

The Days are Coming, declares the LORD, When I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el 31: 31-34

DIG: What was the Covenant God made with Abram (Genesis 15:1-21)? How does it relate to the B'rit Chadashah? Who is this Covenant made with? What was "obsolete" about this "first" covenant (Hebrews 8:6-13, 9:13-15, 10:11-18, where Jeremiah is quoted)? How is the B'rit Chadashah described by Yirmeyahu? How will the New Covenant supersede or fulfill the previous one? How did God illustrate the certainty of His preservation of the descendants of Isra'el in these verses?

REFLECT: How and when is the promise of the New Covenant put into effect (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:16-18)? How would you explain the difference between the TaNaKh and the B'rit Chadashah to a friend? Which one are you living under? How do you know for sure? What is God's part? What is yours? ADONAI's New Covenant promises: (a) Forgiveness of sins (31:34)? (b) Freedom from the sins of the parents (30:29)? (c) Internal working of the Ruach HaKodesh (31:31-34)? (d) All of these? (e) Something else? What aspect means the most to you? Why?

595 BC during the eleven-year reign of Zedekiah

Jeremiah continued his dream (see 31:26). The prophecy reaches its greatest height in this brief passage that was given when every visible evidence of the original covenant had been destroyed. The Temple was a pathetic ruin and the Ark was no more; possibly Nebuchadnezzar carried it off to the royal museum for the entertainment of Babylon. This passage presupposes the physical return of the exiles to their home; but that was merely a pale symbol of the spiritual return that is the pulsating heartbeat of the prophecy.

ADONAI made a covenant at Sinai (Deuteronomy Chapters 28-30). Isra'el broke the covenant, as Yirmeyahu has said at considerable length. But YHVH will not be defeated. He will subject Isra'el to the cleansing fire of His discipline. In the **near historical future** and the **far eschatological future**, Yisra'el will be cleansed. The prophet expresses the idea of the LORD's ultimate victory with the phrase **New Covenant**.²⁶⁶

The B'rit Chadashah comes at God's initiative: The days are coming when I will make a New Covenant. Or could be rendered, "I have put," the prophetic perfect; so sure of its coming, it is viewed as if it has already happened. In Hebrew it is, B'rit (Covenant) Chadashah (New). There are other places in the TaNaKh where the B'rit Chadashah is mentioned (Isaiah 55:3, 59:21, 61:8; Jeremiah 32:40, 50:5; Ezekiel 16:60-63 and 37:26). It is also mentioned in Hebrews 8:8. **The days are coming.** When Jeremiah (under the direction of the Ruach HaKodesh) uses the phrase **in the days to come; the days are coming; in those days; in that day, at that time; or for the time will surely come,** the context points either to the **near historical future** or the **far eschatological future** and which one should be used. This is the eighteenth of twenty-five times that Yirmeyahu uses one of **these phrases. Here there is both near historical application and a far eschatological application.**

The New Covenant is made with Isra'el: What was it that was to be new? Surely not a change of partners! No, it was made **with the whole house of Yisra'el and with the house of Judah (31:31).** The "partners" of the **B'rit Chadashah** are, in biblical terms, YHVH and **Isra'el.** Although not a formal partner of the **New Covenant,** the Gentiles in the Church "participate" when they make the Jewish **Messiah, Yeshua, Lord of their lives (Ephesians 1:13-14).** They also "participate" as a recipient of the promised **Covenant** (see below) blessings for Gentiles who have come through the Seed of Abraham, **Jesus Christ.** Therefore, participation would be a better term to use.

The New Covenant does *not* say that only **Isra'el** will participate in it. It says that the **B'rit Chadashah** is made with **Yisra'el.** That is different, however, from saying that the **New Covenant** is *only* for **Isra'el.** The **Church** is a **mystery** in the TaNaKh (Ephesians 3:2-6) and is revealed in the **B'rit Chadashah.** A mystery in the Bible means something that was once hidden - unknown by mankind (although known by **God**) - but now is revealed. Consequently, the **New Covenant** does not violate any statements when it includes more than was revealed in the TaNaKh.

It will not be like the **Covenant** I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke **My Covenant,** though I was a husband to them, declares **ADONAI.** It was as if **God** was saying, "Although they violated the **covenant** I am faithful to it." By **Jeremiah's** day the Mosaic **Covenant** had long been broken. The problem was not with **God's** promises, but with **Isra'el's** unfaithfulness. This **New Covenant,** however, will not be like the **Covenant** with Moses, which was conditional and temporary. **God** said: **This is the unconditional and eternal Covenant I will make with the whole house of Isra'el** (In the context of **Jeremiah's** writing, both the northern kingdom of **Isra'el** and the southern kingdom of **Judah**), declares the **LORD (31:32-33a).** The **New Covenant** is expressed in the summary way that was frequently used in the TaNaKh.

The B'rit Chadashah is internal: God will make a New Covenant with the house of Isra'el and with the house of Judah, which, unlike the old, will be permanent because it will be inscribed on their hearts. "I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be My people" (31:33b CJB). It will no longer be something external to them, but so deeply ingrained in their consciousness as to be part of them. While the Covenant with Moshe spelled out the standard of God's righteousness, it never gave any Jew the power or ability to maintain that righteousness. But Romans 6 tells us that now we have a choice *not* to sin. Therefore, the result will be salvation for all Isra'el (Romans 11:25-26).

The New Covenant is applied individually: "No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know ADONAI,' for all will know Me (31:34a). It will no longer be necessary for one Jew to tell another Jew, "Know YHVH." Why? Because every single believing Jew will know Him. At the end of the Great Tribulation, as the armies of the antichrist are closing in on Petra, and as the Jews in Jerusalem await execution for refusing the mark of the beast, the spiritual scales will fall from their eyes and they finally realize that Yeshua is the Messiah. At that time they will confess their national sin and plead for Him to return. At that time all Isra'el will be saved (Rom 11:26). Two-thirds of the Jews who entered the Tribulation will be struck down and perish; yet the one-third will be left. This third I will bring into the fire of the Tribulation; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on My name and I will answer them. I will say, "They are My people," and they will say, "ADONAI is our God" (Zechariah 13:8-9).

The B'rit Chadashah will be all inclusive: from the least of them to the greatest, the young and the old, and the humble and the famous (31:34b). There will be no class distinction. All God's children will be on His knee, as it were, and close to His heart.

The New Covenant will be based on the forgiveness of Isra'el's sin: because I will forgive their wickedness (singular) and remember their sin (singular) no more" (31:34c). This assumes that Isra'el will recognize her sin of the rejection of Messiah and ask for forgiveness (see the commentary on Revelation Ev - The Basis for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ). To love conditionally is against YHVH's nature. Just as it's against your nature to eat trees and to grow wings, it's against God's nature to remember forgiven sins. He tells us: I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions as far as the east is from the west, for My own sake, and remembers your sins no more (Isaiah 43:25 and Psalm 103:12). You see, ADONAI is either the Eternal One of perfect grace . . . or He is not God. Grace forgets. Period. He who is perfect love cannot hold grudges. If He does, then He isn't perfect love. And if He isn't perfect love, you might as well stop reading this right now and go fishing because both of us are chasing fairy tales. However, I believe in His loving forgetfulness. And I believe He has a graciously terrible memory.²⁶⁷

The Church's Relationship to the B'rit Chadashah

The Church participates in some aspects of the **New Covenant**, which secures the perpetuity, future conversion, and blessing of **Isra'el**. It secures the eternal blessedness, under the Abrahamic Covenant (see the commentary on **Genesis Eg - I am the LORD, Who Brought You Out of Ur of the Chaldeans to Give You This Land**), of all who believe.

Messiah's death on the cross for **sin** provided the basis for the **B'rit Chadashah's** implementation, and the coming of the **Ruach HaKodesh** at the feast of Shavu'ot was actually the inauguration of the **New Covenant**. So **Yisra'el** and the Church share theologically rich and important common elements, while at the same time maintaining distinct identities (see the commentary on **Revelation Fi - The Government of the Messianic Kingdom**). The Church experiences a preliminary and partial fulfillment of some aspects of the **New Covenant**. These include forgiveness of **sins** and the indwelling of the **Holy Spirit**. The partial nature of this fulfillment can be seen in our **sin** nature.

Therefore (1) **Yeshua's** identification of the cup (**Matthew 26:27-28; Mark 14:23-24 Luke 22:20; First Corinthians 11:25**) as a representation of the **New Covenant** shows us that the **Covenant** would take effect through **His** sacrificial death; (2) the writer to the **Hebrews** refers to **Yeshua** as the mediator of the **B'rit Chadashah** (**Hebrews 8:6, 9:15, 12:24**); (3) the change in the priesthood (**First Peter 2:9**) points to the fact that the **New Covenant** is now in force; and (4) **Rabbi Sha'ul's** identification of himself as the minister of the **B'rit Chadashah** (**Romans 11:13**) suggests the reality of its presence. Consequently, the **New Covenant** clearly teaches that it is available to all who will receive it.

The inclusion of the **Gentiles** in the **New Covenant** is a bottom line blessing from the Abrahamic Covenant: **And all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you (Genesis 12:3)**. This is substantiated by **Yeshua's** statement in **Matthew 26:28**, when He said . . . **which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins**. However, the **Gentiles** are not "partners" in the **New Covenant**, nor are they "the new **Isra'el**." The extension of the **New Covenant to the Gentiles** is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise that **all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through Abraham and his descendants**; *never* that the promises to the nation of **Isra'el** would be transferred to the **Gentiles** or to the Church.

Although the **New Covenant** has been inaugurated, that inauguration is a partial and gradual one. Its ultimate fulfillment will not be completed until the very end of the **Great Tribulation**. At that time every individual **Jew will be saved (Romans 11:29)**, and thus, **the nation will be saved**. As a result, some of the portions of the **B'rit Chadashah** await **far eschatological** fulfillment. This is the "already - but not yet" aspect of the **New Covenant**.

Even though the **New Covenant** is made with **Isra'el**, it doesn't mean that it is only *for* **Isra'el**: For **Christ** himself has brought peace to us. He united **Jews** and **Gentiles** into one people when, in His own body on the cross, He broke down the wall of hostility that separated us (**Ephesians 2:14 NLT**). Hence, the **New Covenant** is not two Covenants, one with **Isra'el** and one with the Church. It is only one **Covenant**, but with two "participants" (**Isra'el** and the Church).

The Church's relationship to the New Covenant is the same as the Church's relationship to the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-7, 13:14-17, 15:1-21); the Land Covenant (Deut 29:1 to 30:20) that elaborates on the land aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant; and the Davidic Covenant (Second Samuel 7:15-16) that elaborates on the seed aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant. ADONAI made four unconditional covenants with Yisra'el (see Af - The Covenants of the TaNaKh). All of God's spiritual blessings are mediated by the means of these four covenants that contain both physical and spiritual aspects.

In addition to these four unconditional, eternal covenants with **Isra'el**, there was a temporary **conditional covenant** . . . the Mosaic Covenant (**Exodus 19-24**). The Temple was a house of prayer for all the nations. The Royal Stoa was a part of the Court of the **Gentiles**, which was merely the area of the Temple Mount that was accessible to the **Goyim** and it had been expanded to provide as many **non-Jews** as possible the opportunity to worship the **One true God** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Iv - Jesus Entered the Temple Area and Drove Out All Who Were Buying and Selling**). Yet before the death and resurrection of **Messiah**, there was a distinction, a **middle wall of separation** (**Acts 21:28; Luke 18:9-14 Jubilee Bible 2000**), or **m'chitzah (CJB)**, between the Court of the **Gentiles** and the inner courts. After His resurrection, however, **the two groups were made one as this dividing wall of hostility had been destroyed because the power of God brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile (Eph 2:14; Rom 1:16).**

So while the Mosaic Covenant was in effect (see the commentary on **Exodus Da - The Dispensation of the Torah**), **Gentiles** could only receive the spiritual blessings of the Mosaic Covenant. **They** would have to totally submit to all the obligations of the 365 prohibitions and 248 commandments of the Torah, and for all practical purposes live as a child of Abraham (which the Hebrew Roots Movement ironically refuses to do). These proselytes to Judaism (or **God-fearers**, as they were known) would then be like **a tree planted by streams of water (Psalm 1:1-3)**. However, after **Messiah** rose from the dead, the temporary Mosaic Covenant, and that **middle wall of separation** was broken down and came to an end. After the birth of the **Messianic Community** in **Acts 2**, the **Goyim** could then enjoy the spiritual blessings of all **four unconditional covenants** on the basis of faith/trust/belief in **Jesus Christ**, as we see starting in **Acts 10** when **Kefa (Peter)** went to the **house of Cornelius**. At that point, the **Gentiles** had been **grafted in (Romans 11:17-18 and 24; John 4:22)**.

In summary, when the human authors of **the B'rit Chadashah** deal with its relationship with the Church, they are not saying that **the New Covenant** is made with the Church; rather, that the Church can "participate" in **New Covenant** blessings, just like the four other unconditional covenants, but is not a "partner" with **Isra'el** in them.²⁶⁸