the ebb and flow of the ethnic story of the nation Israel and the nation of the Gentiles. Read Romans 11, over and over again and then come to me and say you're right Lewis.

Well, let me just close by referring briefly to these other two points here. The New Covenant and the time of fulfillment. Individuals enter into the blessings of the New Covenant now but the New Covenant itself awaits a future fulfillment to the nation. Paul spells that out in Romans 11, and in other places. It's probably here that we should make the distinction that is properly made regarding the reception of the promises following Manneer who says more importantly, “This book, Hebrews, notes the difference between refusing the promise and receiving what is promise. In receiving the promise recipients are declared heirs. In receiving what is promised, they obtain their inheritance.” We do not have yet all the blessings that are promised in the New Covenant but we are heirs of the covenant when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and we possess the forgiveness of sins. But the fullness of the promises of the New Covenant await the future but there is nothing to prevent us from entering into part of them and still hope for the culmination at the second coming.

There're many lines of evidence that indicate a future fulfillment of the New Covenant, although, there is a reception of the promise now by both believing Jew and Gentiles. The future fulfillment is implied by our Lord's words in Matthew 26:29. I read them to you, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it New with you in my Father's kingdom." Romans 11:25 through 27, says, "And so all Israel shall be saved," and referring that to the future times. The whole context of Jeremiah 30 through 33, speaks of the restoration of the Jewish nation. In fact, the prophet says they are giving the words that God gave to him the whole heavens will have to subscribe if Israel doesn't enter in to its blessing forever. Read Jeremiah 30, 31, 32, 33, and you'll see over and over again he lays great stress upon the fact that Israel, the nation, shall continue before him forever, Gentiles too. Other passages in the Old Testament say that as well. We don't have time to talk about them. One final question, I started six or seven minutes late. Just I can think of this one question real quickly.

Now, there're some people who will acknowledge that we do inherit the spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic covenant but we Gentiles who form part of the church of Jesus Christ today do not inherit the land promises. Now, there isn't any text to support that. That's an affirmation without any support. As a matter of fact, it doesn't have any biblical support either. There is never any limitation in the Bible. We inherit all of the promises of the covenantal system and we inherit the land promises as well. There is one text that, I think, is very difficult for those who hold that view to handle and it's the passage in Galatians chapter 3 in verse 16. I'll read it make the comment and then we'll close. Paul says, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." Now, in verse 29 notice he says, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Now, is it not logical and likely that we are Abraham's seed and we're heirs according to the promise, we're heirs of the Abrahamic promises. Doesn't that make sense? Of course it does. Don't tell me it doesn't. It does. You haven't told me that. So

you would not believe that. If you are just reading the text, you will see that. Of course, it means we are inherit the land promises. All of Abraham’s promises, we inherit them.

Now, in verse 16 he says, “And to thy seed.” That’s an expression in the Greek text *kai tou spermate esy*, “and to thy seed.” That happens to occur in the Old Testament in more than one place. That expression Paul got it from the Septuagint, the great translation of the Old Testament and if you go back and look at the places that’s found in the Old Testament it’s found in passages which have to do with the land promises. So the very fact that Paul cites this, “And to thy seed,” from those contexts indicates specifically that Paul expected us to inherit the land promises too because we inherit all the promises in our covenantal head the Lord Jesus Christ. So I don’t know how we’re going to inherit it and I don’t know in what way we will participate.

We’ve reached the limit of my knowledge at the present time, but we shall inherit those promises because we form part of those who are heirs of Abraham in fact called seed of Abraham, but the national ethnic distinction are always maintained. Never do we read that Israel is a term that can be applied to Gentiles nor that the term Gentiles may be applied to Israel. They are given their common senses in the word of God. Why? So that common people can understand the Bible. That’s really why.

One minute over time, I’ve defeated the tapes, I think, tonight too.

Let’s close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy word. We realize, Lord, we do not understand everything concerning the future and concerning the purpose of God. Give us further enlightenment. Enable us to refine our views but above all may they have practical impact in our lives. Help us to serve the Lord as true. [End of Tape.]