



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Various

“The New Covenant”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] In the judicial plans and purposes of God, to the right-hand of God in him and so Lord we thank Thee for all of the blessings that have come to us through him. And we thank Thee for the day and time when Thou didst lead us to put our faith and trust in him who is the Son of God.

And we thank Thee for Thy word, which is a light unto our feet and a lamp unto our paths. We thank Thee that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. And Lord tonight we pray that Thou wilt feed us with the living bread, the written word, and through that the living word, the Lord Jesus.

May our understanding of the truth of the word of God be enlarged tonight as we consider the teaching of the Old and New Testaments. We commiteth to Thee and each one present for Thy blessing in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Now according to the lesson outlined which you have tonight the subject is The New Covenant. Now in presenting the new covenant I want to set the new covenant in the context of all of the covenants of the Bible and so the lesson will actually be on the covenant of Israel. Of which, of course, the new covenant is the final significant one. But we're going to, as I mentioned just before we started, to range all

over the Bible tonight from beginning through to the end so that we can understand something of the large place that the term covenant or testament, better rendered covenant in both testaments, has in the plan of God.

The covenants are specifically said to be Israel's possession. We of course do enter into the blessings of them as we shall see. But they are called specifically the covenants of Israel. And I would like to begin tonight by asking you to read with me a couple of New Testament passages, one in Romans chapter 9 and then the other in Ephesians chapter 2.

Romans chapter 9, verses 1 through 5. This is page twelve hundred and two in the Schofield edition of the King James Version; Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians remember. Romans chapter 9, verses 1 through 5. Now here of course Paul has just finished outlining the great theme of salvation and the question naturally comes to the one who has been reading who knows something of God's plans according to the Old Testament. Well Paul you have told us a lot about salvation but we thought that salvation was of the Jews and the Jews seem to be left out as you have presented salvation. What about them? And so in Romans 9 through 11 Paul points out the relationship of Israel to the plans and purposes of God. And in essence he says that Israel stands at the center of God's plans and we today who are gentiles who have been blessed through Israel's Messiah are entering in to blessings that really belong to Israel and so all Israel shall be saved, he will say, at the conclusion of the section in Romans chapter 11.

But now beginning at the 1st verse he of course is just beginning to take up this subject and he says,

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants,

(now this is what I want you to notice, notice he says to Israel pertains the covenants,) and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Messiah came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.”

So Paul states here that the covenants belong to Israel, they are Israel's possession because they are made with Israel, is his point. Now turn with me to the Ephesians passage, chapter 2, and we will read verses 11 through 13. Ephesians 2, verses 11 through 13. I will do a good bit of reading tonight because I think that one of the great values of reading is that you are able to see these things with your own little two eyes. And that has great value, you know, so that you see them and you just don't have to accept these things on the basis of my testimony. Ephesians 2, verse 11, page twelve hundred and fifty-one.

“Wherefore, (Paul speaks to these Ephesian Christians who have, of course, come out for the most part out of gentiledom into faith in Christ.) Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time, (that is, before you knew Christ as your savior,) ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”

So he says they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise. The covenants, then, belong to Israel. This is a very important doctrine and one that we need to recognize if we are to understand what God is doing today. There is a system of theology called Covenant Theology. Now Covenant Theology has many fine features about it. There are many things about the system which are

honoring to our Lord Jesus Christ and glorifying to god. It, however, is of comparatively recent origin, having originated generally speaking in the 18th Century in Holland. As someone has said the covenants or the covenants as the covenant theologians have constructed them were made not in heaven but in Holland, for most of the Covenant Theology arose from Dutch theology.

Covenant Theology describes the theology of God under the basis of three covenants. The covenant theologians say that there is a covenant of redemption. This covenant of redemption is a covenant made between the persons of the trinity in eternity. That is, the Father covenanted with the Son that the Father would be the source of redemption and the Son would be the means of securing it and the Holy Spirit would be the one who would apply it to the hearts of those who were chosen by God. Then also there was a second covenant, the covenant of works which was their way of describing Adam's relationship to God in the Garden of Eden. We have discussed this, remember, he was placed in the garden innocent and he was given that one command that he could eat of all of the trees of the garden but of the fruit of the tree which was in the midst of the garden. He would not eat of that for in the day that he ate thereof he would surely die. So Adam had a works relationship with God according to the covenant theologians.

And then also a third covenant, the covenant of grace. The theologians said that God after man had sinned, or considering that man would sin, made a covenant of grace promising that if the sinner believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Godhead, would confer upon him, give him in grace, salvation. So covenant theology was built around the covenant of redemption between the presence of the trinity, the covenant of works involving Adam and the Garden of Eden, and the covenant of grace involving the sinner who would be saved by grace.

Now there's nothing, of course, unusually about these three covenants. They are not stated as such in the Bible, you cannot find the statement the covenant of redemption of the covenant of grace, or the covenant of works, these are theological terms. Now just

because they are theological terms that does not mean that they are not valid biblical terms because, after all, the trinity is not a biblical term. It is a theological term used to describe something that we see in the Bible that there is such a thing as the trinity. But the covenants as set forth by the covenant theologians do not tell the whole story. The basis of Covenant Theology ultimately comes down to this, that the covenant theologians believe that the Israel of the Old Testament is to be equated largely or generally speaking with the church of the New Testament. That is, in the church of the New Testament Israel's promises are fulfilled. That promises specifically given to Abraham, for example, in the age of promise these promises belong to the church.

Now we have seen that some of this is true. Then also other promises given to Israel are fulfilled in the church according to the covenant theologians. Now without being disrespectful of men who are, some of whom, are extremely godly men, others are not, but nevertheless without trying to be disrespectful to them or try to argue with them I think that this basic point they are in error in and that is that Israel is not the church. That the Bible distinguishes the nation Israel from the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, composed of all who have believed in him, whether Jews or gentiles.

So this is the thing that we want to do tonight. We want to take a look at these covenants that are set forth in the Bible as over against the covenants of the theologians and see what God has to say. And I think that we shall see, if we see nothing else, that God has certain specific promises that he made to the nation Israel and that he intends to fulfill these promises to the nation Israel, even though in the present time in grace he allows us to participate in some of the blessings which were theirs because they during the present time have rejected him.

To illustrate the significance of this I would like to tell you a little story. There was once a rabbi or a Jew, let me put it that way, I think it was just a Jew, but this is as far as I know a true story. A Jew was talking with a Christian minister and this Christian minister was a very fine man but he was a Covenant Theologian. And they were

discussing the promises that had been made by God in the Old Testament. And the Jew asked him if he would to turn to Luke chapter 1, verses 31 through 33, for he was familiar with the New Testament. And he said, “Do you notice that the promise was given to Mary by the angel that the Son, that is Mary’s son, verse 32,’ of Luke. I think it would be good for us to turn here, Luke chapter 1, page one thousand seventy-one. Luke chapter 1, verses 31 through 33.

The Jew asked the Christian minister this question, he said, “You’ll notice that Luke says in verse 32, giving the words of the angel to Mary, ‘He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.’” He asked the Christian minister this, he said, “You’ll notice that the angel said to Mary that Jesus would reign over the house of Jacob forever.” He said, “Do you believe this?” And he said, the Christian minister said, “No I do not believe this. I believe that this is to be spiritualized, that the house of Jacob is not a reference to the house of Jacob but rather to the redeemed of all ages and that we are not to understand this literally.”

Well of course the Jew then said, “Well now here is an interesting thing, you ask me to believe that these are spiritual promises here in verse 32 and verse 33. But then sir you ask me to believe literally verse 31, which says, ‘And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.’” He said, “Sir do you accept the virgin birth?” And the Christian minister said, “Yes I do accept the virgin birth.” And he said, “You mean to say that you accept the far greater miracle of verse 31 and you accept that as literal teaching and yet you are not willing to accept verses 32 and 33 as literal teaching because you cannot see how this can possibly be, that the Lord Jesus could reign over the house of Jacob forever.” He said, “Sir why do you believe one and you do not believe the other?”

Well the Christian minister said, “I believe it because it’s a fact, the virgin birth.” Even the Jew with an air of inexpressible contempt says, “Ah, I see. You believe Scripture because it is a fact. I believe Scripture because it is the word of God.” Now that is the difference in attitude, I think, that we are to have when we come to the Bible as over against an attitude that we’re not to have. We have to believe Scripture because it is the word of God, not because of our experience, not because of what we conceive to be facts, but rather we are to believe it because it is the word of God and God is faithful to his word and will fulfill it.

Well now let’s, with this just as an introduction, let’s take a brief run through the covenants of the Bible. Not the covenants of the Covenant theologian, but the covenants of the Bible, those that are specifically mentioned in the word of God. And the first one we’ll turn to is one that we’ve already referred to and we’ll just read it and I’ll make a comment and then we’ll move on for the sake of time. It’s found in Genesis chapter 9. It is, of course, the Noahic covenant which we have already discussed. But let’s read it again, verses 8 through 17, of Genesis chapter 9. Excuse me. Genesis chapter 9, verses 8 through 17.

“And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my

covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.”

The Noahic covenant, remember, was God’s unconditional guarantee to mankind that there would never be again a flood judgment over the earth. Now this is a minor covenant in the Bible. Not a whole lot of significance is attached to it but it is one of the biblical covenants. It has its relationship to 2 Peter chapter 3 for when Peter describes the final judgment that God will pour out upon the earth in that 3rd chapter, he goes on to point out that it will not be a judgment like the flood but it will rather be a judgment of fire. So God promises never to bring the flood over the earth again. He does not promise that he will not bring a judgment of fire because he says throughout the rest of the word that that judgment will be a judgment of fire.

The second covenant that we have, and we have already studied this one, too, is the Abrahamic covenant. So let’s turn over to Genesis chapter 12, verses 1 through 3, and remind ourselves again of some of the things that we should have learned. Remember the Lord chose Abraham in order to make him the father of many nations and he gave him some promises which we call Abrahamic promises. They are in Genesis 12, verses 1 through 3,

“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

Now notice Abraham was promised a land, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee.” Verse 7, “And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.” So Abraham was promised a land. Then also Abraham was promised a seed, we just read that in verse 7. Furthermore Abraham was promised a royal line to succeed him. Now that is not given in Genesis 12, we must turn over to chapter 17, and read verse 6. So let’s turn over there.

Now you can see from this that these covenants are given in broad terms and then as they proceed details are given to fill in so that more details are given later. And verse 6, “And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.” So Abraham was promised a land, he was promised a seed, he was promised a royal line. Now these Abrahamic promises were unconditional promises. They were not given to Abraham if he obeyed and if he disobeyed then he lost them. But they were unconditional promises. They were, “I will do this.” And in, then, the Epistle to the Galatians Paul stresses the fact that this is God’s promise, it is a promise, it is not a two way covenant like the Mosaic law, “If you obey me then I will do this.” But these were unconditional promises given to Abraham. And the Old Testament men who were spiritual knew that they were unconditional promises. And even out of their disobedience they looked forward to the time when these promises would be fulfilled to them.

Now these are the basic biblical promises. These promises given to Abraham are the broadest and the basic promises of God. And everything else in the whole program of God goes back to Genesis chapter 12, “In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. So that ultimately when the Lord Jesus grew in this kingdom we have the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham.

Now those who were spiritual in our Lord's day recognized that and I want you to turn with me now to Luke chapter 1 so that you can see again that they were looking forward to the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises. Luke chapter 1, we all know the Magnificat, and in Luke chapter 1, verse 46 and following, Mary, we almost could say, sings for this is given in the text, in the original text, in something of lyric fashion under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Mary sings these words, for they are arranged in lyric fashion, poetic fashion according to Hebrew poetry which is not exactly like our poetry, you know. So she begins by saying in verse 46, of Luke 1, page one thousand seventy-two, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.” And then she goes on to speak about how God has given her mercy and grace. By the way you'll notice that it says here, “My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.” So Mary was not a person who did not need a savior, she needed a savior herself. It has been said by some that Mary was born without sin. That, of course, is not true as you can see from this text right here.

But let's go on to verse 54, “He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.” So Mary says in this Magnificat that the promise to her of the Son, the Lord Jesus, who would come by means by the virgin birth that promise is the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham. So she sees in this the coming of Christ, the fulfillment of these promises made long ago.

Well that is the second covenant and a basic and important covenant it is. I think you can say this without any question, that if you do not understand the Abrahamic covenant in that God's promises to Israel will be fulfilled then you cannot understand the program of God at all with regard to the future. Now of course you can be a Christian, fortunately you do not have to understand all of the deep things of the Bible to be a Christian. All you need to do to be a Christian is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ who died for you, who gave himself as the one who is your substitute on the cross, took your sins away. And the moment you say in your heart, “I thank you Lord Jesus for dying for

me,” then you become a Christian. Then the Lord gives you the Holy Spirit and you’re able to understand some of these things about which we are talking now. It’s not necessary for you to understand all of these things to be a Christian, but of course you will be a happy, joyous Christian and you will be an intelligent Christian if you understand these things and you will read the newspaper with some understanding that you never read before, too. And when you see the black headlines on the front page you won’t be so disturbed, you won’t be tossed to and fro if you understand from whence you have come and whether you are going by the promises of God. So the promises are important but they are not essential for salvation.

Well let’s look at the third covenant and since we’ve just spent three times on the Mosaic covenant it will not be necessary for us to read from Exodus chapter 20 all the way through Exodus chapter 24. I hope you do remember some of this. You remember that the covenant to Moses including the Ten Commandments was, however, a conditional covenant. In that covenant God said, “If you obey my voice then you shall be a peculiar people under me and a kingdom of priests.” And when the covenant was inaugurated you remember that they slew animals and Moses took the basin with the blood and part he poured on the altar signifying that God had done his part and then he took and sprinkled the people with the other to show they had part in this covenant too.

So this was a conditional covenant in contradistinction to the Abrahamic covenant. It was a covenant that Israel must do their part in order to receive the blessing of God. God would then do his part. Now the reason that God gave the Mosaic covenant, and remember this is here when it was given at Mount Sinai, the reason that he gave this covenant was to show Israel their sin. Remember that? And then also to show them what, besides their sin, to show them by the ceremonies?

[Comment from audience member]

[Johnson] The savior, right, the savior. In other words they were, you see, in the Abrahamic covenant nothing was said about man's sin. And man needs to be morally prepared to receive Christ as savior. That's why today when you preach the gospel to so many congregations there is so little response. They are not morally prepared. They do not consider themselves today to be sinners in the sight of God. They think that maybe perhaps they're a little crooked and a little perverse. And I don't mean crooked in the sense of dishonest, I mean crooked in the sense of maybe not being morally as they should be but after all God is not a kind of person who judges sin today. Our ideas of God are different, our ideas of sin are different. And so we usually think that if we haven't spent some time in the penitentiary recently we are not really sinners at all, you know.

And so the reason is that when the gospel is preached, why, we say, “I wonder to whom he's talking. We don't have any sinners in our congregation, you know. We're all nice law abiding citizens, we come from Richardson, Texas and we are nice people out here in the North part of this part of the country.” We have that kind of attitude, you know. For twenty-five years I had that. I sat in the Presbyterian church and I thought because I was a Presbyterian I was not a sinner. After all, others might be sinners, particularly Baptists, but I was not [Laughter]. You know?

Well this is the attitude I think a lot of us have. Perhaps you don't have the attitude I had but that was the attitude I had for twenty-five years, and I wasn't a sinner. So naturally when the gospel was preached it didn't mean anything to me because I wasn't interested in salvation.

Well Israel needed to be taught sin. And so the law was given, God said, to show them that they were sinners. To give them this series of, “Thou shalt not's,” to show them that if they were honest that they could not keep them. But of course Israel did just as we do today. They manufactured some human substitutes for keeping the commandments. They set up a whole series of human fulfillments of the Law of Moses so

that when Paul came along he said as far as touching the righteousness, which was in the law, he was blameless.

Now can you imagine a man saying a thing like that? He had never coveted. He had, you see, had interpreted that statement “covet” in such a way that he was not guilty of the law. Then in Romans he then tells us when the truth really came home to him by the Holy Spirit then he learned sin. For the law said, “Thou shalt not covet,” and then he realized that sin was exceeding sinful.

So as Israel manufactured a series of human traditions so that if they could keep these human traditions they were blameless, so we today. But at any rate, the law was given to show them their sin and also in wonderful grace by means of the sacrifices and the priesthood God was giving them just a little visual lesson every day of how there must come a redeemer to die for their sins. So the Mosaic covenant then was a conditional covenant designed to prepare Israel for the coming of Christ.

But there's another covenant in the Old Testament that we have not discussed at all for the sake of time up to this point. And I would like to refer to it for it is the fourth of the biblical covenants. Since it is a biblical covenant we ought to look at it and it is the Palestinian covenant. And I want you to turn to Deuteronomy chapter 29, verse 1, and then we'll read chapter 30, verses 1 through 10. This covenant actually consumes several chapters but since we do not have time to read every verse we will just sort of read the highlights.

Now notice this is Deuteronomy chapter 29, and verse 1. Deuteronomy 29, verse 1, page two hundred and forty-eight. Now before we read it let me remind you of Israel's position at this time. They have been given the Mosaic law, they've been given the Mosaic covenant. And now they are to be brought up to the land, they have come to the land and they're just about ready to enter the land in the next book of the Bible, Joshua. Joshua will take them into the land. Moses, of course, will die, Joshua will take them in. So he is giving them last minute instructions before they enter the land. And since they're

entering the land he gives them this Palestinian covenant in order to show them the conditions under which they will enjoy possession of the land.

So verse 1, “These are the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.” Now the covenant in Horeb, of course, is the Mosaic covenant, that’s another term for Mount Sinai. So this is a second covenant.

Now let’s read chapter 30, verses 1 through 10,

“And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, (you see, all of the rest of that chapter have to do with the blessing and the curse and how God will curse them and will judge them if they do not obey.) When all these things that come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, with all thy soul; That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. (Now this is extremely important. You see, he has said I’m making a covenant with you, if you don’t obey me I’m going to scatter you to the ends of the earth, but if you do obey me then I will gather you from all of the places whither I have scattered you. You so you can see he’s laying down the condition of obedience for enjoying the blessing of the land. Verse 4,) If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee, (that means that no matter where the Jews may be, if they turn to the Lord then God will gather them into his land, that’s what he’s saying.) And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the LORD

thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the LORD thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul.”

So here then is the Palestinian covenant. It is called a covenant and it is, you can see, a conditional covenant just like the Mosaic covenant. Not an unconditional one but a conditional one so that possession of the land which was promised to Abraham is dependent upon the obedience of those to whom the promises were given.

If I were to ask you a question today in the light of this, why do the Jews not have the land that God gave them according to the Old Testament, what would be the reason?

[Comment from the audience]

[Johnson] Disobedience, right. Disobedience. Israel is in disobedience and that is why they are not in their land. If the nation Israel should suddenly turn to the Lord they would be gathered back into their land. Now that is what Paul will say in the New Testament very specifically.

So the Abrahamic covenant guaranteed them title to the land. The Palestinian covenant determines their possession of that which belongs to them. Now illustrated in this way let's suppose that my son who is now twenty-four years old were actually

fifteen and just getting ready to graduate from high school. And let's suppose as he was and as all young high school students are he wants to drive a car so bad that he just constantly pesters us day after day after day. Let's suppose that he is this way, for he was that way. And we were pestered day after day after day, “Daddy let me drive.” He figured out more ways to get a license before he was sixteen, I think, than any other sixteen year old, but the Lord gave me grace and I managed to say no all the way through and retained his friendship.

But let's suppose that when he is sixteen and he graduates from high school at approximately the same time and I buy a car for him, supposing of course I have the money to do this, I buy the car and I say to him, “Son,” on his graduation day, “this lovely new automobile is yours. I have put it in your name. It belongs to Samuel Lewis Johnson III. But I want you to understand, son, that you are still a minor. And you are under the authority of me in my home. And I want to tell you that though this car belongs to you, if you do not obey the laws of the land, if you go out and you speed and you get tickets the moment that you begin to disobey the law of the land I'm going to deprive you of the use of your car.” In other words, the title is given to him in grace. But the use of his car is dependent upon his obedience.

Now this is the difference between the Abrahamic covenant and the Palestinian covenant. The Abrahamic covenant guarantees to Israel possession of the land according to the promises of Genesis chapter 15. But the Palestinian covenant of Deuteronomy chapter 30 conditions the use of their land. And their use of the land, their possession of the land, is dependent upon their obedience to the word of God.

Now because they have disobeyed God they disobeyed him through the Old Testament. Their preeminent disobedience was the rejection of the Lord Jesus, he has scattered them to the ends of the earth and they do not have their land today. Now mind you there is a nation Israel in the land, in part of the land that God has promised them. So apparently things are beginning to work towards perhaps a fulfillment of that promise

in the not too far distant future. We do not know when, of course, but at least we can see how things might be fulfilled before too many decades or so pass by. Maybe sooner, maybe later.

But at any rate the point I'm trying to make is that the Abrahamic covenant guaranteed their title to the land. The Palestinian covenant governs their possession of it. Now the miracle of the Jew is a remarkable thing. The fact that they still have national entity throughout all of the judgments of the past is a miracle in itself. One of Frederick the Great's marshals was talking with Frederick the Great once and Frederick the Great asked him as they were discussing spiritual things, "Give me in one word evidence of the inspiration of the Scriptures," for the marshal was a believer. And the man said to Frederick the Great, "I'll give you in one word proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures," and he said, "The Jew."

Now there was a lot of truth in that because the history of the Jew is a remarkable thing. They have been scattered to the four corners of the earth, they have been dispersed abroad, and yet they have not been absorbed. True there have been some intermarriages and this is constantly going on, but the Jew is still an entity. And even though he has mingled among all the nations of the earth you can still pick out Jews wherever you go. If you go to Germany you can see the Jew. If you go to Britain you can see the Jew. If you go to Switzerland you can see the Jew. If you go to Italy you can see the Jew. If you come to Brooklyn you can see the Jew. And many of them, of course.

So they have never been absorbed. And you know I think if I were talking to a Jew I would like to - and I have done this too, from time to time - I would always like to ask him this question, "Here is a question a want to ask you, in the Old Testament from the time that God gave you the promises to your father Abraham, you disobeyed God, did you not?" "Yes, we disobeyed God. We disobeyed God and we had to go off into captivity, the Assyrians came in and took the ten tribes captive, and then ultimately we

went into the Babylonian captivity. The two tribes went into captivity.” “Why were you in captivity for seventy years?” “Well we were in captivity for seventy years because we committed all of the abominations that the Bible describes. We set up idols and we worshiped idols instead of the true God. Well can't there be any sin any greater than that?” “No, this is one of the greatest sins possible, to set up idols and worship them instead of the true God, this is an abomination under Jehovah. Well now, let me ask you a question, why is it in the light of all these sins that you committed in the Old Testament period that God only sent you into captivity for seventy years when today now Jerusalem has been destroyed, not a stone has been left standing upon a stone in the temple and for almost two thousand years you have been scattered to the four corners of the earth. Pray tell me what sin have you committed now that is greater than all of the sins of the Old Testament?” And of course a Jew, an unbelieving Jew, has no answer to that. But of course the great sin that Israel committed was the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah. That was the great sin.

And I want you to turn with me to a passage in which this is stated. It's in Leviticus chapter 26. Leviticus chapter 26. And you know in this Leviticus chapter 26 we have the Palestinian covenant again. And in this the conditions of blessing are given and also the chastisements. And if you have a Schofield edition you'll notice the chastisements are listed as the first, the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth, and then the prediction of the dispersion to the ends of the earth. And I want you to notice verse 40 of Leviticus chapter 26. After he has said,

“They that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them. (Now notice,) If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me. And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if

then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.”

Now the thing I want you to notice here is that in verse 40 when we read here, “If they shall confess their iniquity, with their trespass which they trespassed against me,” in the Hebrew text these words are in the singular, singular. Now in verse 39 he mentions iniquities in the plural but here in verse 40 when he speaks about their confession of their trespass he uses the singular. Because, you see, in the mind of God the trespass and the iniquity is related to the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ as Messiah. And that is why Paul says his heart’s desire and prayer toward God is that Israel might be saved.

So the Palestinian covenant then is a covenant that governs the possession and enjoyment of the land. Well now I want to go on and try to finish these covenants and we have two more extremely important covenants to mention. So let’s look at 2 Samuel chapter 7. This is not quite as important in one sense as the Abrahamic but it does fill in some details. 2 Samuel chapter 7.

Now remember in the Abrahamic covenant the Lord promised a land, he promised a seed, and remember tonight I mentioned that he promised a royal seed. King’s should come out of him. Now the Davidic covenant, which is described here in 2 Samuel chapter 7, is a covenant in which details are given with regard to the king. If in the Abrahamic covenant we have promises that pertain to the land and the enjoyment of it in the kingdom of Israel when they come back into the land and enjoy their land the Davidic covenant is designed to show us who among them will rule when Israel possesses their land. And of course the one who will rule is the Lord Jesus Christ. For he is of Israel. He is the great King David of Israel.

Now you know 2 Samuel chapter 7 has to do with David's desire to build the Lord a house. David, you know David was a man who had a heart after the Lord. And he was a remarkable man but he was a man of warfare. But David had an attachment and devotion to the Lord which is an admirable thing. And a time came in his life when he reflected, well we're living in sealed houses, we're living in wonderful homes, but the Lord all of this time has dwelt in the tabernacle behind the curtains, now I want to build the Lord a house. And Nathan said, remember, “Go ahead and build it David,” and then the Lord spoke to Nathan and said, “No Nathan, David will not build me a house. Solomon is going to build a house, but not David. But I want you to give some words to David and so in 2 Samuel chapter 7, and verse 12, let's begin reading there,

“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom, He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son.”

Now this promise, of course, was to David's whole line. And Solomon did build the house, but Solomon was not the fulfillment of this because Solomon was not David's - he was David's son but he was not God's son. And the writer of the Epistle to Hebrews in the New Testament tells us to whom this really pertained, it pertained to the Lord Jesus Christ who was David's greater son, ultimately. But the point I wanted to make from the Davidic covenant is that here God gives us an additional detail. All that was said in the Abrahamic promises was that kings would come out of Abraham. But now in the Davidic covenant the king and details are given about him, the king is described and he is described, of course, in terms that refer ultimately only to the Lord Jesus Christ. So the Abrahamic covenant is the root of all the covenants. The others expand. The Palestinian

expands regarding the land, the Davidic regarding the kingdom, the new covenant will expand regarding the seed in a moment.

Now it's a remarkable thing that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only person who has today an incontrovertible right to sit on the throne of David. Isn't that interesting? No other person can point to any historical records in Israel which guarantee him the right to sit upon the throne of David. If you were to look among the Jews today for records you would discover that they were destroyed when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. The only records that exist today to determine a man's right to the Davidic throne according to the Old Testament promises are the records of Matthew chapter 1 and Luke chapter 3. And the Lord Jesus is the only person who has an incontrovertible right to sit on that throne.

And you might be interested to know this, I haven't time to go into details, but in the Old Testament it is stated at one place in the Old Testament that no one who was of the Davidic seed would sit on that throne forever. In other words when Jehoiakim came and he had sinned against the Lord it was stated that no one from his seed would sit on that throne forever. Now here was a remarkable contradiction. God had said that the king would come from David and then as the line developed finally in the line he said, “No one from this line shall sit on the throne.”

Well how then is it possible for the Lord Jesus Christ to sit on this throne? Well you see there were two lines from David, one from Nathan and one from Solomon. And through Solomon, or through one line, let's put it this way, through one line the legal right to this throne came. But at the same time it was stated that if a person was from that line physically he could not sit on the throne. So the legal claimant to the throne of David could not be physically from the line. How then is it possible for a man to sit on the throne then and not violate this prohibition? Well if he is of the seed of David and yet at the same time not of the seed physically through Solomon's line but legally possessing that right then it is possible for him to sit on the throne. Having legal right but since he is

not physically of the line to not come under the curse pronounced in the Old Testament. And of course this is why the Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. You see, he was born of a virgin for the simple reason that he could not be, aside from the fact that he must be pure in order to be our savior, but in order to be our Davidic king he must not be of Joseph's line physically, but yet at the same time he must be of the seed of David. And of course he was seed of David because he was seed of Mary who was also of the Davidic line through Nathan.

But since she married Joseph who was the legal claimant to the legal throne the Lord Jesus as the first son possessed that right legally to sit on the throne and he did not come under the curse of the line physically, thus by reason of the virgin birth the Lord Jesus is the only person who can ever sit on the Davidic throne. I wish I had time to talk about this but we have got to go on here, I want to finish this.

At any rate you'll notice that God's promises to Israel now include a king. These promises are based upon his word, they're based upon his character. He is a faithful God. In Psalm 89 when the Davidic promises are set to - well set to poetry, frequently in the Bible you know you know have in the historical books truth presented historically and then in the Psalms you will have the same truth presented lyrically or poetically. There it is stated that this promise to David is sure because the witness in the heavens is faithful.

I ran across a story not too long ago about a little boy in New Orleans, a little colored boy which impressed me very much because it illustrates Bible truth so well. Many years ago a man was talking with a local person in New Orleans. And this man was saying to the friend who was a Bible teacher, “In the old days we used to have some very virulent fever outbreaks in New Orleans. And a story has been cared down in my family, which you might be interested in,” he told the Bible teacher. He said, “My father or my grandfather,” I've forgotten which, “was one day in the midst of one of these outbreaks of fever, walking on the outside of the City of New Orleans down a road. And he looked

over on the side and he saw a little colored boy over in the bushes there, apparently very sick. And as he approached him and turned him over and looked at him he saw the boy was still alive and that he could still talk. And he asked him, ‘Son what in the world are you doing here?’ He said, ‘Why I’m here waiting for God.’ And the man said, ‘Waiting for God, what do you mean?’ He said, ‘Well daddy died on Monday, and my brother died on Tuesday, and mother died last night. And just before she died she told me to wait on the Lord, that he would take care of me. And so I’m here waiting on for God.’” Well it’s very interesting because you see, he went on to say this, “And mother never told a lie.” His confidence was resting in the character of his mother and the word of his mother.

And so our confidence in the Bible, in all of the promises of God, rest in the world of God and the faithfulness of God to his promises. If for example he does not fulfill these promises to Abraham he is not faithful. If he does not fulfill the promises to David he is not faithful. But because he is faithful, because he is a person who does not lie, because his character is faithfulness and because he has said we know that these promises shall be fulfilled.

Well now tonight it says over there the lesson is on the new covenant. So we have to look at the new covenant. Jeremiah chapter 31, this of course is the climactic covenant. And this is the one about which the New Testament makes so much. So let’s turn to Jeremiah chapter 31, verses 31 through 40. Jeremiah 31, verses 31 through 40.

Now you can see if you are listening very carefully, I know it’s difficult to listen to all this that I’ve told you tonight, because this is a lot that I’ve told you, it really is a summary of the Bible. You can see that some promises are given to Abraham which pertain to the land, which pertain to the king, and which pertain to Abraham’s seed. But you will notice that there is one thing that is missing. And the one thing is bound up again in sin. And the one thing is for what provision is there to be made for forgiveness of sins? It’s not enough to make promises to Abraham’s seed, it’s not enough to make promises regarding a king and regarding a lamb. If we are not prepared morally to enjoy

these possessions we need to have our sins forgiven in order that we might enter into these blessings which God has provided because since the Garden of Eden men are in sin.

So the new covenant is designed to prepare the seed for the possession of the promises. It is the covenant that pertains to the forgiveness of sins. Now that is something missing from all of the other covenants. Let's read it. 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.” Now notice this new covenant is not made with the church, it is made with Israel and with the house of Judah. “Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD.”

What covenant is that?

[Comment from the audience]

[Johnson] That's the covenant, well it was the covenant of the land but also the Mosaic covenant. That's the one they break.

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Now verse 34,) And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

So you see here this covenant promises the forgiveness of sins. Now we have only a minute or two and let me remind you that when the Lord Jesus Christ came what covenant did he inaugurate? Well he inaugurated, of course, the new covenant. Remember he in the upper room with his disciples sat down and he took the bread and he took the wine and he said, “This is my body which is for you, this do in remembrance of me,” and then he took the cup and he said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, this do ye often as you drink it in remembrance of me.” In other words by that symbolic fashion, in that symbolic fashion in the Lord’s supper he inaugurated the new covenant.

Now of course that was only a symbol of the cross where the new covenant was really inaugurated. There he gave his body and he gave his blood for the sins of the whole human race. Laying the foundation for the promises made to Abraham and the promises made to David so that they might ultimately be fulfilled. In the meantime now he is in heaven and the Holy Spirit is bringing men into the possession of the promises which are referred to under the covenants.

So the Lord Jesus came, inaugurated the covenant, instituted its memorial. This is why the Christian church has from the time of the apostles celebrated the Lord’s supper and they have celebrated it in the earliest days every Sunday. They met every Sunday to remember the Lord. They gathered round the Lord’s table and they took the bread and they took the wine because this to them was symbolic as he told them to do. This was symbolic of the blessings of the new covenant. And every time they took the bread to their mouth and every time they took the wine to their lips it was as if the Lord were assuring them of the wonderful promises that he had made to them, a forgiveness, and ultimately of the possession of the kingdom promises.

Well our time is up, we have proceeded through the covenants of the Bible. These are the covenants that are mentioned in the Bible. Now we know from the

standpoint of the -Bible that ultimately all these covenants shall find their complete fulfillment at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of the verses that we could refer to are there. But we are reaching the end of the tape and we must stop. So let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Heavenly Father we thank Thee for the...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]