

The New Covenant and Pentecost

Acts 2

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Introduction:

1. Today is **Pentecost** and we celebrate the outpouring of the HS on us
2. **Abrahamic Covenant**: God promised that He would make a nation of his descendants, give them land, to be a blessing to the nations.
3. God delivered Abraham's descendants from slavery in Egypt and then made a covenant with them at Mt. Sinai, constituting them a nation.
4. He then situated them right where 3 continents come together in order that they could infect and bless the other nations!
5. He removed the peoples living in that land because their wickedness had become so intolerable – they even sacrificed children to their gods.
6. **Mosaic Covenant**: God promised to bless Israel so they could bless the surrounding nations – IF they obeyed!
7. But He warned that IF they disobeyed, He would remove them JUST like He was removing the peoples whose land He was giving Israel.
8. **The people failed** – 10 times they tested God in the wilderness, resulting in a 40 yr. sentence in the wilderness until that generation died
9. **ALL the leaders failed**. Just like God had warned, the Israel was exiled by Assyria in 722 BC and Judah went into Babylonian exile in 605 BC.
10. It looked like the promises to Abraham had failed: no nation, no land, and therefore no blessing to the nations.
11. **Davidic Covenant**: yet 300 yrs before their exile, God promised to give David a righteous divine King who would sit on David's throne forever!
12. That solved **HALF** of the exile crisis – but what about the people?!
13. **New Covenant**: Israel was in exile and Judah was about to go into exile when Isaiah & Jeremiah announced a NC to solve the people problem!

A. The New Covenant promised in the Old Testament

1. **Jeremiah 31:31-32 (NIV)** *I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ³² 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*
2. The NC will be different from the Mosaic covenant in **3 ways**.

First: God will internalize the Law by the Spirit

1. Under the Mosaic Covenant the HS came on a select few people to accomplish a task that required a supernatural endowment
2. For this reason, judges, kings, prophets, and craftsmen received the HS
3. While that purpose would always continue, God promised that under the NC the HS would be given for additional purposes.
4. **Jeremiah 31:33 (NIV)** *I will put my **LAW** in their minds and write it on their hearts.*
5. There was **NO PROBLEM** with the Law, but with the people and leaders!
6. The law had been etched on tablets of stone and in the book of the Law, but God says that He will place it in their hearts! Ezekiel tells us how ...
7. **Ezekiel 36:27 (NIV)** *I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*
8. Ezekiel explicitly says that the solution is to place His Spirit in the people so that He can make the law a part of the peoples' inner life!
9. The coming of the HS in the NC won't be just to fulfill a task (prophet, king, judge), but to indwell ALL God's people so they can OBEY!
10. They will then remain forever faithful to God and never again turn away
11. **Jeremiah 32:40 (NIV)** *... so that they will **NEVER** turn away from me.*
12. With that ability Israel will be able to REMAIN in the land and thus bless that nations – and it happens by the empowering Holy Spirit!

Second: God will remove sin by the Spirit

1. **Jeremiah 31:34 (NIV)** *For I will forgive their wickedness **AND** will remember their sins no more.*
2. Forgiveness of sin's guilt was available under the old covenant through the sacrificial system (Ex 34:6-7; Nu 14:18; Ps 86:5; Joel 2:13; Jon 4:1)
3. What's NEW in the NC is that the sin will be fully removed!
4. **Ezekiel 36:25 (NIV)** *I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.*
5. **Isaiah** said God would BLOT out their sins (Isa 43:25).
6. God will remove the presence of sin as an ongoing reality!
7. Sin will be fully and finally abolished by the indwelling HS!
8. When that happens the PEOPLE will be able to keep the covenant!
9. Which is why there will be a 1000 year millennial reign in which Israel is never thrown out of the land! They can keep the covenant!

Third: ALL Israel will know God by His Spirit

1. God made the NC with ALL Israel
2. **Jeremiah 31:31 (NIV)** *"The time is coming," ... "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.*
3. God promised a NC for both kingdoms WHEN they had gone into exile and they no longer existed as a nation!
4. Yet, God told Ezekiel that He would bring the nation back to life!
5. God brought Ezekiel into a valley of dead bones and told him to prophesy to the bones, representing Israel, to come to life!
6. **Ezekiel 37:11-14 (NIV)** *... these bones are the whole house of Israel ... Therefore, prophesy ... 'I will bring you back to the land of Israel ... ¹³ Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD ... ¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land.'*
7. Notice, God then said that they would then know the Lord!
8. In fact, God said through Jeremiah that ALL Israelites would know God
9. **Jeremiah 31:34 (NIV)** *No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will ALL know me*
10. And He said this would happen by His Spirit!
11. According to the NC a time is coming when Israel will ALL be back in the land AND will ALL know the Lord – they will ALL be saved!
12. And Ezekiel said it will be accomplished by the Spirit!
13. The NC didn't tell us WHEN this will happen, only THAT it will happen!

B. The New Covenant inaugurated at Pentecost

1. Just before the Passover, when Jesus was crucified, He shared the Last Supper with them. Here He announced the New Covenant.
2. **Luke 22:19-20 (NIV)** *And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."²⁰ In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."*
3. As we saw, earlier the NC was made with Israel. So, how is it that Christians are part of the NC?
4. It is by the fact that the salvation of the Gentiles was already part of the Abrahamic Covenant, and the NC enables its implementation!
5. That's why Paul could say that we Gentiles were grafted in

6. **Romans 11:17 (ESV)** *But if some of the branches (Jewish) were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot (Gentiles), were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree.*
7. At that same Supper, Jesus then taught them about the HS – which, as we already saw, was a BIG part of the New Covenant
8. John records Jesus' teachings about the Spirit he would send!
9. He had just told them not to let their hearts be troubled.
10. **John 14:2-4 (NIV)** *In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*
11. Then He told them what He would do when He went away ...
12. **John 14:16-17 (NIV)** *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives **WITH** you and will be **IN** you.*
13. The Spirit had already anointed them to complete various tasks, like going and healing the sick, raising the dead, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom – just like in the OT.
14. The Spirit also came on Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah, Simeon & John the Baptist, to complete specific tasks. The Spirit was WITH THEM!
15. But **NOW** Jesus promised that the Spirit would be sent to be IN THEM – just like the prophets had predicted!
16. After Jesus had been resurrected from the dead, He remained on earth another 40 days to share His last lessons with the disciples (Acts 1:3).
17. Just before He ascended into heaven on the 40th day, He said ...
18. **Acts 1:4-5 (NIV)** *Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.*
19. And then He ascended into heaven. The 120 returned to Jerusalem where they continued in prayer for 10 days. **And then it happened!**
20. **Acts 2:1-4 (NIV)** *When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ **ALL** of them were FILLED with the*

Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

21. Many get sidetracked by tongues here b/c they don't know the story!
22. The phenomena are not the heart of this event – the fact that they were FILLED with the HS meant that the Spirit was now IN them – just like the prophets had predicted, and just like Jesus had promised!
23. The phenomena were there to get everyone's attention and confirm that the Spirit had indeed come, just like the dove descending on Jesus wasn't the BIG thing – it just identified the figure whom Isaiah said the HS would come upon!
24. There were three great celebrations on earth, all accompanied by supernatural phenomena when the Spirit moved into a new 'residence:'
 - a. When His presence came to dwell in the tabernacle (Lev 9:23-24)
 - b. When His presence came to dwell in the temple (2 Chron 7:1-3)
 - c. When He came to dwell in new temples – hearts of people!
25. **What** were the Pentecost phenomena?
 - a. They heard a sound like the blowing of a violent wind
 - b. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire come on each of them
 - c. The 120 spoke with human languages unknown to them, so that they could be understood by the 15 languages represented there!
26. The fact that there is no evidence that these signs accompanied others in the NT who were baptized in the Spirit, and because we don't see any evidence of it in church history or in the experience of other believers today, leads us to conclude that these were a unique set of signs given by God to mark a unique event in salvation history!
27. When the gathered Jewish crowd witnessed this, they were amazed and bewildered, wondering what it meant.
28. Peter rose to explain, reminding them that the prophets had spoken of this very day, when the Spirit would be poured out on ALL God's people!
29. In his address, Peter quoted the prophet Joel ...
30. **Acts 2:17-18 (NIV2011)** *In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on ALL people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.*
31. The day of Pentecost was certainly a remarkable transition in the history of the world, because the New Covenant had been inaugurated!
32. When Peter finished telling them what had just happened, the crowd asked what they should do. Peter answered ...
33. **Acts 2:38-39 (NIV)** *REPENT and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call.*
34. Notice two things they would receive if they repented ...
 - a. Sins would be forgiven
 - b. The Holy Spirit would be given to all who believed!
35. That is precisely what the NC had promised!
36. But the proof is in the pudding, as they say. Would this indwelling HS change their behavior? That had been the real problem with both the people and leaders they couldn't obey the Mosaic Law!
37. The New Covenant promised that the Spirit would change that.
38. Well, when Peter told them what they should do (repent) in order to receive forgiveness and the gift of the HS, 3000 got saved!
39. **Acts 2:41 (NIV)** *Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*
40. And those 3000 not only received forgiveness, but they received the HS not only to carry out specific tasks, but to be enabled to obey God's law!
41. Did this happen to the 3000? Read on ...
42. **Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)** *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.*
43. This is not normal human behavior – but it is surely wonderful!
44. This was the fulfillment of what the prophets had predicted! It would change their hearts and behaviors!
45. The prophets had predicted just this! Guess what the result was?
46. **Acts 2:47b (NIV)** *... And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

47. Recall that God had promised Abraham: to make His seed into a nation, to give the nation land, so they could be a blessing to the nations.
48. But because they couldn't obey the Law they were thrown out of the land and they weren't a blessing to the nations.
49. However, the NC promised that not only would they be forgiven, but they would receive the HS to enable them to obey the Law!
50. And in obeying the Law they would then be able to be a blessing to those around them! This was the PROOF! It worked!
51. The Promised NC Spirit had come!!!

C. The New Covenant will be fulfilled at Jesus' Second Coming

1. But wait ... aren't we missing something?
2. Didn't the NC promise that sin would be eradicated, that Israel would be saved, and that Israel would be back in the land?
3. What we'll now see is that the Cross and Pentecost inaugurated the NC; they didn't fulfill it! There's much more to come of the Spirit!
4. At Pentecost we got a down payment of the Spirit!
5. **Romans 8:23 (NIV)** *Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.*
6. To grasp this, we need to understand **Israel's agricultural cycle**
7. The cycle began in fall with what were called "**the early rains.**"
8. These rains ended the dryness of summer and produced a harvest of things like nuts and tree fruits.
9. The early harvest sustained the people, and the early rains **softened the ground so it could be worked to produce a later harvest.**
10. After the early rains, **farmers would work the ground and prepared for a second set of rains and a second harvest.**
11. **In the spring the second set of rains, called the later rains,** would come. These were much heavier than the early rains, and they were critical because they **prepared Israel's main crops for harvest.** This is when the primary staples like **wheat** and **barley** were harvested.
12. The two rains and two harvests were connected. **Without the early rains, there was no food to sustain the people and the ground wasn't prepared for the subsequent work.**
13. Without the early rains, the later heavier rains would fall on hard, dry ground and destroy everything.
14. "Firstfruits" refers to the 1st part of the harvest after the early rains
15. Paul used this metaphor to describe the present gift of the Spirit we enjoy compared to what we will enjoy later at the resurrection!
16. That's when we will receive ALL the benefits of our salvation.
17. Paul referred to the early church as a firstfruits of the coming harvest
18. **2 Thessalonians 2:13 (NIV)** *... God chose you as firstfruits to be saved*
19. The early church understood that the rain of the Spirit in their generation was an "early rain" that had produced an "early harvest" (firstfruits) and that a later rain would bring in a later and larger harvest.
20. Peter's perspective of harvest is what caused him to describe the outpouring of the Spirit as a manifestation of Joel's prophecy
21. **Acts 2:16-20 (NIV)** *THIS is what was spoken by the prophet Joel ... I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great & glorious day of the Lord.*
22. But wait – Joel predicted an outpouring of the Spirit accompanied by dramatic end-times signs in the earth
23. None of these happened in Peter's generation, yet Peter saw a connection between Pentecost & Joel's prophecy. Why?
24. **Because of what Joel said in v. 23 ...**
25. **Joel 2:23 (NIV)** *Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains because he is faithful. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before. (cf. Jas 5:7)*
26. Joel reminded his readers that the Lord gave TWO rains, not one!
27. **Peter recognized Pentecost as the early rain with the early harvest!**
28. **He knew there was a heavier rain or Spirit outpouring coming!**
29. When the heavier outpouring of the HS comes, all Israel will be saved!
30. With the recent explosion of population in the earth, a global revival could easily produce more Christians on the planet than are in heaven!
31. The end-times will not only be a time of great tribulation, but will also be the time of unprecedented harvest, as the HS is poured out!
32. **Revelation 7:9, 13-14 (NIV)** *Before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people & language, standing before the throne ... They were wearing white robes ... ¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where*

did they come from?" ¹⁴ I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

33. And ALL Israel will be saved! They will ALL know the Lord!

Conclusion:

1. You may be thinking: "Ray, your teaching is so irrelevant for today – all this OT stuff." If you think that, you couldn't be more wrong!
2. We Gentiles start reading our Bibles at ch. 15 of a 20 chapter book, and that gets us into huge trouble! I'll give you a couple of examples ...

Example 1: grace vs law

1. Many say, "OT was Law, but now we're under grace." Not true!
2. Sacrificial system (begun after the Fall) provided forgiveness!
3. God was patient and longsuffering in the OT
 - a. God was patient with 19 evil Jewish kings for 200 yrs, sending prophets to warn them until He sent them into Assyrian exile!
 - b. Speaking of the Assyrians, they were the cruelest people on earth:
 - c. They skinned their victims alive, impaled them on poles etc.
 - d. It was to those people that God sent Jonah because He said they didn't know their right hand from their left hand!
4. And do you want to see Law in the NT?
 - a. Jesus said He didn't come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it
 - b. Read His Sermon on the Mount – he moved beyond the letter of the law to the heart of the Law!
 - c. Paul argues the Law is good (Romans 7)!
5. The NC teaches that the HS was given so we could obey God's law!
6. Result of bad teaching: CT (Mar 2021) reported 60-70% of evangelicals in USA cohabited outside marriage. Only 10% of 20's think it is wrong!
7. And Christian parents are changing their minds about homosexuality when their children decide to go that route.
8. We will face great pressure in this area shortly!

Example 2: Israel

1. The NC told us that Israel will be a nation again and will be saved!
2. That is just as much a part of the NC as forgiveness & the HS!

3. Yet, the Reformers ignored this fact, and the result was that in WWII much of the Church got on the wrong side of history, ignoring the holocaust!
4. At the Nuremburg trials some of the Nazis pointed to Martin Luther as a defense of their atrocities.
5. Greater pressure will come in this area against the Church as well.

PRAYER

Hand over to Stefan or Zac