

EXPLANATION OF 58TH BIBLEBOOK

HEBREWS 8 (A.D. 64)

OUTLINE

Section 5. Hebrews 8:1 – 10:18. Christ is the Mediator of a better covenant.

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Section 5. Hebrews 8:1 - 10:18. Christ is the Mediator of a better covenant. / The new order superseded the old order.

Hebrews 8 teaches that the change of the law brought about a change of the sanctuary, the high priest and the covenant. The earthly sanctuary was a copy and shadow of what is in heaven and was man-made. The old covenant was superseded, not because it was wrong, but because God found fault with the Israelites – they did not and could not keep the covenant (8:1-7). The old covenant was definitely superseded by the new covenant. The first covenant (the law) was written externally on stones, the Israelites knew God only by hearsay and they did not experience forgiveness. The new covenant (“I will be your God and you will be my people”) is written internally on hearts, the believers know God personally and experience real forgiveness of all their sins. The new covenant made the old covenant obsolete. The old covenant disappeared after 70 A.D. (8:8-13).

8:1-7. The sanctuary, priesthood and covenant of the old order is contrasted with the new order.

a. The old and new sanctuary contrasted (8:1-2,5).

8:1. For the chief point in that which *is being* discussed (is): We (Jewish and Gentile believers) have a High Priest, who *once in history* sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.¹

The writer may feel that his argument about the superiority of the Melchizedek priesthood has been too difficult for some of his readers to follow, so he sums it up by saying, “What all this amounts to, what it all leads up to, is this: We (Jewish and Gentile believers) have such a High Priest.”

Having established the superiority of the high priesthood of Christ and consequently *the supersession of the Old Testament priesthood*, the writer deals with *the Old Testament temple, sacrifices and covenant, which are also superseded! Just as the Aaronic priesthood gives way to the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, so the old covenant gives way to the new covenant, the earthly sanctuary gives way to the heavenly sanctuary, and the animal sacrifices, which were but temporary tokens, give way to the one sacrifice that is effective and of eternal validity.* The writer contrasts three things: the old and new sanctuary, the old and new priesthood with their sacrifices and the old and new covenant.

8:2. (this High Priest) who is a servant of God² of the sanctuary, that is of the true tabernacle which the Lord, not man, *once for all in history* set up (pitched).³

Jesus Christ is a servant in the temple and discharges his ministry, not in an earthly temple, but in the heavenly dwelling-place of God. ‘The heavenly sanctuary’ is the only one which is not an imitation of something better than itself. The heavenly sanctuary (8:2) is the dwelling-place of the living God. It belongs to the same order of being as ‘the everlasting rest’ of the saints (4:9), ‘the well-founded city’ (11:10) ‘the better/heavenly country’ (11:16), and ‘the unshakeable kingdom’ (12:28). Because God himself is the only real or true God⁴, the other entities as the heavenly sanctuary are real in so far they are associated with his reality.

¹ **8:1.** For (δε) the chief point (to sum up)(pertaining to the head) (το κεφαλαιον)(n-nn-s) in (επι)(pd=preposition dative) that which (τοις)(ddnp=determiner/definite article dative neuter plural / npdnzr=noun pronoun dative 3rd person plural) *is being* discussed (λεγομενοις>λεγω)(vpppdn-p) (is): We (Jewish and Gentile believers) have (εχομεν>εχω)(vipa--xp) such (of such a kind)(τοιουτου-η-ον) (a-dam-s-adjective *demonstrative* accusative masculine singular)(of this superior order and quality) a High Priest (ο αρχιερευς)(n-am-s), who (ος)(apnm-s=adjective pronominal *relative* nominative masculine singular) *once in history* sat down (εκαθισεν>καθιζω)(viaa--zs *aurist*) at (εν)(pd=preposition dative) the right hand (η δεξια)(ap-df-s) of the throne (ο θρονος)(n-gm-s) of the Majesty (η μεγαλωσση)(n-gf-s) in (εν)(pd) heaven (ο ουρανος)(n-dm-p) (and now *sits enthroned* with God the Father on his throne in heaven).

² cf. Paul as servant of the Gentiles pertaining to spiritual things, Romans 13:6; Romans 15:16; Philippians 2:25

³ **8:2.** (this High Priest) who is a servant of God (ο λειτουργος)(n-nm-s) of the sanctuary (τα αγια)(ap-gn-p), that is (και) of the true (αληθινος-η-ον)(a--gf-s)(the antitype of the illustration, 9:11, or copy, 9:24) tabernacle (tent) (η σκηνη)(n-gf-s) (sanctuary) which (ην)(apraf-s *relative*) the Lord (ο κυριος)(n-nm-s), not (ουκ)(ab=adverb) man (ο ανθρωπος)(n-nm-s), *once for all in history* set up (pitched) (επηξεν>πηγνυμι) (viaa--zs).

⁴ ο μονος αληθινος θεος. John 17:3

b. The old and new priesthood with their sacrifices contrasted (8:3-4).

8:3. Every high priest is *successively* appointed to *continually* offer both gifts as well as sacrifices, wherefore (it was) necessary for also this one (Christ, the New Testament High Priest) to have something to offer *once for all*⁵

8:4. If he were on earth, he would not have been a priest, *because* there (already) are those who *continually* bring gifts according to the law.⁶

The Old Testament high priesthood was first legally confined to one family, the family of Aaron. If this New Testament High Priest (Christ) were now on earth, he would not have been a priest at all, because he was of the tribe of Judah and there were *already other priests of the tribe of Levi who at that time offered the gifts according to the law*⁷. The law regulated who should be priests and it excluded all laymen (non-Levites) from priestly functions. On earth Jesus Christ was a layman!⁸

The writer consistently emphasises the singularity of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ offered (cf. 7:27; 10:12). The writer is principally thinking of Jesus Christ offering himself as a sin offering on our behalf (cf. 1:3; 7:27).

8:5. They *continually* serve (at a sanctuary that is) a copy of the heavenly things⁹. In this manner Moses was instructed (*and that instruction stuck while he carried it out*) when he was about to bring the tabernacle to completion: 'For you *must* see to it, he (God) said, (that) you shall *certainly* make everything according to the pattern *that was once* shown to you on the mountain.¹⁰

The word 'instruction' is used in the papyri of official pronouncements by magistrates, of a royal reply to a petition and of an answer of an oracle. In the New Testament it is used of 'a divine communication or instruction'¹¹. Moses had to make everything according to 'the pattern' shown to him on the mountain¹².

Moses did not merely receive *verbal directions*, but was shown something like a *visible scale model* of the sanctuary that was to be erected. It is also possible that he saw the heavenly dwelling-place of God in heaven itself, because the tabernacle was intended to serve as a dwelling-place for God in the midst of his people on earth and the earthly dwelling-place should be a replica of his heavenly dwelling-place. The conception of the earthly sanctuary as a copy of the heavenly sanctuary is also found in the book of Revelation: 'God's temple in heaven'¹³. In Revelation chapter 4 and 5 heaven itself is the temple of God.

The writer of Hebrews regards the relationship between the two sanctuaries in the Old Testament period (the tabernacle and the temple) as *a temporary* one, because the whole Levitical order *temporarily foreshadowed* the spiritual order of the new age. *The new age begins at the first coming of Jesus Christ and from then onwards God's people live no longer with the earthly copies and shadows, but with the heavenly realities themselves!*¹⁴

c. The old and new covenant contrasted (8:6-7).

Because the ministry of Jesus Christ is directly in the heavenly dwelling-place of God itself, his ministry is accordingly *far superior to any earthly ministry (in any temple, mosque or church)!*

8:6. But now, he (Christ) has received (*and now continually possesses*) a superior ministry, by so much as he also is the Mediator of a superior covenant, which has been legislated upon superior promises¹⁵

⁵ **8:3.** Every (πας)(a--nm-s) high priest (ο αρχιερευς)(n-nm-s) is *successively* appointed (καθισταται>καθιστημι)(vipp--zs) to (εις το) (+infinitive expresses purpose) *continually* offer (προσφερειν<προσφερω)(vnpaa) both gifts (το δωρον)(n-an-p) as well as (and) (τε και) sacrifices (η θυσια)(n-af-p), wherefore (οθεν)(ch=conjunction hyper/superordinating) (it was) necessary (αναγκαιος -α -ον)(a--nn-s) for also (και) this one (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdam-s demonstrative) (εχειν>εχω)(vnpa) something (τι)(apian-s interrogative) to offer *once for all* (προσενεγκη>προσφερω)(vsaa--zs) (The aorist tense emphasises that this offer took place *only once in history!*)

⁶ **8:4.** If (ει μεν) he were (ην>ειμι)(viiia--zs) on (επι)(pg) earth (η γη)(n-gf-s), he would not (ουδ αν)(ab +verbal particle) have been (ην>ειμι)(viiia--zs)(the indicative expresses a statement contrary to fact) a priest (ο ιερεις)(n-nm-s), *because* there (already) are (οντων>ειμι)(vppagm-p) those who *continually* bring (προσφεροντων>προσφερω)(vppagm-p) gifts (το δωρον)(n-an-p) according to (prescribed by) (κατα)(pa) the law (ο νομος)(n-am-s).

⁷ Also this proves that at the time the letter to the Hebrews was written, the temple was still standing and animal sacrifices were still offered!

⁸ Cf. the priesthood of laymen, of ordinary believers in the New Testament. 1 Peter 2:9-10

⁹ Ephesians 1:3. Compare other moral 'examples' in John 13:15; James 5:10; 2 Peter 2:6.

¹⁰ **8:5.** They (belonging to that class)(the earthly priests) (οιτινες)(apnm-p relative) *continually* serve (λατρευουσιν>λατρευω)(vira--zp) (at a sanctuary that is) a copy (pattern)(το υποδεικμα)(9:23)(n-dn-s) and shadow (η σκια)(10:1)(n-df-s) of the heavenly things (το επουρανιον)(ap-gn-p). In this manner (καθως)(cs) Moses was instructed (*and that instruction stuck while he carried it out*) (κεχηρηματισται>χηρηματιζομαι)(vipp--zs) when he was about (μελλων)(vppanm-s+) to bring to completion (επιτελειν>επιτελεω)(+vnpa) the tabernacle (η σκηνη)(n-af-s): 'For (γαρ)(cs=conjunction subordinating) you *must* see to it (ορα>οραω)(vmpa--ys), he (God) said (φησιν>φημι)(vira--zs), (that) you shall *certainly* make (ποιησεις>ποιεω)(vifa--ys /vmaa--ys)(the future tense expresses the *Hebrew imperfect* tense) everything (πας-αντα)(ap-an-p) according to (κατα)(pa=preposition accusative) the pattern (ο τυπος)(n-am-s) *that was once* shown (δειχθεντα>δεικνυμι)(vrapam-s) to you (σου)(npd-ys) on (επι)(pd) the mountain (το ορος)(n-dn-s).

¹¹ cf. Matthew 2:12,22; Acts 10:22; Romans 11:4

¹² Exodus 25:9,40; Exodus 26:30; Exodus 27:8

¹³ cf. Revelation 11:19; Revelation 14:17; Revelation 15:5-6

¹⁴ Therefore the dispensational notion of a future earthly 'so-called great tribulation temple' and a future earthly 'so-called millennial temple' is pure fiction!

¹⁵ **8:6.** But (δε) now (at this time) (νυν)(ab=adverb, logic particle, here also temporal) he (Christ) has received (attained, obtained) (*and now continually possesses*)(τετυχεν<τυγαων)(vira--zs perfect tense) a superior (more excellent, more differing) (διαφορωτερας<διαφορος)(a-mgf-s=adjective comparative genitive feminine singular) ministry (η λειτουργια)(n-gf-s), by so much (οσω)(aprdn-s=adjective pronominal

(1) The original covenant (Abraham).

The original covenant is God's promise that he would bless all the families on earth in the 'seed' of Abraham (namely, Jesus Christ)¹⁶. The new covenant is promised in the Old Testament¹⁷ and in the New Testament¹⁸. By this covenant God would be the God of those who believed, walk among them and they, the believers, would be the people of God¹⁹.

(2) The first covenant (Moses).

Much later (645 years later)²⁰ God added the Law of Moses to this covenant with Abraham, not to replace the covenant with Abraham, but to serve as a mirror showing his Old Testament people their transgressions and as a Schoolmaster guiding his Old Testament people to Jesus Christ²¹.

The writer of Hebrews limits himself to this added part to the Old Testament covenant, the Law of Moses, and calls it 'the first covenant' or 'the old covenant'.

(3) The second covenant or new covenant (Jeremiah).

The second or new covenant is *the fulfilment or reality of the original covenant*. Hebrews 8:10-12 shows why this second or new covenant is 'a better covenant' than the Law of Moses.

8:7. For if that first (covenant) had been blameless, then a place (occasion) for a second would not have been sought.²²

In Hebrews 7:22, Jesus Christ is called 'the Guarantor²³ of the new covenant'²⁴. In Hebrews 8:6 he is called 'the Mediator of the new covenant' (8:6; 9:15; 12:24). *The concept of a mediator is not taken from the Persian religion*. Plutarch in his *Moralia* 369 alludes to Mithras as the mediator between Ormuzd (the good god) and Ahriman (the evil god) in Persian theosophy²⁵.

The concept of 'mediator' reflects its supreme ethical significance, typified in the '*reconciling* rainbow' encircling the throne²⁶, or in the stairway in Jacob's vision that *joined the separated* heaven and earth²⁷. The mediator is the perfect 'at-one-maker' (of those on earth with those in heaven), who conserves the interests of both parties for whom he acts.

The 'better promises' are those recorded in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and are repeated in Hebrews 8:8-12. 'The better covenant' is the new covenant foretold by Jeremiah. *The covenant of which Jesus is the Mediator is 'a better covenant' simply because it is 'a new covenant' that fulfils and realises what the old covenant did not!* If the old covenant had

relative dative nominative singular)(instrumental dative) as he also (καί)(ab=adverb) is (εστίν>εἶμι)(vipa--zs) the Mediator (Arbitrator, Go-between) (ο μεσότης)(n-nm-s)(cf. Job 9:33) of a superior (better)(κρείττων, κρείττονος)(a-mgf-s *co*MParative) covenant (ἡ διαθήκη)(n-gf-s), which (ἦτις)(apmf-s *relative*) has been legislated (founded, enacted or ordained by the Old Testament law and continues as a present reality)(νενομοθετηται<νομοθετω)(viip—zs *perfect tense*) upon (επι)(pd) superior (better) (κρείττοσιν)(a-mdf-p *co*MParative) promises (ἡ επαγγελία)(n-df-p)

¹⁶ Genesis 12:3; Genesis 22:18-19

¹⁷ Jeremiah 31:31-34

¹⁸ Luke 24:25-27,44-45; John 5:39-40; Romans 3:21

¹⁹ Leviticus 26:12

²⁰ Abraham was 75 years old when he went from Haran to Canaan and God made a covenant with him (2092 B.C.)(Genesis 12:4). The period from Abraham's arrival in Canaan to Jacob's departure from Canaan to Egypt (1877 B.C.) was 215 years. God confirmed his covenant of grace concerning 'the seed' with Jacob when he was dreaming about the stairway at Bethel (1877 B.C.)(Genesis 28:12-14). After 430 years in Egypt (Exodus 12:40; Galatians 3:17-19) the Law was added to the covenant in 1447 B.C! The law was added 645 years after the covenant!

²¹ Galatians 3:15-24

²² **8:7.** For if (εἰ γάρ) that (ἐκεῖνος-η-ον)(a-dnf-s *demonstrative*) first (πρωτος-η-ον)(apof-s *ordinal*) (covenant) had been blameless (faultless) (αμειπτος-ον)(a--nf-s), then a place (occasion) for (ο τοπος)(n-nm-s) a second (δευτερος-α-ον)(apogf-s *ordinal*) (covenant) would (αυ)(qv=particle verbal) not (ουκ)(ab) have been sought (εζητετο>ζητεω)(viip--zs).

²³ ο εγγυος

²⁴ *Guarantor and Mediator*. The divine oath became the "guarantee" of "a better covenant". The word 'covenant' means 'contract', 'agreement' or 'testament'. The word 'guarantee' or 'surety' is frequently used in common Greek in legal and other documents in the sense of 'a surety' or 'bond' or 'bail' or 'collateral' or 'guarantee' that a promise would be fulfilled or 'guarantor' or 'one who stands security'. The 'guarantor' (ο εγγυος) undertakes a weightier responsibility than the 'mediator' (ο μεσότης) (8:6; 9:15; 12:24), because *he is answerable for the fulfilment of the obligation which he guarantees*. Note the relationship between the functions of a mediator and a guarantor. The old covenant had a mediator (cf. Galatians 3:19) but no guarantor. There was no one to guarantee the fulfilment of the people's undertaking. The people promised to God, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey" (Exodus 24:7), but no one guaranteed that this would actually happen! In comparison, the new covenant has a mediator and a guarantor! *Jesus Christ not only mediates the covenant between God and mankind, but also guarantees the perpetual*

fulfilment of the covenant, which he mediates, on the manward side as well as on the Godward side. As the Son of God, he confirms God's eternal covenant with his people and as his people's representative, he satisfies its terms with perfect acceptance in God's sight.

²⁵ Mithras is the mediator between Ormuzd (good god) and Ahriman (evil god) in Persian theosophy. Ahura (lord) Mazda (wisdom), also known as Ohrmazd, Hormazd, Hurmuz is the creator and highest deity of Zoroastrianism. He is the first and most frequently invoked spirit in the *Yasna*. He first appeared in the Achaemenid period (550 – 330 B.C.) in the Behistun Inscription under Darius I. The Behistun (the place of God) Inscription is a multilingual inscription and large rock relief on a cliff at Mount Behistun near the city of Kermanshah in western Iran, established by Darius the Great (522–486 B.C.). It was crucial to the decipherment of cuneiform script (wedge shaped script of Assyria and Persia) as the inscription includes three versions of the same text, written in three different cuneiform script languages: Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian (a variety of Akkadian). The inscription is to cuneiform what the Rosetta Stone is to Egyptian hieroglyphs (hieroglyph= figure of an object standing for a word, syllable or sound): the document most crucial in the decipherment of a previously lost script.

²⁶ Revelation 4:3

²⁷ Genesis 28:12

been perfect, it would not have required to be superseded by a new covenant. And the new covenant must be better; otherwise there was no point in replacing the old covenant with a covenant that is no better than the covenant it replaces.

8:8-13. The old covenant is definitely superseded by the new covenant.

The new covenant is superior to the old covenant and has superseded it.

a. **The old covenant broken, the new covenant established (8:8-9).**

(1) Establishing the old covenant.

'The first covenant' is the Law of Moses that was later added to the covenant with Abraham. In the Old Testament, God made the first covenant with the people of Israel at Sinai, after he delivered them from their slavery in Egypt. In Exodus 20:1-17 God first saved Israel from their slavery in Egypt (verse 1) and then gave them the law/the Ten Commandments as a rule how to live as God's saved people²⁸. God did not require them to keep the law in order to be saved.

In Exodus 24:1-8, this covenant was confirmed by animal sacrifices and the sprinkling of blood on the altar, on the Book of the Covenant and on the people. Moses called it *'the blood of the covenant', that is, the shedding of blood which ratified the (law as the added part of the) covenant.* Hebrews 9:18-22 refers to this same ratification of the old covenant (the Law of Moses).

The essence of the old covenant as the Law of Moses is, "Obey me and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in the ways I command you, that it may go well with you"²⁹. And: "Keep my decrees and laws for the man who obeys them will live."³⁰ This does not mean that keeping/obeying the law would save/justify the Israelites. It means that obedience to the law is the rule how to live as God's people, the saved/justified believers! It is not a rule for how to be saved, but a rule for how to live as a saved person. In the New Testament the law is summarised with the rule of love³¹.

But the people of Israel disregarded and disobeyed this covenant. God says, "From the time your forefathers left Egypt until now, day after day, again and again I sent you my servants the prophets. But they did not listen to me or pay attention. They were stiff-necked and did more evil than their forefathers"³². Prophet after prophet recalled the people of Israel to their covenant loyalty. The blessings attached to the keeping of the covenant would still be theirs if they were obedient, but persistent disobedience would result in God's curse.

Finally, God charged Israel with breaking the covenant and threatened disaster³³. Thus, *by predicting the inauguration of a new covenant, Jeremiah in effect announced the impending dissolution of the old order (of the old covenant)³⁴ and with it the dissolution of the old people of God!* The remnant within Israel who kept the covenant (the elect believers) continued as 'the people of God'. "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand of the sea, only the remnant will be saved."³⁵

(2) Reaffirming the old covenant.

The covenant was a very important topic in the days of Jeremiah after the priest, Hilkiyah, had discovered 'the book of the law' (probably the law of Deuteronomy) in the temple in 621 B.C. (the 18th year of king Josiah)³⁶. This discovery was followed by a solemn act of national repentance and rededication: The king "renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord – to follow the Lord and keep his commands, regulations and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant"³⁷. The king's repentance was genuine, but many people who took part in this ceremony and in the accompanying reformation of the national religion did so largely by way of conforming to the king's will. Jeremiah was quick to perceive this and to recognise that there was no ground for expecting this covenant to be kept any more than the covenant of Deuteronomy 29:1 of which it was essentially a reaffirmation.

(3) Breaking the old covenant.

²⁸ Exodus 20:2-17

²⁹ Jeremiah 7:23

³⁰ Leviticus 18:5.

³¹ Matthew 22:37-40; John 13:34-35

³² Jeremiah 7:24-26

³³ Jeremiah 11:10-11

³⁴ Jeremiah 31:31-34

³⁵ Romans 9:27

³⁶ 2 Kings chapter 22-23

³⁷ 2 Kings 23:3

8:8. But *again and again* finding fault (blame) with them, he said, “Look, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I (the LORD) will *certainly* establish a new (not previously known/present) covenant upon the house of Israel (northern kingdom) and upon the house of Judah (southern kingdom).³⁸

8:9. It will not be according (like) the covenant which I (God) *once* made with their forefathers. (*It will not only be a new covenant, but different than the first covenant*). In the day I took them by my hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not continue in my covenant and I disregarded them’, declares the Lord.³⁹

If there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for a second (8:7). But God ‘found fault with’ or ‘blamed’ them (the people of Israel). *The present tense in the Greek stresses the continual or recurring finding fault with Israel* (8:8). Israel did not ‘continue’ (remain faithfully) in God’s covenant. Consequently, God ‘disregarded’⁴⁰ them. *What was wrong with the first covenant was that the people of Israel broke it! They did not keep the covenant! They could not keep the covenant. No reaffirmation of the Deuteronomy covenant or even the Exodus covenant could meet the situation. Their sin (to miss/to fail to keep God’s goal) must first be atoned for!*

(4) Establishing the new covenant (8:8)

What was needed was a new covenant: new in character as well as new in time. Jeremiah proclaimed and predicted such a new covenant. The time would come when God would make a new covenant, ‘because’⁴¹ the old covenant had been broken.

The pronouns are in first person singular and the prophecy begins with the phrase “says the Lord”. Thus the speaker of this oracle is God! The Lord says, the days are coming when I will establish (bring about/to completion) a new covenant upon the house of Israel and the house of Judah. The words ‘συντελειν διαθηκην’ replaces the words of the Greek translation of the Old Testament: ‘διαθησομαι’ - I will covenant -, but are also used of a covenant made under Zedekiah to set Hebrew slaves free⁴². Whatever Greek construction is used, they all represent the Hebrew ‘to cut a covenant’⁴³ (cf. the cutting of animals in two halves and then moving between them when a covenant was made)⁴⁴.

This new covenant will ‘not be according to’ the covenant, which God made with their fathers in the day he took them by their hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt. The new covenant will not simply be another covenant that reconfirms the first covenant made in Exodus or Deuteronomy. *The second or new covenant will be a different type of covenant, different in character. The old covenant (the law added to the covenant with Abraham) characterised by externalities and temporality (the ceremonial/ritual law) will be replaced by a new covenant characterised by internal renewal and permanence!*

The new covenant will be made with ‘the house of Israel’ and with ‘the house of Judah’. Jeremiah as prophet of the Old Testament period could not see ‘the mystery’ that was first revealed to the New Testament apostles, namely, that the believers in all other nations would be “heirs together with Israel, members together of one body and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus”⁴⁵. *Like all the Old Testament prophets he could only see the future of God’s plan with God’s future people in terms of the real situation of God’s people at the present, that is, in terms of the people of Israel.* The people of Israel (with some exceptions)⁴⁶ were at this time the only people of God. But all the promises made in the Old Testament find their fulfilment in Jesus Christ and his people⁴⁷! Hebrews 8:1 shows that the writer of Hebrews applied this new covenant to God’s New Testament people. “We (Jewish and Gentile believers) do have such a High Priest”.

³⁸ **8:8.** But (γαρ)(cs=conjunction subordinating) *continually/again and again* finding fault (blame) (μεμφομενος>μεμφομαι)(vppnsm-s) with them (αυτους)(npamzp), he said (λεγει>λεγω)(vipa--zs), “Look (ιδου)(qs=particle sentential), the days (η ημεραν)(n-nf-p) are coming (ερχονται>ερχομαι)(vipn--zp), says (λεγει>λεγω)(vipa-zs) the Lord (ο κυριος)(n-nm-s), that (και)(cc=conjunction coordinating) I (the LORD) will *certainly* establish (bring to completion) (συντελεσω>συντελω)(vifa--xs) a new (not previously known/present)(καινος-η-ον)(a--afs) covenant (η διαθηκη)(n-af-s) upon (επι)(pa=preposition accusative) the house (ο οικος)(n-am-s) of Israel (northern kingdom) and upon the house of Judah (southern kingdom).

³⁹ **8:9.** It will not (ου)(ab=adjective adverb) be according (like) (κατα)(pa) the covenant (η διαθηκη)(n-af-s) which (ην)(aprafs=adjective pronominal relative accusative feminine singular) I (God) *once* made (εποιησα>ποιεω)(via--xs) with their (αυτων)(npgmzp) forefathers (η πατηρ)(n-dm-p). (It will not only be a new covenant, but different than the first covenant). In the day (εν ημερα)(when) I took (επιλαβομενον>επιλαβωνω)(vpadgmxs) them (αυτων)(npgmzp=noun pronoun genitive masculine 3rd person plural) by my (μου)(npg-xs) hand (η χειρ)(n-gf-s) to lead (εξαγαγειν>εξαγω)(vnaa) them (αυτους)(npamzp) out (εκ)(pg) of Egypt, because (οτι)(cs=conjunction subordinating) they (αυτοι)(npamzp) did not (ουκ)(ab) continue (remain faithfully) (ενεμειναν>εμμενω)(viaa-zp) in (εν)(pd) my (μου)(npg-xs) covenant (η διαθηκη)(n-df-s) and I (καγω=κα+εγω) disregarded (neglected, had no concern for, NIV turned away from) (ημελιστα>αμελεω)(viaa--xs) them’ (αυτων)(npgmzp), declares (λεγει>λεγω)(vipa--zs) the Lord (ο κυριος)(n-nm-s).

⁴⁰ cf. Hebrews 2:2-3!

⁴¹ οτι

⁴² Jeremiah 34:8,15

⁴³ Hebrew: karath berith

⁴⁴ Genesis 15:10,17-18

⁴⁵ Ephesians 3:6

⁴⁶ Isaiah 56:3-8

⁴⁷ 2 Corinthians 1:20

b. God contrasts the new covenant with the old covenant (8:10-12).

8:10. Namely, this (is) the covenant which I will *certainly* covenant (or make) with the household of Israel after those days. I will *continually* give (put) my laws into their mind and I shall *certainly* inscribe them on their hearts and I will *certainly* be to them for a God, and they shall *certainly* be to me for a people^{48, 49}

The Greek participle could be used temporarily or it could express the manner or means of making the covenant: i.e., “I will make a covenant *by putting* ...”. The new covenant foretold in Jeremiah is set in contrast to the covenant, which the Lord made with the people of Israel when he delivered them from the land of Egypt⁵⁰. The prophecy of Jeremiah was spoken during *the days of national collapse*, possibly during the brief period of Gedaliah’s governorship at Mizpah (cf. “a time of trouble for Jacob”)⁵¹.

The life of God’s people would be reconstituted on a completely new basis and on a new relationship between God and them. The new relationship between God and his people would be brought into being, involving three things: the implanting of God’s law in their hearts, the knowledge of God as a matter of personal experience, and the blotting out of their sins.

(1) The new covenant consists of the implanting of God’s law in the heart instead of trying hard to keep it.

Although the people of Israel promised to keep God’s covenant⁵², they did not have the moral power to match their good intention. Although many Israelites probably memorised God’s commandments⁵³, even that could not guarantee the performance of what was memorised. *What was needed was regeneration, a new nature, a heart liberated from its bondage to sin, a heart which not only spontaneously knew and loved the will of God but had the power to do it! What was needed was a new covenant that could fulfil and realise what the first covenant could not.*

God proclaimed the coming of that new covenant through the prophets, Ezekiel and Jeremiah. According to Ezekiel, the new covenant would consist of a new relationship to God, particularly characterised by the removal of all their sin, the removal of their heart of stone and the giving of a new heart and a new spirit, the putting of his Holy Spirit in them and thus causing them to obey his commandments⁵⁴. According to Jeremiah, the new covenant would consist of a new relationship to God, particularly characterised by the implanting of God’s laws in the hearts of people (thus knowing God’s will and doing it), knowing God as a personal experience and the blotting out of all their sins⁵⁵.

The new covenant is *not new in regard to its substance*, namely, that God would be their God and that they would be God’s people⁵⁶. *Note in Revelation 21:3 states the plural: they would be ‘his peoples’⁵⁷, because God’s covenant people is no longer restricted to Israel and Judah, but had been extended and enlarged to include believers from every nation!*

But the new covenant is *new in regard to its effect* – *it could impart this new heart, this regeneration through the Holy Spirit!* Thus, *while the formula of the covenant remains the same from age to age, the content of the covenant is filled with fresh meaning to the point that it can be described as “a new covenant”.* The words, “I will be your God”, acquires fuller meaning with every further revelation of the character of God. And the words, “you shall be my people”, acquires deeper significance as the will of God for his people is more completely known. The New Testament reveals much more completely WHO God is and much more completely WHAT his people are and should be like!

⁴⁸ cf. 1 Peter 2:10; Revelation 21:3 plural, cf. 5:9

⁴⁹ **8:10.** Namely (οτι)(cs=conjunction subordinating), this (ουτος-αυτη-αυτο)(apdnf-s=adjective pronominal *demonstrative* neuter feminine singular) (is) the covenant (η διαθηκη)(n-nf-s) which (ην)(apraf-s *relative*) I will *certainly* covenant (or make) (διαθησομαι<διατιθημι) (vifm--xs)(the future tense emphasises certainty) with the household (ο οικος)(n-dm-s) of Israel after (μετα)(pa) those (εκεινος-η-ο) (a-daf-p *demonstrative*) days (η ημερα)(n-af-p). I will *continually* give (put)(διδους<διδωμι)(vppanmxs) my laws (ο νομος)(n-am-p) into (εις)(pa) their (αυτων)(npgmzp) mind (understanding, intellect) (η διανοια)(n-af-s) and I shall *certainly* inscribe (επιγραψω>επιγραφω) (vifa--xs) them (αυτους)(npramzp)(the laws) on (επι)(pa) their (αυτων)(npgmzp) hearts (η καρδια)(n-af-p) and I will *certainly* be (εσομαι>ειμι)(vifd--xs) to them (αυτοις)(nprdmzp) for a (εις)(pa)(verb to be + preposition indicates to serve as) God (ο θεος)(n-am-s), and they (αυτος-η-ο)(nprnmzp) shall *certainly* be (εσονται)(vifd--zp) to me (μοι)(npr-d-xs) for a (εις)(pa) people (ο λαος)(n-am-s).

⁵⁰ Exodus 24:1-8

⁵¹ Jeremiah 30:7

⁵² Exodus 24:7

⁵³ Deuteronomy 6:6-7

⁵⁴ Ezekiel 11:19-20; Ezekiel 36:25-28

⁵⁵ Jeremiah 31:31-34

⁵⁶ cf. Exodus 6:7; Exodus 29:45; Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 7:23; Jeremiah 30:22; Ezekiel 11:20; Hosea 2:23; Zechariah 8:8; Zechariah 13:9; cf. 2 Corinthians 6:16

⁵⁷ λαοι

(2) The new covenant consists of the knowledge of God as a personal an intimate experience instead of a national acknowledgement of God.

8:11. And they shall not teach each man his fellow-citizen and each his brother, saying, “You *must* know the Lord”, because all will *certainly* know me, from the least to the greatest of them.⁵⁸

The Greek word: ‘οιδα’ means ‘to be intimately acquainted with’, ‘to stand in a close relationship to’. ‘To know God’ means not only to know theoretically of his existence, but also to have a positive relationship with him. ‘Not to know God’ does not mean to be ignorant about God, but not to want to know anything about him⁵⁹. There was a sense in which the people of Israel knew their God, because he had revealed himself in words and deeds to them in contrast to the Gentile nations that did not know him. Although there were individuals who had a more personal and intimate knowledge of God, as David, the knowledge of God was generally a knowledge about God, a national acknowledgement of his past words and deeds, that they might ‘know’⁶⁰ that he is God⁶¹. Those who did not ‘know’⁶² God, did not acknowledge his holiness and did not obey his will⁶³. Already the second generation of Israelites in the Promised Land, Canaan, did not know the Lord, nor what he had done, and consequently they did evil and served idols⁶⁴. Even just before their exile to Assyria, there was no faithfulness, love or ‘knowledge’ or ‘acknowledgement’ of God in the land of Israel⁶⁵. Knowledge of God was also closely coupled with ‘loyalty or obedience to the law’⁶⁶, ‘a doing what was right and just’⁶⁷.

Thus, while in the old covenant, ‘the knowledge of God’ was simply a national acknowledgement of God and his covenant, reflected in what they were and how they behaved during the Old Testament period, in the New Testament ‘the knowledge of God’ is a personal knowledge of God, which is possessed by each person of God’s people, because of the new heart they received. It is a personal an intimate knowledge of God (which marked Jeremiah too), by whom they are ‘known’⁶⁸, and it increases until it attains its consummation in knowing God even as God knows them⁶⁹.

In 1 Corinthians 8:3, ‘to be known by God’⁷⁰ means that ‘he has come to be known by God’ and ‘is thereafter known forever by God. *The Greek word: ‘γινωσκω’ means, to ‘acknowledge’ or ‘recognise’.* With God as subject, it means ‘that God ‘recognises someone as belonging to him’ or that God ‘chooses/elects’⁷¹ that person. In these passages, *God’s knowing directed to man is the basis and condition for man’s coming to know God.* Because God knows/chooses that person, that person comes to know God.

(3) The new covenant consists of the blotting out of sins as essential to this new relationship.

8:12. “I will *certainly* be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins I will by no means remember anymore.”⁷²

Although the blotting out of sins was known in Israel⁷³, it was not a part of the old covenant, not a part of the promises belonging to the Old Testament covenant. In contrast, the blotting out of sins becomes essential to the new relationship with God under the new covenant! Forgiveness of sins and the assurance of forgiveness is now written in the very terms of the new covenant⁷⁴.

(1) Under the old covenant,

God was compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness to thousands, forgiving their wickedness, rebellion and sin⁷⁵.

⁵⁸ **8:11.** And (και) they shall not (ου)(ab) teach (διδάξουσιν<διδασκω)(vsaa--zp) each man (εκαστος-η-ον)(ap-nm-s) his (αυτ-η-ο)(npgmzs) fellow-citizen (ο πολιτης)(n-am-s) (translating Hebrew: neighbour) and (και) each his brother (ο αδελφος), saying (λεγων>λεγω)(vppanm-s), “You *must* know (γνωθι<γινωσκω) (vmaa--ys) the Lord” (ο κυριος)(n-am-s), because (στι)(cs) all (πας)(ap-nm-p) will *certainly* know (ειδησουσιν<οιδα)(vifa--zp) me (με)(npa-xs), from (απο)(pg) the least (small, insignificant) (μικρος-α-ον)(ap-gm-s) to (εως)(pg) the greatest (μεγας-αλη-α)(ap-gm-s) of them (αυτων)(npgmzp).

⁵⁹ 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Titus 1:16; John 7:28b; John 8:19

⁶⁰ Hebrew: la-da’at

⁶¹ Deuteronomy 4:32-35

⁶² Hebrew: jada’

⁶³ 1 Samuel 2:12

⁶⁴ Judges 2:10-11

⁶⁵ Hebrew: en da’at elohim ba’arets. Hosea 4:1

⁶⁶ Hosea 4:6; Hosea 6:6

⁶⁷ Jeremiah 22:15-17

⁶⁸ Galatians 4:9; 1 Corinthians 8:3

⁶⁹ 1 Corinthians 13:12; cf. 1 John 3:1-3

⁷⁰ εγνωσται<γινωσκω)(indicative perfect passive)

⁷¹ cf. Amos 3:3

⁷² **8:12.** (A quote) (στι)(cs) “I will *certainly* be (εσομαι<ειμι)(vifd--xs) merciful (gracious) (ιλεως-ων)(a--nm-s)(translating Hebrew: ‘eslach, to forgive) (cf. Hebrews 10:17-18) to their (αυτων)(npgmzp) unrighteousnesses (η αδικια)(n-df-p), and (και) their sins (η αμαρτια)(n-gf-p) I will by no means (ου μη) remember (μνησθω<μυμνησκομαι)(vsao--xs) anymore (still) (ετι).

⁷³ Isaiah 38:17; Isaiah 43:25; Isaiah 44:22; Micah 7:18-19

⁷⁴ cf. Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 10:43; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:22

⁷⁵ Exodus 20:6; Exodus 34:6-7a

He was incomparably a pardoning God, blotting out transgressions⁷⁶, sweeping away sins like the morning mist⁷⁷, treading sins underfoot and hurling all iniquities into the depths of the sea⁷⁸. If the people of God humble themselves, pray, seek God's face and turn from their wickedness, then God would forgive their sins⁷⁹.

But besides God's forgiveness, also God's retribution was emphasised for the impenitent⁸⁰. God's holiness must take action against the sins of people⁸¹.

(2) Under the new covenant,

the assurance of forgiveness of sins is written in the very terms of the new covenant. "I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more"⁸². When God *remembers* sins, he does something to people's disadvantage, he makes them taste his wrath⁸³. Then God's holiness must take action against the sins of people. But if God does *not remember* the sins of people, then it is *because his grace* has determined to forgive them, not in spite of his holiness, but in complete harmony with his holiness.

His holiness had already taken action against sin in the death of his Son on the cross. Under the old covenant in its sacrificial system, there was 'an annual reminder of sins' (10:3) on the one hand and in God's forbearance a leaving the sins committed beforehand unpunished⁸⁴. But under the new covenant there is no such remembrance of sins, because of the sacrifice that was offered once for all (7:27)!

(3) The better covenant with better promises.

Therefore the writer of Hebrews teaches in Hebrews 7:22 and 8:6 that the new covenant is *a better and superior covenant* than the old covenant, because of who Jesus Christ is and what he has done. He is the Mediator of the new covenant, fulfilling all the shadows of the Old Testament and making complete salvation a reality for every believer!

The old covenant at Sinai involved divine promises, but not promises like these. *The three promises concerning God's laws engraved in their minds and hearts, each individual knowing God personally and intimately, and sins that will be remembered no more, are 'the better promises' on which the new covenant is based.* Based on the completed work of salvation of Jesus Christ, God will regenerate people and put his laws in their hearts; they shall all know God personally; and he will remember their sins no more!

The fulfilment or realisation of such promises gives complete new meaning to the ancient covenant words: "I will be their God and they shall be my people". This is being realised under the new covenant in the New Testament period!

c. The old covenant is antiquated and on the point of disappearing completely (8:13).

8:13. In that what he says (NIV in calling), new, he has declared old and treated as obsolete (and it remains old/obsolete) the first. And that which is declared old and treated as obsolete and is growing old (is) near disappearing'.⁸⁵

(1) The old covenant was antiquated.

Central to the argument of the writer of Hebrews is *the 'abolition' of the old covenant (the Mosaic Law) and its replacement by the new covenant.* The very words 'a new covenant' antiquate the previous covenant. Jeremiah's words clearly imply that when the future new covenant comes, it will supersede the earlier covenant. The apostle Paul regards himself and his colleagues as "ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit"⁸⁶ and regards the covenant associated with Moses as the old covenant⁸⁷. If the old covenant of Moses' day is antiquated, then so must the Aaronic priesthood, the earthly sanctuary, the Levitical sacrifices, (and the circumcision, ablutions, gifts, tithes and clean foods) which were all established under the old covenant.

The age of the Law and Prophets is past and the age of the Son is here and here to stay⁸⁸!

⁷⁶ Isaiah 43:25

⁷⁷ Isaiah 44:22

⁷⁸ Micah 7:18-19

⁷⁹ 2 Chronicles 7:14

⁸⁰ Exodus 34:7b

⁸¹ Exodus 20:5

⁸² Hebrews 8:12

⁸³ Revelation 16:19

⁸⁴ Romans 3:25

⁸⁵ **8:13.** In (εν)(pd) **that what** (τω)(ddns=determiner/definite article dative neuter singular) he says (λεγειν>λεγω)(vnpad +dative cf. previous τω) (NIV in calling), (the covenant) new (καινος-η-ον)(ap-af-s), he has declared old and treated as obsolete (and it remains old/obsolete) (πεπαιωκεν <παιωω)(vira—zs perfect tense) the first (πρωτος-η-ον)(apoaf-s ordinal)(covenant) (consisting of the Mosaic laws especially the ceremonial laws). And (δε)(cc-conjunction coordinating) **that which** (τω)(dnns / npnzs) is continually declared old and treated as obsolete (more decrepit) (παλαιουμενον)(vppnn-s) and is continually growing old (γηρασκον>γηρασκω)(vppann-s) (the old covenant in the old age) (is) near (close to) (εγγυς)(ab) disappearing (vanishing away, destruction) (ο αφανισμος)(n-gm-s)(the word is suggestive of utter destruction and abolition).

⁸⁶ 2 Corinthians 3:6; cf. John 3:23-24

⁸⁷ 2 Corinthians 3:14

⁸⁸ Hebrews 1:1-2

(2) The old covenant with all that accompanied it was at the point of vanishing away.

“Anything that is growing old and ageing will shortly disappear” (NEB). It cannot be proved from these words that the Jerusalem temple was still standing and its sacrificial ritual was still being carried on. These words could simply mean that by predicting the inauguration of a new covenant, Jeremiah in effect announced the impending dissolution of the old order. But if in fact the Jerusalem temple was still standing and the Aaronic priests were still discharging their sacrificial duties there (when the letter to the Hebrews was written, apparently in 64 A.D.), then the writer’s words would be all the more telling. *Jesus*⁸⁹ (44-46 A.D.) and *Stephen*⁹⁰ (63 A.D.) had foretold the downfall of the temple. Now the writer of *Hebrews* (64 A.D.) (8:13) predicts it again. If the end of the temple and its ministry had been imminent 30 years before (the crucifixion was in 30 A.D.), it was the more imminent now that ‘the 40 years of probation’(cf. the 40 years in the desert) were more than three-quarters of the way towards their end (in 70 A.D.).

Addendum: New meaning to the old covenant words.

1. The form of the covenant.

The biblical covenant is much more than a contract or compact between God and man. It is not ‘an agreement between two parties who are more or less equal in status’ (η συνθηκη), but ‘a settlement by a superior on inferiors’, tendered on the one hand for acceptance on the other (η διαθηκη). The early biblical covenant has closest affinities with the treaties, which bound vassal-states to their imperial overlords in the second millennium B.C.

2. The substance of the covenant.

The substance of the covenant is God’s promise, “I will be their God and they will be my people”.

This promise was made to Israel:

- while they were still in Egypt⁹¹,
- when he had given them the law in the wilderness⁹²,
- just before their exile to Babylonia⁹³
- and after their return from exile⁹⁴.

However, in the New Testament, this promise was *applied to the people of the new covenant, that is, to all believers in Jesus Christ of all nations*⁹⁵! In the new heaven and new earth Christians from all the “nations”⁹⁶ (plural) will be “God’s people” and God himself will dwell with them⁹⁷!

It makes all the difference in the world to the substance of the covenant when it is God (and not an imperial overlord) who takes the initiative in his grace, who bestows his promises freely on those whom he called to be his people, and who binds his people to himself with bands of love. *Analogies illustrating God’s covenant should not be drawn from international politics, but from the family circle.*

God’s covenant relationship is like the relationship between a father and his children: “When I took them by the hand to lead them”⁹⁸. “When Israel was a child, I loved him. ... I took my people up in my arms, ... took care of them. I drew them to me with affection and love. I picked them up and held them to my cheek; I bent down to them and fed them”⁹⁹.

God’s covenant relationship is like the relationship between husband and wife: “I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert”¹⁰⁰.

3. Not a renewal of the old covenant.

In the second century B.C., the Qumran community endeavoured to realise the promise of the new covenant. The members of the community are described as entering into the new covenant in the land of Damascus (probably their wilderness retreat on the shores of the Dead Sea). Yet they looked forward to a new age which would revive the highest ideals of the old age: they looked forward to:

- a renovated temple, which would still be a temple made with hands
- a pure sacrificial worship, which would still involve the slaughter of bulls and goats

⁸⁹ Mark 13:2; John 2:19

⁹⁰ Acts 6:14; Acts 7:48-49

⁹¹ Exodus 6:7

⁹² Leviticus 26:12

⁹³ Jeremiah 31:33

⁹⁴ Zechariah 8:8

⁹⁵ 2 Corinthians 6:16

⁹⁶ οἱ λαοὶ

⁹⁷ Revelation 21:3

⁹⁸ Jeremiah 31:32; Hebrews 8:9

⁹⁹ Hosea 11:1,3,4 GNB

¹⁰⁰ Jeremiah 2:2)(cf. Hosea 2:7,14

- a worthy priesthood, which would still be confined to the sons of Aaron.

4. A complete abolition of the old covenant.

To the writer of Hebrews, the new covenant *does not involve the revival of the old covenant, but nothing less than the 'abolition' (8:13) of the old covenant* with its old sacrificial order. This abolition is based on:

- the high priesthood of the perfect and exalted Jesus Christ
- his perfect and unrepeatable sacrifice
- his service discharged in the heavenly sanctuary.

Thus, *true worship "in spirit and truth"¹⁰¹ is released from dependence on the externalities (holy offices, holy places, holy times and holy actions) of religion.*

5. The replacement of the old covenant announced at the Lord's Supper.

Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper with the words, "This is the blood of the (new) covenant shed for many"¹⁰² certainly refers to this *new covenant*¹⁰³. His words were the same as those of "the blood of the first covenant"¹⁰⁴ and *Jesus intended to announce that now at length that earlier covenant was to be replaced by the new covenant foretold by Jeremiah.*

The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross definitely had the effect, which Jeremiah said the new covenant would have. Paul and countless Christians have experienced the effect of Christ's sacrifice, "What the law could never do, because our lower nature robbed it of all potency, God has done: by sending his own Son in a form like that of our own sinful nature, and as a sacrifice for sin, he has passed judgement against sin within that very nature, so that the commandment of that law may find fulfilment in us, whose conduct, no longer under the control of our lower nature, is directed by the Spirit"¹⁰⁵.

6. The new covenant is extended to all believers.

In Jeremiah's prophecy, the new covenant is to be made "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah", because at that time they were "the people of God". *In the New Testament fulfilment, it is not confined to them, but extends to all believers of every nation.* In the Old Testament itself indications are not lacking that the new covenant was to have this all-embracing character. While Jeremiah was not given to see what the new covenant would mean for the world, God did reveal it to Isaiah¹⁰⁶. "Aliens who bind themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, to love the Name of the LORD, to worship him and who hold fast to my covenant ... My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations ... I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered."¹⁰⁷

Nevertheless, this wider extension is implicit in Jeremiah, because *national origin and racial descent* must also be included among those *externalities from whose control true religion is released by the new covenant.* It is absolutely clear that in the New Testament, the new covenant is extended to people from every nation who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit! While people associated with the old covenant are characterised by their inability to understand or keep the law, people associated with the new covenant are characterised by regeneration by the Holy Spirit¹⁰⁸!

7. The new covenant has exactly the same meaning for both Israel and all the other nations.

Two extremes must be avoided: It is one thing to say that Jeremiah was not given to see what the new covenant would mean for the whole world. It is entirely another thing to say that by Israel he really meant the New Testament Church.

But it is also *an error to suppose that the new covenant will mean something else for 'all Israel' than it does for the 'Church'.* It is also *an error to suppose that Israel will be saved in some other way than the Church.* Just like not all people on earth will inherit the new earth, likewise not all people belonging to physical (ethnic, national) Israel will be saved¹⁰⁹. In the New Testament, God does not abolish physical (ethnic, national) Israel, but in saving (the elect believers in Israel) it transcends it, *just as he does not scrap this present earth, but renews it!* God fulfils his promise by saving a mass of elect believing Jews and a mass of elect believing Gentiles¹¹⁰! Together they form 'God's people', coming from every tribe, language, people and nation¹¹¹.

¹⁰¹ John 4:23-24

¹⁰² Mark 14:24; cf. Matthew 26:28

¹⁰³ cf. Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25

¹⁰⁴ Exodus 24:8

¹⁰⁵ Romans 8:3-4 NEB

¹⁰⁶ cf. Isaiah 19:24-25; Isaiah 42:6; Romans 15:9-12

¹⁰⁷ Isaiah 56:3-8

¹⁰⁸ 2 Corinthians 3:6,14

¹⁰⁹ Romans 9:6

¹¹⁰ Romans 11:25-26

¹¹¹ Revelation 5:9; 1 Peter 2:9

8. The new covenant is here to stay.

The old covenant is antiquated and already in Jeremiah's time on the point of being abolished and disappearing altogether (8:13). *The age of the Law and Prophets is past and the age of the Son is here, and here to stay.*

"In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son"¹¹². "I have not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them"¹¹³. "Believe all that the prophets have spoken... Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. ... Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms... Then he opened their minds so that they could understand the Scriptures"¹¹⁴!

¹¹² Hebrews 1:1-2

¹¹³ Matthew 5:17

¹¹⁴ Luke 24:25-27,44-45