

The background image is a landscape photograph. It features a dirt road that starts in the foreground and leads into the distance, flanked by rolling hills. The sky is filled with large, dramatic clouds that are illuminated from below by a low sun, creating a warm, golden glow. The colors in the sky range from deep blues at the top to bright yellows and oranges near the horizon. The overall mood is serene and majestic.

The New Covenant

(Part 2)

A
RuínandRedemption.com
Teaching Series

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The New Covenant (Part 2)

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The New Covenant (Part 2)

I. The Inauguration of the New Covenant

1. INTRODUCING the New Covenant: *How do the Gospels Introduce Jesus?*

When you're introducing one friend to another, most of the time you try to give some context to the relationship: *This is my friend Brett; he's the one I roomed with in college. Or, this my friend Seth; we got to know each other really well at seminary.* In a similar way, when we get to the gospels, each of the gospel writers are seeking to introduce us to Jesus; and as they do so, they're also trying to give us some context, so that we might have a better understanding of whom it is they're introducing us to.

Well, as each of the gospel writers introduces us to Jesus, the context they give us is God's covenantal dealings throughout redemptive history; starting from the end, back to the beginning. *Mark* wrote his gospel before *Matthew*, *Luke*, or *John*; and he introduces Jesus by quoting some of the last words in the entire Old Testament: "Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way" (Mark 1:2). This is a quote from Malachi 3:1. And not only does *Mark* quote from Malachi; he also combines this with a quote from Isaiah: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.'" (Mark 1:3; cf. Isaiah 40:3). So, as *Mark* introduces us to Jesus, he quotes from both *the first and the last of the prophetic books*; and in doing so, gives us an important context: *Mark's* gospel account about Jesus picks up right where the prophets had left off.

Matthew traces the roots of the new covenant a little further back. He begins writing his gospel in the first verse by introducing us to Jesus in this way: "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham." (Matthew 1:1). So then, the context *Matthew* gives us traces Jesus back from the prophets to David and Abraham; and in describing Him as the son of David and Abraham, *Matthew* is declaring that *Jesus is the fulfillment of the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants*.

Luke traces the ancestry of Jesus even further back, for in *Luke's* genealogy, not only is Jesus the son of David and the son of Abraham, but also "the son of Adam" (Luke 3:38). *Luke* is identifying Jesus here with that descendant of Eve whom God had promised would crush the head of the serpent, all the way back in Genesis 3:15. This was the very first promise of the Covenant of Grace. Not only is Jesus the true fulfillment of the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants—but *He's also the second Adam*.

John goes the furthest back as He introduces us to Jesus. In the opening sentence of his volume, he writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1:1); going on to tell us: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (v 14). Jesus isn't only the son of David or the son of Abraham, or the seed of the woman from Genesis 3:15. *He is God himself*."¹

2. ASCERTAINING the New Covenant: *When exactly does the New Covenant Begin?*

The new covenant begins with Jesus. But one question that still arises is: When exactly is it that the new covenant begins? On the one hand, it seems that the new covenant must have begun with *Jesus' birth*. But some Scriptures seem to tell us the new covenant didn't properly begin until *the preaching ministry of John and Jesus' earthly ministry* (Matthew 11:12-13; Luke 16:16); which was many years afterwards. Other Scriptures seem to convey that the new covenant wasn't inaugurated until *Christ's death*, for it wasn't until the Last Supper that Jesus said: "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood." (Luke 22:20). But even after Jesus' death and resurrection, it seems that the inauguration of the new covenant is still something yet to come, for Christ tells His disciples that

¹ The truths from this section are largely adapted from the new covenant chapter in Jonty Rhodes' *Covenants Made Simple*. I've found this short book by Jonty Rhodes to be a very helpful introduction to understanding the covenants of Scripture.

the Holy Spirit will not come upon them until He ascends to His Father (John 16:7); and it's for this reason they are told to wait in Jerusalem until they're *clothed with power from on high* (Luke 24:49). So then: Did the new covenant properly begin with Jesus' birth? Or with His earthly ministry? Was it inaugurated with His death? Or was it not established until He poured out His Spirit at Pentecost?

Thankfully, we don't have to pick one of these options over against the others. As one writer put it: "the kingdom of heaven did not directly and all at once attain to its full state of maturity, but by slow degrees acquired strength." In other words, the new covenant wasn't established in a single moment of time, all at once; but, rather, it unfolded organically, beginning with the events surrounding Christ's birth and culminating with the sending forth of the Spirit at Pentecost. The inauguration of the new covenant was, in some ways, like *a mountain range with many peaks*. There are over fifty mountains in the Himalayas—but though each of these mountains has its own distinct name and its own distinct peak—they're all part of the same range. And it's the same principle with the inauguration of the new covenant: Each of these events has its own distinct place—but the new covenant includes them all.²

3. OVERVIEWING the New Covenant: *What Events Mark the Inauguration of the New Covenant?*

A) The PREPARATION of the New Covenant: Perhaps the first place to begin in considering the inauguration of the new covenant is the preparation that took place in and through the birth and life of John. In the days of Herod, king of Judea, an angel was sent to a priest named Zacharias with this message: "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. . . And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:13-17; cf. 1:76-77). The angel was harkening back to the last two verses of the entire Old Testament; where Malachi foretold that God would send "Elijah the prophet" before the coming of the Lord. The angel clarifies that it's not Elijah himself who would come again. But the Lord would raise up another prophet in the spirit and power of Elijah; and that prophet was John. This is why Christ said, "John himself is Elijah who was to come" (Matthew 11:14); and again, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him. . ." (Matthew 17:12). Just as Elijah was the forerunner for Elisha, so too, John would be the forerunner for the Messiah. And just as God raised up Samuel as the last of the judges to anoint David; so too, John came as the last of the prophets to usher in the coming of Christ. John's life and ministry was God's *preparation for the new covenant*.³

² John Ball says: "From the birth of Christ, the things foretold in the Old Testament pertaining to the constitution of the new, began to be fulfilled; and that first by his coming in the flesh, afterwards by his administration, and then by his death; by whose death the Old Testament was abolished, and the new did succeed in the room thereof. . . [and yet,] properly the beginning of the new covenant is to be fetched from that time, wherein Christ has fulfilled all things, which were shadowed of him in the Law, or foretold in the Prophets, that is, after that Christ was corporally ascended into heaven, and had sent down the Holy Spirit in the visible shape of fiery tongues upon His Apostles, at the solemn feast of Pentecost. . . From this time properly the New Testament took its beginning." (pp196-98). And Roberts notes: "The new covenant administration began, when the old covenant administration ended, and was abrogated. . . [and] the old covenant administration ended and was abrogated at and near upon the death of Jesus Christ. . . [Still,] when I fetch the date or beginning of the new covenant from the death of Christ, I understand the death of Jesus Christ. . . as comprising also his resurrection, ascension, session at the right hand of God, and his pouring forth his Spirit on the feast of Pentecost. . ." (pp1233-34). And again: "The term of the new covenant's beginning comprises in it three things; [namely], 1) *the preparation to it*, which was by the ministry of John [the] Baptist, of Jesus Christ and his disciples; 2) *the dedication or sanction of it*, which was properly by the death and blood of Jesus Christ, the great new covenant's sacrifice; [and] 3) *the solemn publication of it*, which was on the solemn feast-day of Pentecost. . . when the Holy Ghost fell upon the Apostles. . ." (Roberts, pp1233-34). And Witsius writes: "Some begin the New Testament from the birth of Christ, because of that expression of the apostle (Galatians 4:4), in which he asserts the fulness of time was come, when God sent his Son made of a woman; to which they add, that on that very day the angels proclaimed the Gospel concerning Christ was manifested (Luke 2:10-11). Others begin the New Testament from the year of Christ's preaching, alleging Mark 1:1, where the evangelist seems to refer the beginning of the Gospel to that year in which John and Christ began to preach, which is more clearly taught in that passage just cited from Luke 16:16. Others again place the beginning of the New Testament at the moment of Christ's death, upon the authority of the apostle, who says, that the New Testament was ratified by the death of Christ the testator (Hebrews 9:17). Some. . . on the day of Pentecost, or the effusion of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, on which the New was as it were sealed, and its law came out of Zion (Isaiah 2:3). But all these things are easily reconciled, if we allow some latitude to that fulness of time, in which the New succeeded the Old Testament. . . *the kingdom of heaven did not directly and all at once attain to its full state of maturity, but by slow degrees acquired strength*" (V1, pp315-16).

³ What do we make of the fact that John himself denies he is Elijah when he is asked by the Jews in John 1:21? Calvin says:

THE PREPARATION OF THE NEW COVENANT

	IN THE OLD COVENANT	IN THE NEW COVENANT
John was like ELIJAH	Elijah was the forerunner for Elisha	John was the forerunner for Christ
John was like SAMUEL	Samuel ushered in the reign of David	John ushered in the reign of Christ

B) The INCARNATION of the New Covenant: But if John's birth was the preparation for the new covenant, then the birth of Christ embodies its formal inauguration. Indeed, if there's one event that signifies the inauguration of the new covenant, surely it's the incarnation. So it's no surprise that the Prophets often associated the birth of the Messiah with the beginning of the new covenant age. This is precisely what the prophet Micah is saying when he writes that God would give His people over to their enemies “until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. . .” (5:3). Micah's telling us that the days of the new covenant would begin with the birth of Christ. And Paul seems to be saying the same thing when he contrasts the old and new covenants in Galatians. For after telling us that we were, in some respects, “held in bondage” under the old covenant, Paul describes the inauguration of the new covenant in this way: “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law. . .” (4:4). For Paul, “the fullness of the time” is a reference to the new covenant; and the new covenant dawned upon the world when God sent forth His Son. Indeed, it was in contemplating the birth of the Messiah that Zacharias lifted up his voice and said: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant—as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets. . .to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father. . .” (Luke 1:68-74). All the old covenant promises find their fulfillment *in the Messiah's birth*.

THE INCARNATION OF THE NEW COVENANT

	HOW THE NEW COVENANT IS DESCRIBED	WHEN THE NEW COVENANT HAPPENS
MICAH 5:3	As freedom from captivity	When she who is in labor has borne a child
GALATIANS 4:4	As the fullness of the time	When God sent His son, born of a woman

C) The PUBLICATION of the New Covenant: Though in some respects, the new covenant seems to have been inaugurated with the birth of Christ, in other respects it seems to have been more fully inaugurated with the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Jesus himself says in Luke 16:16: “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.” John lived and ministered in a unique period of redemptive history; sometimes it seems his ministry belongs to the end of the old covenant; other times it seems to belong to the beginning of the new (cf. Matthew 11:11-13). It's almost as if he stood with one leg on each side. But if John's ministry was in-between the two different administrations, the ministry of Christ ushered in the beginning of the new covenant age. Jesus tells us that since the time of John, “the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached. . .” But what is He saying? Wasn't the gospel preached in the old covenant as well? It was. But not with the same clarity; not with the same effect; and not yet in such a way that the substance had come to replace the signs and shadows. In other words, Jesus is telling us that ever since the time of John, the preaching of the new covenant began dawning upon the world. And it's this preaching that Christ inaugurated at the commencement of His earthly ministry. When Jesus came, declaring, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mark 1:15), He was announcing the old covenant administration was passing away—and the new covenant age had already begun to bloom. The fullness of time had come; the old was giving way to the new. In a very real sense, *the new covenant was inaugurated with Jesus' public ministry*.⁴

“But the question is founded on a false opinion which they had long held; for, holding the opinion that the soul of a man departs out of one body into another, when the Prophet Malachi announced that *Elijah* would be sent, they imagined that the same Elijah, who lived under the reign of king Ahab (1 Kings 17:1) was to come. It is therefore a just and true reply which John makes, that he is not Elijah; for he speaks according to the opinion which they attached to the words; but Christ, giving the true interpretation of the Prophet, affirms that John is Elijah (Matthew 11:14; Mark 9:13).” (*Commentary on John 1:21*).

⁴ Calvin notes: “John stands between the Law and the Gospel, holding an intermediate office allied to both. For though he gave a summary of the Gospel when he pronounced Christ to be ‘the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world,’ yet, inasmuch as he did not unfold the incomparable power and glory which shone forth in his resurrection, Christ says that he was

THE PUBLICATION OF THE NEW COVENANT

	WHAT WAS PROCLAIMED	WHEN IT WAS PROCLAIMED
IN THE OLD COVENANT	The Law and the Prophets	Up until the time of John
IN THE NEW COVENANT	The Gospel of the Kingdom of God	With the public ministry of Christ

D) The DEDICATION of the New Covenant: Just like the Himalayas, there are many peaks in the inauguration of the new covenant. But if the highest peak of the Himalayan range is Mount Everest, the greatest and most important event in the inauguration of the new covenant is the death of Christ. On the night in which He was betrayed, the Lord Jesus sat to eat the Passover with His disciples; and after breaking the bread, Jesus took a cup; and after giving thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:27-28). There are at least three things that we can take away from this passage:

1) First, Jesus is making it clear that His blood is the INAUGURATION of the new covenant. We know this because of the context. When He utters these words, Jesus is pointing us back to another passage of Scripture. In Exodus 24:8, after God had declared His covenant to Israel, we're told that Moses took some of the blood of the calves and the goats, and “sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you. . .’” And what was happening in Exodus 24:8? Scripture tells us later this was the inauguration of the old covenant (Hebrews 9:18). In other words, it wasn't just any ordinary sacrifice—this was the blood that inaugurated the entirety of the old covenant administration. And *this* is the passage Jesus is quoting. The only difference is that whereas Moses had said, “this is *the blood* of the covenant”, Jesus now declares, “this is *My blood* of the covenant. . .” As Jesus gave the cup to His disciples, He was telling them: What I'm doing *now* with *My blood* is the fulfillment of what was being pictured *then* with the blood of the calves and the goats. That was *the shadow*—but this is *the substance*. For indeed, that blood did serve to inaugurate *the old covenant*. But as Jesus shared the Passover with His disciples that night, He was inaugurating something even greater: He declares, “This cup. . . is *the new covenant* in My blood.” (Luke 22:20).⁵

not equal to the Apostles. For this is the meaning of the words: 'Among them that are born of woman, there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he,' (Matthew 11:11). He is not there commending the persons of men, but after preferring John to all the Prophets, he gives the first place to the preaching of the Gospel, which is elsewhere designated by *the kingdom of heaven*.” (Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.9.5). And again, he notes in his commentary on Matthew 11:13: “Christ does not class John with the ministers of the Gospel, though he formerly assigned to him an intermediate station [cf. v12?] between them and the Prophets. But there is no inconsistency here; for although John's preaching was a part of the Gospel, it was little more than a first lesson.” Calvin's comments here also shed some light on how he understands the meaning of Christ's phrase “the kingdom of heaven” and “the kingdom of God” in the context of these particular passages (Matthew 11:11-13 and Luke 16:16). In the first reference, he tells us that *the kingdom of heaven* is a designation for “the preaching of the Gospel”; but it's clear that he means by this the clarity of the gospel that only came after John with the inauguration of the new covenant preaching of Christ. According to this, Calvin explicitly notes of Matthew 11:11, that “*The kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God* denote the new condition of the Church. . .” In other words, according to Calvin, “the kingdom of heaven” and “the kingdom of God” in Matthew 11:11-13 and Luke 16:16 are short-hand for *the administration of the new covenant*. This doesn't mean, however, that we should interpret this phrase in this particular or limited way every time it's used in the Gospels, for it's clearly given a broader range of meaning in other passages where *the kingdom of heaven* seems to convey the realities of the Covenant of Grace more generally (cf. Matthew 13:44, etc).

⁵ Duncan says of Matthew 26:27-28: “this phrase, 'this is my blood of the covenant' (*to haima mou tes diathekes*), recalls the words of the sacrificial inauguration of the synoptic covenant recorded in Exodus 24:8. Moses inaugurating the covenant at Sinai speaks words almost identical. . . Here, Moses sacrificed young bulls, and after reading the book of the covenant in the presence of the people, he sprinkled the blood of these slaughtered beasts on the people, declaring that sprinkled blood, to be the blood of the covenant. Thus, the covenant was ratified. In Matthew's narrative, then, the significance of the cup, or its contents, that which it is setting forth. . . is relating. . . to the blood sprinkled in ratification of the Mosaic Covenant.” Ainsworth writes of Exodus 24:9: “Thus the first covenant (or testament) was not dedicated without blood (as the apostle observes in Hebrews 9:18-23), and the patterns of heavenly things were purified by the blood of these sacrifices; signifying that Christ by his death should sanctify himself for his people, and them unto himself, by the blood of a better covenant (John 17:19; Hebrews 9:13-14; 1 Peter 1:2). . . Thus the sacrament of the Old Covenant, confirmed by the blood of beasts, had a resemblance unto the New Covenant, established upon better promises, and confirmed by the blood of Christ.” And Calvin notes on Exodus 24:5: “This offering. . . comprised in it a ratification of the Covenant. . . for, in order to increase the sanctity and security of covenants, they have in all ages. . . been accompanied with sacrifices. To this end Moses, the victims being slain, pours half the blood upon the altar, and keeps half in basins to sprinkle the people, that by this symbol the Covenant might be ratified, whereof he was the mediator and surety. . . [T]he case of this sacrifice was peculiar; for God desired the Jews to be reminded of the one solid confirmation of the Covenant, which He made with them; as if He had openly shown that it

THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW COVENANT

GOSPEL	JESUS' WORDS IN THE LAST SUPPER	OT ALLUSION	SERVES TO EMPHASIZE
MATTHEW	"this is My blood of the covenant. . ."	Exodus 24:8	<i>The inauguration</i> of the new covenant
LUKE	"this cup. . . is the new covenant in My blood"	Jeremiah 31:31	The inauguration of <i>the new covenant</i>

2) *Secondly, Jesus is clearly declaring that His blood is a PROPITIATION for our sins.* Christ says to His disciples in Matthew 26:27-28: "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins." We mentioned that *the first part* of what Jesus says here is a reference to Exodus 24:8, where Moses takes the blood of the covenant and sprinkles it on the people. But why did Moses do this? Hebrews 9 explains that this blood represented the need for and the provision of atonement, for "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (v22); and it's for this reason that "even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood" (9:18). But if "the first covenant" was inaugurated with the blood of atonement, then much more "the second", for the blood of the old covenant was merely a "copy" of God's true provision of atonement that would come through the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:23ff). Jesus' blood would be shed as a propitiation for our sins. And this is what the Lord continues to emphasize in *the second part* of what He shares with His disciples; for He tells them that His blood "is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins" (v28). The imagery of "pouring out" is the same language used in the sacrifices of the Old Testament, when the priest would pour out the blood of the offering at the base of the altar (cf. Leviticus 4:7; 8:15). In the same way that the blood of those Old Testament sacrifices was poured out, so too, Jesus is saying, His blood was to be poured out; and it would be poured out "for forgiveness of sins." What Christ is sharing here with His disciples is the very same truth we've already encountered many times before: *Forgiveness happens through atonement.* Jesus' atoning blood is what results in forgiveness of sins.⁶

would then only be ratified and effectual, when it should be sealed with blood. . . And again: "The sum is, that the blood was, as it were, the medium whereby the covenant was confirmed and established. . . Hence we gather that the covenant of gratuitous adoption was made with the ancient people unto eternal salvation, since it was sealed with the blood of Christ in type and shadow. . . For this reason Christ in the Holy Supper commends His blood as the seal of the New Covenant. . . for it is obvious that Christ compares with the figure [Exodus 24] the truth which was manifested in Himself. . ." The Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible says on Exodus 24:8: "Jesus proclaimed the fulfillment of this symbolism when he offered the cup at the supper, saying, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Matthew 26:28)." And the ESV Study Bible says on Hebrews 9:18-21: "[T]he Mosaic covenant also began with blood. The Mosaic covenant-initiation ceremony (Exodus 24:3-8) is recalled in Hebrews 9:19-20)." And again on Hebrews 9:23: "Covenantal structure, and the need for purification, requires an inaugurating sacrifice. Here the focus is on the purification of the place of holy worship. The lesser copies (IE, the Mosaic tabernacle and vessels) are patterned after greater heavenly realities (which represent the very presence of God), and these heavenly realities require a greater purification sacrifice (the blood of Jesus)." On the difference between Matthew and Luke, Ligon Duncan notes: "Luke identifies the cup with the *new* covenant. Matthew [and] Mark take you to Exodus 24, while Luke identifies the cup with the new covenant. . . looking back to Jeremiah 31, verses 31-34." When you put them together, it seems they are stressing two aspects of the same truth: Matthew emphasizes the fact that *Jesus' death was a covenantal inauguration*; Luke is emphasizing *the covenant His death inaugurated is the new covenant*.

⁶ On the connection of atonement between Jesus' words and Exodus 24:8, Ligon Duncan says: "This explicit connection between Jesus' blood and the blood sprinkling at Sinai points to an understanding of Jesus' death as a covenantal sacrifice. . . You see the richness of Jesus' words now. What is He doing? He is giving a pre-explanation of what is going to start happening on the next day to his disciples. . . [Also,] in Matthew's [account] alone, we find the phrase, 'for forgiveness of sins,' (*eis aphesin hamartion*), which serves to indicate the purpose of the shedding of the blood of the covenant, and perhaps suggestive of Isaiah 52:15, or of Jeremiah 31:34. Both passages, of course, connect the covenant idea. . . Here again we have a connection between the covenant idea and the forgiveness of sins." The Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible likewise notes: "The blood dashed on the altar signified God's acceptance of this as a covenant offering and thus of the covenant with Israel through the blood of atonement." (on Exodus 24:6). And again: "The people were sprinkled with 'the blood of the covenant,' the blood that put the covenant into effect. . . The blood signified cleansing from sin so that the people could enter into the covenant. It also marked the covenant relationship as accomplished only through atonement (Hebrews 9:21-22). . . " (on Exodus 24:8). On the significance of Jesus' language of "pouring out", Robertson writes: "The 'pouring out' (*ekkheo*) of Christ's blood reflects the sacrificial language of the Old Testament, and the process by which the curses of the covenant were heaped on a substitutionary victim." (p144). Robertson elaborates further on *ekkheo* with a footnote, saying: "Note the usage of the term in the Septuagint in relation to Israel's sacrificial system as found in Leviticus 4:7,12,18,30,34; 8:15; 9:9; 17:4,13." Ligon Duncan also sees a connection between Jesus' language of "pouring out" and the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, writing: "It has been suggested that this is a word of explanation, reminiscent of Isaiah 53:12 ['because He *poured out* Himself to death']. . . This points to the eminent vicarious death that Jesus by which Jesus would establish the covenant." Finally, we could also say a few words here on the meaning of "diatheke" in Hebrews 9:16-17: Though it's disputed as to whether these verses are referring to a "covenant" or a "testament", it does seem that the surrounding context should inform how we interpret these two verses. And if we look to the surrounding context, the author is clearly speaking of a covenant—not a testament. As Robertson notes: "The

THE PROPITIATION OF THE NEW COVENANT

JESUS' WORDS IN MATTHEW 26:28	OT ALLUSION	SERVES TO EMPHASIZE
"this is My blood of the covenant. . ."	The inauguration of Exodus	Forgiveness happens <i>through atonement</i>
"which is poured out. . .for forgiveness of sins"	The sacrifices of Leviticus	<i>Forgiveness happens</i> through atonement

3) *Thirdly, Jesus is emphasizing the necessity of PARTICIPATION in His blood.* We've seen that the words of Christ here in Matthew 26:27-28 are a reference to the inauguration of the old covenant back in Exodus 24:8. Well, there's one last thing we can note about this passage in Exodus: Not only is this passage unique because it's the inauguration of the old covenant; but it's also unique because of what Moses does with the blood of the sacrifice. We read in Exodus 24:8: "So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people. . ." This is the only occurrence in the entire Old Testament when the blood of a sacrifice is sprinkled on the worshippers. And so, not only is Christ connecting His death with *the reality of propitiation*—He's also connecting it with *the necessity of participation*. There must be a personal participation in the blood of Jesus for us to share in its benefits. Christ himself seems to echo the same truth when He gives His disciples the cup, saying, "Drink from it, all of you" (v27). *Now, in one sense, there's an external participation that all God's people collectively share.* Just as all the worshippers in the old covenant were sealed with blood under Moses, so too, all God's people in the new covenant are sealed through their participation in the body and blood of the Lord. Indeed, it seems that the Lord's Supper, now, in the new covenant, serves the same function as the sprinkling of the blood did under Moses in the old covenant administration. *But there's also a word of warning here.* The whole nation was sprinkled under Moses; indeed, if the blood of the old covenant was like a sacrament, they all partook. Paul tells us they "were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink. . .*Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased.*" (1 Corinthians 10:1-5). The author of Hebrews has a similar warning for us in the new covenant, for

crucial factor for deciding between these possible meanings of the term in Hebrews 9 is the relation of death to *diatheke* throughout the passage. The connection between death and a 'last will and testament' is obvious. . .Yet death is as inseparably related to 'covenant' as to 'testament'. . .both 'testament' and 'covenant' involve death. Death activates a testament. Death inaugurates and vindicates a covenant. Clearly the opening verse in this section of Hebrews is concerned with the relation of death to 'covenant'. . .*A death has taken place for the redemption of transgressions committed under the first covenant* [v15]. . .This verse speaks of Christ's death as the factor which removes transgressions committed under the first *diatheke*. In no way does the death of a 'testator' remove transgressions committed against a last will and testament. The death of a testator is not a vicarious, substitutionary death. But the death of Christ the maker of the new covenant provided redemption from the curses incurred due to the violation of the old covenant. *Diatheke* in Hebrews 9:15 refers clearly to 'covenant,' not 'testament.'" (pp138-140). And then speaking of verses 18-20, which are immediately subsequent to the passage in question, Robertson says: "Blood" and '*diatheke*' in these verses recall the inauguration ceremony of Sinai. By sprinkling the blood, Moses did not institute a last will and testament. God did not die in order to activate a 'will' for Israel. Instead, the ceremony at Sinai instituted a covenantal relationship. The sprinkled 'blood of the covenant' solemnly consecrated God and Israel to one another for life and death. The 'blood' of Sinai as discussed in Hebrews 9:18-20 represented a covenantal rather than a testamentary arrangement. Death sealed the covenant." (p141). This is confirmed by what the author of Hebrews goes on to assert in verse 22, where still in the context of the inauguration of the old covenant, he declares, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." So, the context surrounding verses 16-17 clearly supports a rendering of *diatheke* as "covenant." But even more than just the evidence of the immediate context, the whole section of vv15-24ff seems to be presenting a particular argument: This section is telling us that we ought to interpret what is happening in the second covenant (the new covenant) precisely by what happened in the first (the old covenant). This is especially clear in 9:18 and 9:23. The author of Hebrews is telling us in these verses that what was happening in Exodus 24:8 with the old covenant is a type or shadow or copy of what Jesus was going to accomplish for us in the new covenant. In other words, the two things are analogous. They worked in the same way. Exodus 24 was the fore-picture; Matthew 26 is the fulfillment. So we go back again to Robertson's question: Was the beast who was slaughtered and his blood then sprinkled on the people in Exodus 24:8 a testament? Was that how his blood functioned? Did the beast simply happen to die, and the people somehow became the inheritors of all that belonged to this beast, so that now that the beast is dead they may inherit all the possessions of the beast? Of course not. It was a sacrifice of atonement. The beast didn't just die; he was sacrificed, and he was sacrificed as an offering of atonement, so that through the blood of atonement sprinkled on the people they might receive forgiveness of sins. Well, if Hebrews 9 is telling us the two covenants worked the same way, we have our answer: As it was a covenantal sacrifice in the old covenant—so it is in the new. If we take *diatheke* as "covenant" in vv16-17, we could read it in this way: "For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be *represented* the death of the one who made it. For a covenant is valid only *over dead bodies*. . ." It is true that the natural reading of the text alone would give preference to a rendering of "last will and testament" in vv16-17. But we should also take into account the immediate context and flow of thought of the passage, as well as the fact that, "Of the 31 times in which the term [*diatheke*] occurs outside these two verses, 31 times the word means *covenant* rather than *testament*." (Robertson, p141).

he speaks of the punishment of those who have “trampled under foot the Son of God” and regard as unclean “the blood of the covenant” by which they were “sanctified” (Hebrews 10:29). How can one prove to be an unbeliever who has been “sanctified” by Christ's blood? Because they were sprinkled outwardly—but never inwardly. They were sealed with blood sacramentally—but never savingly. They were under the realm of the covenant—but never embraced the reality. So then, when Jesus tells His disciples to drink of the cup, He's urging us to partake of the reality the sacrament only represents.⁷

THE PARTICIPATION OF THE NEW COVENANT

	THE REALITY OF EXTERNAL PARTICIPATION		THE NECESSITY OF PERSONAL PARTICIPATION	
OLD COVENANT	Exodus 24:8	All sprinkled by the blood	1 Corinthians 10	External participation not enough <i>then</i>
NEW COVENANT	Matthew 26:27	All drink from the cup	Hebrews 10:29	External participation not enough <i>now</i>

E) The CULMINATION of the New Covenant: We said that the greatest and most important event in the inauguration of the new covenant is the death of Christ. But though it's true this is the “highest peak” among many in the inauguration of the new covenant, that doesn't mean it's the last one. After Jesus had risen from the dead and spent forty days with His disciples, He gathered them together and “commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised,” saying to them, “for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:4-5). Christ had died, He had risen, and He was about to ascend back to His Father, but there was still something else that was needed to complete the inauguration of the new covenant.

Pentecost is taken from a Greek word (*pentaecostae*) meaning “fiftieth”; it refers to the festival that's celebrated on the fiftieth day after Passover, also known in the Old Testament as the Feast of Weeks. There were actually three celebrations that took place during the course of these fifty days: The first was *Passover*; which celebrated the Lord's saving of His people from death through the blood of the Passover lamb. Passover took place on the 14th day of the first month (Leviticus 23:5). The second celebration took place three days later; it was *the celebration of “the first fruits”*, and it was to happen “on the day after the sabbath” (Leviticus 23:11), which would have always been on a Sunday. Finally, God's people were to count off fifty days from the Passover, at which time they would celebrate *the Feast of Weeks* (or Pentecost), which was a celebration of the very beginning of the ingathering of the harvest (Exodus 23:16). All three celebrations point us to Christ: For Jesus is our Passover lamb who has been sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). And three days later, His resurrection is said to be the first fruits of those who are asleep (1 Corinthians 15:20). But it wasn't until the day of Pentecost that there was, in a very real sense, the inauguration of the harvest of Jesus' new covenant work of redemption.⁸

⁷ As Ligon Duncan notes: “It has been pointed out, that the narrative of Exodus 24 is the only sacrificial ritual recorded in the Old Testament in which the blood was sprinkled on the people. . . It is not, therefore, with an ordinary sacrifice that Jesus connects His death, but with a unique atoning sacrifice that emphasizes the ultimate involvement of those who participate.” On Hebrews 10:29, The Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible notes: “This description indicates that apostates were counted among the people of the covenant. . . and thus were set apart by the blood of Christ—but in a non-saving way.” And Calvin says of the reference to the blood of the covenant, “The apostle. . . alludes to the ancient rite of sprinkling, which availed not to real sanctification, but was only its shadow or image.” And David Dickson, in asking of Hebrews 10:29, “But how can the reprobate be said to be sanctified by the blood of the covenant?”, answers in this way: “I answer, there is a sanctification to the purifying of the flesh, and a sanctification to the purifying of the conscience. . . The sanctification, external, to the purifying of the flesh, consists in the man's separation from the world, and dedication unto God's service, by calling and covenant, common to all the members of the visible church; and it is forcible thus far, as to bring a man into credit and estimation as a saint, before men, and unto the common privileges of the church; whereupon, as men, so God also speaks unto him, and of him, as one of his people, and deals with him, in his external dispensation, as with one of his own people. In this sense all the congregation of Israel, and every one of them, is called holy, yea Cora also, and his followers (Numbers 16:3). . . For as the blood of Christ has virtue to cleanse the conscience, and renew the soul which comes unto it truly and spiritually, so it must have force to do what which is less; that is, purify the flesh, and external condition, of the man who comes unto it outwardly only, as the types did under the law; whereupon, a hypocrite in the Christian church must be accounted one of the congregation of the saints. . . Or we may say more shortly, there is a sanctification by *consecration*. . . and a sanctification by *inhabitation* of the Holy Spirit. . .”

⁸ We might say there were actually four feasts in the span of the fifty days, as the Passover was also the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (See Leviticus 23:5-6. Deuteronomy 16:1-8 shows the intimate connection between the two). The three great feasts of Israel were the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of the Harvest (which is another name for the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost), and the Feast of the Ingathering, which was also called the Feast of Booths (cf. Exodus 23:14-17). All Israel was to travel down to Jerusalem for these feasts three times a year. *The Feast of Unleavened Bread* lasted for an entire week, from the 15th to the 21st of the first month. If the Passover signifies what Christ has done for His people, then the Feast of Unleavened Bread signifies how God is calling us, His people, to live in light of Christ's sacrifice. Paul says in 1 Corinthians

	DAY CELEBRATED	THE ORIGINAL MEANING	CORRESPONDS TO
PASSOVER	On the 14 th day of the 1 st month	The sacrifice that rescued from judgment	Jesus' Death
FIRST FRUITS	On the 3 rd day after Passover	The first sheaf that guaranteed the others	Jesus' Resurrection
FEAST OF WEEKS	On the 50 th day after Passover	The beginning of ingathering the harvest	The Coming of the Spirit

Well, after Christ had ascended to the Father, all His disciples were together in Jerusalem when the day of Pentecost came. And we know the rest! There was a loud rushing noise from heaven; and it filled the house, and tongues of fire distributed themselves on each of them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other dialects and languages; so that the Jews that rushed to see what was happening could each hear them in their own mother tongue “speaking of the mighty deeds of God” (Acts 2:1-11). When Peter took his stand to explain what was happening, he told the crowd, “this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. . .’” (Acts 2:16-17). In other words, Peter was saying, this very moment is the fulfillment of what Scripture foretold in Joel 2:28-32. And indeed, it's God's own testimony that the days of the new covenant have arrived; for the pouring out of God's Spirit was one of the certain signs of the beginning of the new covenant administration.⁹

This doesn't mean the Holy Spirit wasn't at work in the old covenant. He certainly was. Those who penned the Old Testament Scriptures did so in and through the Holy Spirit who was moving within them (1 Peter 1:10-11; 2 Peter 1:21). The Lord's prophets were filled with the power of the Spirit as they declared the Word of God to His people (Micah 3:8). God's Spirit gifted certain individuals in the old covenant for particular tasks (Exodus 31:2-6). The Spirit of the Lord also came upon certain leaders that the Lord raised up, to empower them to deliver His people from their enemies (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 15:14-15). Later in Acts, Stephen tells the Jews they “are always resisting the Holy Spirit” even as their fathers did (7:51); and Isaiah helps us understand what Stephen meant when he testifies

5:7-8, “For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” What feast is Paul talking about here when he says, “let us celebrate the feast”? The Feast of Unleavened Bread! Paul is connecting the Passover with the Feast of Unleavened Bread and telling us that this is the feast we are to observe for the whole of our lives. Yeast or leaven represents sin in Scripture. So Paul is telling us that as Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed for us, our lives, in turn, are to be unleavened; that is, sanctified, set apart, holy for the Lord. *The Feast of Booths* (or Feast of Tabernacles, or Feast of the Ingathering) also lasted an entire week, being celebrated on the 15th to the 21st of the seventh month. It commemorated the full gathering of the harvest. It also looked back and remembered God's faithfulness to His people through their wanderings through the wilderness under Moses. If you calculate from Exodus 19:1, it appears Moses comes down from Sinai the seventh time with his face shining in Exodus 34:29 on the first day of the Feast of Booths. If Pentecost celebrates the beginning of the ingathering of the harvest, the Feast of Booths celebrates the completion of the harvest. It signifies the resurrection. As Moses came down from the mountain with his face shining, so too, this feast looks to the day that Christ will come again. On that day He will gather His people as wheat into barns, but the chaff will be burned with unquenchable fire. If our present life now is a continual celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, then the life to come in eternal glory with the Lord will be a continual celebration of the Feast of Booths, as we similarly look back on our pilgrim journeying through the wilderness of this world and wonder at the Lord's mercies in providing all of our needs, protecting us from evil, and bringing us safely home to glory.

⁹ As Ferguson notes: “Pentecost publicly marks the transition from the old to the new covenant. . . and inaugurates the new era in which the eschatological life of the future invades the present evil age. . . That which is 'new' in the new covenant ministry of the Spirit is therefore inextricably related to the significance of the Pentecost event.” (*The Holy Spirit*, pp.57-58). On Peter's reference to Joel, he takes some liberty at the beginning of the quotation: Joel 2:28 begins: “It will come about *after this*”; while Peter quotes Joel as beginning, “And it shall be *in the last days*. . .” The Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible explains what Peter is doing in this way: “The words 'In the last days' (cf. Isaiah 2:2; Hosea 3:5; Micah 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1) are Peter's way of associating the Hebrew and Greek words of Joel 2:28 ('and afterward'). Peter interpreted 'and afterward' as referring to the days of the new covenant in contrast to the former days of the old covenant.” (from note on Acts 2:17-21). And again on Joel 2:28-29: “By introducing this prophecy with the words 'in the last days' (Acts 2:17), Peter connected it with other prophecies regarding Israel's Messianic future and so taught that Pentecost was critical to the inauguration of the promised new age.” Thomas Blake helps to explain Joel's meaning when he speaks of *visions* and *dreams*: “prophecies in the Old Testament, of the glory of the New Testament times, are in Old Testament phrases by way of allusion to the worship of those times, set forth to us.” (*A Treatise of the Covenant of God*, p.238). In other words, when the Old Testament prophets looked forward and spoke of New Testament realities, they explained those New Testament realities using Old Testament language, since it's the only language they had. Others have compared this to a father and son who lived in the late 1800's. When the son is a boy, the father promises to give him a horse on his 18th birthday; but when the boy turns 18, his father gives him a (newly invented) car instead. When Joel speaks of visions and dreams, he's using the only language he knows to explain new covenant realities.

how God's people “grieved His Holy Spirit” when they rebelled against Him in the wilderness (Isaiah 63:10). And this also teaches us salvation itself has always been the special gift of the Spirit. Whether living in the old covenant or the new, the only way anyone is ever saved is through the renewing work of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5). So, it's quite clear that the Spirit was at work in the old covenant as well. But if all this is true, then in what sense is the pouring out of the Spirit “new” in the new covenant?¹⁰

1) *At Pentecost, there's a newness in the CORPORATE EFFECT of the Spirit:* We mentioned this earlier in our study of Jeremiah 31. Though there were many in the old covenant who embraced the gospel from the heart, by faith; it seems this was the exception rather than the rule. For though many in the old covenant had God's Law written in their hearts, many more remained unchanged. But this is precisely what's different now in the new covenant, and the reason it's different *is the greater effect in the working of the Holy Spirit.* We could put it this way: In the new covenant, the Spirit is now at work with a much greater force among God's people than He was in the old covenant administration. We showed that Pentecost was the celebration of the first fruits. But there's also another event in the Old Testament that came to be associated with the same day. For it was on the day of Pentecost that Moses also came down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments in his hands. Do you see the correlation? Moses had ascended the mountain; and on Pentecost he came down again with the the Law of God written on stone tablets. In the same way, Christ had ascended; but at Pentecost, He comes down—not to present God's Law *as written on tablets*—but to write it powerfully *on the hearts of His people* through the working of the Holy Spirit. When God gave the Law to Moses, He did so out of the midst of the fire on the mountain. But now, when the Lord sends the Holy Spirit, He puts the fire of heaven into the very hearts of His people. Again, it's not that the Lord hadn't done this at all before—but now it would be on a much greater scale—so that when Peter preaches his first sermon after Pentecost, three thousand souls are saved all at once. The old covenant had been characterized by God's Law written on stone; but now the new is marked by that same Law written on the hearts of His people. And the reason is, *at Pentecost, there's a newness of effect in the working of the Spirit.*¹¹

THE NEWNESS OF THE SPIRIT'S CORPORATE EFFECT

	THE BOOK	THE EVENT	THE TIME	THE RESULT
OLD COVENANT	Exodus	God provided His Law	Fifty days after the Passover	The few were changed
NEW COVENANT	Acts	God poured out His Spirit	Fifty days after Christ's death	The many are changed

¹⁰ The Spirit of the Reformation Bible notes: “To understand the New Testament ministry of the Spirit, it is essential to be aware that He ministered in the Old Testament period in ways that anticipated what was to come in the New Testament. He 1) brought order to the primeval chaos (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 33:6); 2) imparted revelation and wisdom (Deuteronomy 34:9; Micah 3:8); 3) fell upon special servants of God to enable them for service (Exodus 31:2-6; Judges 6:34; 15:14-15; Isaiah 11:2); and 4) brought about inward renewal in believers (Ezekiel 36:26-27; cf. Romans 8:9-16). In these and similar ways, the Holy Spirit was revealed in the Old Testament as the power and presence of God with His people.” (p1755). Ligon Duncan cites John 7:39, “for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified”, and explains it in this way: “[Radical discontinuity is emphasized in this passage. . . the language of discontinuity there has to be understood as a relative contrast in absolute terms. . . .] Referencing similar passages, Duncan concludes: “the Holy Spirit is said by New Testament writers to be active in the Old Testament. . . nevertheless, the change from old covenant to new covenant is often described in the New Testament itself, as fundamentally being seen in just this: That the new covenant is uniquely the era of the Holy Spirit.”

¹¹ Ferguson notes: “Pentecost was the fiftieth day from the Passover. It was the Feast of First-fruits, celebrating the offering of the harvest (Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:15-21). . . But Pentecost was also. . . increasingly viewed as a commemoration of the giving of the law at Sinai.” (*The Holy Spirit*, pp63-64). And again: “Moses had ascended the mountain. When he descended he had in his possession the Ten Commandments, the law of God. Christ too had recently ascended. At Pentecost he comes down, not with the law written on tablets of clay, but with the gift of his own Spirit to write the law in the hearts of believers and by his power to enable them to fulfill the law's commands. Thus the new covenant promise begins to be fulfilled (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 8:3-4; 2 Corinthians 3:7-11).” (p61). Roberts writes: “As the Lord God, fifty days after the sacrificing of the first Passover, appeared to all Israel like devouring fire, and spoke His Law that old covenant to them out of the midst of the fire, so the Holy Ghost, fifty days after the sacrificing of our great Passover Jesus Christ for us, appeared to all this conflux of Jews in the shape of cloven tongues, as of fire sitting upon the heads of the Apostles, speaking in all their languages the wonderful works of God, and mysteries of the new covenant. . . .” (p1295). And again, of Ezekiel 36:25-27: “The elect in all ages had their measure of the Spirit of God; but before Christ the Spirit was given very sparingly, after Christ very plentifully and bountifully. . . These captive Jews had the Spirit of God before, and under their captivity; but God promises a more plenary endowment of them therewith, after their return from Babylon (Ezekiel 36:27).” (p1129-31). And Ligon Duncan writes: “The new covenant is the era of the Spirit because now the Spirit works in the hearts of God's people with a more prevailing and a more pervading force. Of course, He regenerated and sanctified the souls of God's saints in the old covenant . . . And yet, we are compelled to say that the Spirit's work in the new covenant is more powerful and prevailing than in the old.”

2) *At Pentecost, there's a newness in the INDIVIDUAL GIFTS of the Spirit:* There's a story in the Book of Numbers about two men named Eldad and Medad. When the Lord sends His Spirit to rest upon seventy elders who are chosen to assist Moses, God's Spirit also comes to rest upon them; and when it does they begin to prophesy in the camp. Joshua doesn't like what's happening. But Moses says to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:29). Well, in the new covenant, God is pleased to grant Moses' request. This is what the Lord meant when He foretold through the prophet Joel: "It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days." (2:28-29). Here, God is speaking about extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit. These things were rare in the Old Testament. The Lord gifted those seventy elders under Moses with a special unction from the Spirit. He had gifted another man with a special measure of wisdom in craftsmanship for constructing the furnishings of the tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-5). And God had gifted His Spirit to particular judges and kings whom He had raised up in Israel's past in order to equip them in a special way to lead and govern His people. But every time the Lord did this, it was the exception, rather than the rule. These unique gifts of God's Spirit were only given to the few, not the many. But this is what Joel is saying would be different in the new covenant. In the old covenant administration, it was only certain individuals that were gifted at select times in order to fulfill particular functions. But now, in the new covenant, the Lord has poured out *all kinds of unique spiritual gifts* (IE, Joel's imagery of prophesy, dreams, visions) *upon all His people* (literally on "all flesh"; young men and old, male and female servants). In the new covenant age, each one of us has received a special gift (1 Peter 4:10) for the building up of the whole (Ephesians 4:12).¹²

THE NEWNESS OF THE SPIRIT'S INDIVIDUAL GIFTS

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
IN THE OLD COVENANT	God granted only certain kinds of gifts	To certain individuals	At certain times
IN THE NEW COVENANT	God has poured out all manner of gifts	Upon all of His people	For all times

¹² Ferguson writes: "The long-looked for day of the Lord had arrived; the powers of the age to come were now released. The characteristic feature of this was a distinction in the distribution of the Spirit. He was now 'poured out' by Christ in unrestrained measure, and distributed without geographical and ethnic limitation, 'on all people.'" (*The Holy Spirit*, p62). And again: "Now all of the Lord's people possess the knowledge of God formerly experienced only by the prophets. . . That which came to the people by and large through official channels in the Mosaic economy (via prophets, priests and kings) now belongs to all the Lord's people by Christ through his Spirit." (p63). On Joel 2:28-29, Francis Roberts notes: "This passage in Joel has special reference to the times of the new covenant; the scope whereof, is, to show, that God will more plentifully *for measure*, and more generally *for extent*, bestow his Spirit and the effects thereof upon his people under the new covenant, than He did under the old. *For measure*, they should have his Spirit in prophecy, visions and dreams: that is, they should have all sorts of the manifestations of the Spirit upon them, and this should not be as formerly an extraordinary, but an ordinary and common thing. *For extent*, all flesh, that is, all sorts of God's people, male, female, young and old, bond and free (as here Joel expounds himself) should partake of this Spirit of God. So that they shall equalize, yea in some sort excel the ancient old covenant prophets themselves. . . This promise was most signally and eminently fulfilled by God's miraculous pouring forth His Spirit upon the Apostles on the Feast of Pentecost, and afterwards by His extraordinary and ordinary shedding forth of His Spirit upon others." (Roberts, pp1423-24). And Calvin says of Acts 2:29, "[W]hen God is said to pour out his Spirit. . . it must be thus understood, that he makes manifold variety and change of gifts to flow unto men from His Spirit. . ." And again: "[T]he prophet does signify that there shall be no difference of age or kind, but that God admits all, one with another, unto the partaking of his grace. It is said, therefore, 'all flesh,' because both young and old, men and women, are thereby signified. . . [F]or we must note here a double contrariety, between the time of the Old and New Testament; for the pouring out (as I have said) does signify great plenty, when as there was under the law a more scarce distribution; for which cause John also does say that the Holy Ghost was not given unto Christ ascended into heaven. 'All flesh' does signify an infinite multitude, whereas God in times past did vouchsafe to bestow such plenty of his Spirit only upon a few. Furthermore, in both comparisons we do not deny but that the fathers under the law were partakers of the self, same grace whereof we are partakers; but the Lord does show that we are above them, as we are indeed." (Calvin). And the Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible notes on Joel 2:28-29: "As Moses prayed for the Israelites to serve as God's prophets (Numbers 11:29), Joel predicted that this desire would be experienced in Israel's glorious future. Peter proclaimed that this vision's fulfillment began at Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21). . ." And once again: "[T]he prophet Joel predicted that in the last days the Spirit would be poured out on every class and race of people (Joel 2:28-32). This is one noteworthy way in which the Spirit's ministry in the Old Testament was less dramatic than in the New. In the Old Testament, only a select few were gifted in special ways to accomplish extraordinary tasks for God; in the New Testament, however, the Spirit gifts all believers (Acts 2:16ff). . . [T]he Spirit's work is now spread much more widely than in the past, and all believers are gifted in some way (1 Corinthians 7:7; Ephesians 4:7; 1 Peter 4:10). In this sense Jesus promised a greater distribution of the fulness of the Spirit when he promised 'another Counselor' (John 14:16)" (p1755).

3) *At Pentecost, there's a newness in the UNIVERSAL SCOPE of the Spirit:* When Joel prophesied that God would pour out His Spirit on “all flesh” (2:28) in the new covenant, he was saying the Lord would grant unique gifts to each of His people. But he may have been saying much more than that as well. For when God poured out His Spirit at Pentecost, not only was there a newness as it related to *the Spirit's individual gifts*—but there was also a newness as it related to *the Spirit's universal scope*. In the old covenant, God had singled out one particular people to be the objects of His mercy. It's not that the Lord never saved any Gentiles in the Old Testament; but when He did so, this was definitely the exception rather than the rule. The vast majority of God's people in the old covenant were ethnic Jews. And even when Christ went about His public ministry, He made clear this was something that hadn't changed—at least not yet. For when a Gentile woman comes to Jesus about her daughter, He tells her: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24). And when Christ sends out His disciples to preach, He forbids them from going to the Gentiles (Matthew 10:5-6). In the old covenant, the extent of the Spirit's influence was effectively limited to the Jews. But now, with the new covenant outpouring at Pentecost, *the Spirit's influence has taken on a universal scope*. And it's for this reason that Christ tells His disciples just before His ascension: “but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8). From now on, the gospel is to be proclaimed to all nations. And the reason is that the Spirit's influence is no longer limited to just one particular people. At Pentecost, the Lord has given a new manifestation of the Spirit fit for a new covenant. And He's also given us a new missional power that corresponds to this design; for the Spirit himself empowers us to testify of Jesus (1:8). We no longer need to sit, waiting for the Spirit to show up (1:4). He's already come. We rather go forth in His power, declaring the gospel of Jesus.¹³

THE NEWNESS OF THE SPIRIT'S UNIVERSAL SCOPE

	WHAT WE SEE	WHAT IT MEANS
IN THE OLD COVENANT	The scope of the Spirit's influence was limited	The gospel was mainly preached to Jews
IN THE NEW COVENANT	The scope of the Spirit's influence is universal	The gospel is now to be preached to all

¹³ Of the phrase, “all flesh” in Joel 2:28, Matthew Henry writes: “The Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh, not as hitherto upon Jews only, but upon Gentiles also. . . Hitherto divine revelation was confined to the seed of Abraham, none but those of the land of Israel had the Spirit of prophecy but, in the last days, 'all flesh shall see the glory of God' (Isaiah 40:5) and shall come to 'worship before him' (Isaiah 66:23).” And John Gill likewise says: “That is, all sorts of men, Jews and Gentiles, men of all nations; and such there were on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured down upon the apostles, and the grace of the Spirit was given to many of all nations; though that was only the beginning of the fulfillment of this prophecy, which quickly had a further accomplishment in the Gentile world. . .” Calvin notes: “[U]ntil the advent of Christ, the Lord set apart one nation within which to confine the covenant of his grace. . . Israel was then the Lord's darling son; the others were strangers. Israel was recognized and received into confidence and safekeeping; the others were left to their own darkness. Israel was hallowed by God; the others were profaned. Israel was honored with God's presence; the others were excluded from all approach to him. . . The calling of the Gentiles, therefore, is a notable mark of the excellence of the New Testament over the Old. Indeed, this had been attested before by many very clear utterances of the prophets, but in such a way that its fulfillment was postponed until the Kingdom of the Messiah. Even Christ at the beginning of his preaching made no immediate progress toward it. He deferred it until, having completed the work of our redemption and finished the time of his humiliation, he received from the Father 'the name which is above every name'. . . Paul with good reason, therefore, proclaims this a great 'mystery hidden for ages and generations' (Colossians 1:26; Ephesians 3:9), and says that it is wonderful even to the angels (cf. 1 Peter 1:12).” (*Institutes*, 2.11.11). And Ligon Duncan says: “The new covenant is the era of the Spirit because in it, the Spirit of God is poured out upon all flesh. It is a central idea of the new covenant that it is worldwide in scope. . . The worldwide kingdom of God is now inaugurated and now the Spirit is to be poured out upon all flesh. . . now, the barrier of the nation and the nations has been broken down. And all peoples will now come to Mt. Zion.” Duncan goes on to say: “The new covenant is the era of the Spirit, because now, for the first time, the object of the Spirit's work is to recover the world from its sin.” He quotes B.B. Warfield, saying: “Of course [recovering the world from sin] was the Spirit's ultimate object from the beginning, but during the period of preparation, it was only its ultimate and not its proximate object.” Duncan concludes: “Its proximate object was preparation. Now, in the new covenant, it is performance. Then it was to preserve a seed, sound and pure for the planting; now, it is for the reaping of the harvest. . . The Spirit is the leaven which leavens the world. In Israel, it was the leaven laid away in the closet until the day of leavening came.” On the empowering of the Spirit, Ferguson says: “The fulfillment of the Great Commission takes place in the power of the Spirit.” (p.59). And John Murray writes: “[T]he Holy Spirit came in the fullness of his grace and power in world-wide activity for the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham (Gen. 22:18) and that given to Christ (Psalm 2:8), in fulfillment of the world-wide redemptive design and accomplishment. There was the coming of the Son by a distinctive mode and for a distinct undertaking. This is also the coming of the Holy Spirit by a distinctive mode and for a distinctive function. . . This the age of Pentecost. . . This is why we have the gospel. It is because the utmost part of the earth has come within the scope of the Holy Spirit's activity.” (*The Power of the Holy Spirit*, p138).

II. The Head of the New Covenant

1. The IDENTITY of JESUS: *Who is Christ?*

A) The REALITY of the PICTURES: Who is Jesus? He's the reality that all the pictures of the old covenant had pointed to. *Jesus is the Greater Adam.* For as all in Adam die on account of his sin, so too all in Christ shall live on account of His righteousness. For whereas Adam was tempted and fell, Christ in the wilderness was tempted and stood. For as the first Adam brought ruin upon the world, the second Adam has wrought redemption. *Jesus is the Greater Noah.* For as Noah's entire family was saved from judgment in and through and because of Noah, so it is with Christ. And just as God appointed Noah to be the founder of a new humanity, so that, all who were safe with him in the ark would afterwards inherit a new and purified earth, so it is with Christ. *Jesus is the Greater Isaac.* For just as Isaac was the long-awaited child of promise; and just as his birth was miraculous, so it was with Christ. And indeed, as Isaac, in obedience to his father's command, submitted to climb the hill with the wood on his back, in order to do his father's will, so did Christ. *Jesus is the Greater Joseph.* For as he was the unique, beloved son of his father; and yet because of this, his own brothers were jealous of him and hated him, and sold him into the hands of the Gentiles, so it was with Christ. And being falsely accused, he suffered, though he had done no wrong; and yet after his sufferings, he was highly exalted and given all authority and honor and dominion, so that before Joseph every knee did bow, just as it shall be with Christ. *Jesus is the Greater Moses.* For he was born the child of a slave though he himself was free from the slavery of his brothers, as it was with Christ. And as he forsook a palace in order to free his people from their bondage, so did Christ. But even so, his own kinsmen failed to realize God had chosen him to grant them deliverance. In time though, God redeemed His people through him, and raised him up as their mediator, and spoke only to His people through him, just as with Christ. *Jesus is the Greater Joshua.* For they share the same name, "the Lord saves"; and it's no wonder; for if Moses pictured Christ in his redeeming Israel from bondage, Joshua pictured Him as their victorious warrior who gave them possession of the land. *Jesus is the Greater David.* For as the first king of Israel failed, there was need for another who would do all God's will. Like David, Christ is the shepherd king of Israel; whose sufferings came before glory; who wore a cross before a crown.¹⁴

JESUS IS THE REALITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PICTURES

	THE PICTURE	THE REALITY
ADAM	The covenant head whose actions determined the fate of all his posterity	<i>Jesus is the Greater Adam</i>
NOAH	The founder of a new humanity who led his household to a purified earth	<i>Jesus is the Greater Noah</i>
ISAAC	The long awaited child of promise who submitted to the will of his father	<i>Jesus is the Greater Isaac</i>
JOSEPH	The unique and beloved son who wrongly suffered yet was highly exalted	<i>Jesus is the Greater Joseph</i>
MOSES	The chosen prophet who forsook the palace to redeem his own kinsmen	<i>Jesus is the Greater Moses</i>
JOSHUA	The victorious warrior who brought Israel into their promised inheritance	<i>Jesus is the Greater Joshua</i>
DAVID	The second-king and shepherd-king whose sufferings came before glory	<i>Jesus is the Greater David</i>

B) The FULFILLMENT of the PROMISES: The old covenant pictured Christ over and over again in his birth and death, in his sufferings and exaltation, and in his covenantal headship for His people. But there wasn't just pictures of Christ throughout the old covenant—there were also promises. And just as Christ is the reality of the pictures, He's also the fulfillment of the promises. *Jesus is the seed of the woman.* After Adam's sin, God drew near and made a promise to the man and the woman in

¹⁴ Roberts writes: "There were many types and shadows [in the Old Testament]. . . But this Jesus, God-man, is the truth and substance of them all. *He is the true Adam* that justifies and quickens all his supernatural seed, as the first Adam condemned and killed all his natural seed. *He is the true Melchizedek*, first king of righteousness, and then king of Salem, that is, king of peace; without father according to his man-hood, without mother according to his God-head, without beginning of days, or end of life. . . *He is the true Prophet, like Moses*, to be hearkened to in all things. *He is the true Joshua* that brings his Israel, all true believers, into the eternal rest. *He is the true Seed of David*, that reigns over the house of Jacob forevermore." (p1587). And Clowney notes: "A greater Savior was needed. That Savior, too, would come. . . a Prophet like Moses, but a better Mediator; a Priest like Aaron, but One of the royal order of Melchizedek; a King like David, but given an eternal throne. The new humanity needed to be founded by a second Adam, the descendant of the woman who would crush the serpent's head. The promise to Abraham was to be fulfilled in another Isaac, the true Seed in whom the nations would be blessed." (p202).

Genesis 3:15. From the woman, Eve, would come a descendant who would deal a death blow to the snake, though he himself would be struck by the serpent in the process. It's the first gospel promise; God would send a Messiah into the world who would destroy the snake and his work. He would be bruised, yet He will conquer. The first Adam had failed, but God would send a second. There was now enmity between God and man. As a result of Adam's sin, spiritual death was unleashed into the world; the snake and man were now united against their Creator. But through the seed of the woman God would reconcile man to himself—putting the enmity back between the woman and the serpent.

Jesus is the seed of Abraham: In Genesis 12, God called Abraham to leave his country, his relatives, and his father's house, in order to journey to the land which He would show him. At the same time, God also made several promises to him; and among those promise, the Lord told him: “And *in you* all the families of the earth will be blessed.” (Genesis 12:3). What did it mean that all nations would be blessed “in” Abraham? Thankfully, God later clarifies the meaning when He comes to Abraham again and tells him in Genesis 22, “*In your seed* all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. . .” (v18). God's blessing would come to the nations through the seed of Abraham; that is, only through a very special and particular descendant of Abraham. And it's Jesus. Jesus is the seed of Abraham through whom God's blessing of salvation comes to the nations. If Christ's genealogy in Luke emphasizes the fact that He is *the seed of the woman* as “the son of Adam” (3:38); then Matthew's genealogy seeks to emphasize the fact that Jesus is also “the son of Abraham” (1:1). Abraham's special “seed” is Christ.

And *Jesus is the seed of David*. Matthew's genealogy emphasizes this too, for in the very first verse of his gospel, he writes: “The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, *the son of David*, the son of Abraham.” Christ is the seed of the woman; He is the seed of Abraham; and He's the seed of David. God made a promise to David in the context of His covenant with him in 2 Samuel 7:12-13: “When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you. . .He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” We might have thought this descendant must be Solomon. But Solomon's kingdom certainly didn't last forever. No, as the prophets later help us understand, God was looking past Solomon to a greater seed of David when He made these promises to him. Indeed, this seed of David was the Messiah. And it's for this reason that Jesus is called the Son of David throughout the gospels. Christ was known as *David's Son* because He was being rightly identified as *David's seed*.¹⁵

JESUS IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROMISES

	SCRIPTURE	PROMISE	FULFILLMENT
The seed of THE WOMAN	Genesis 3:15	The One who would crush the snake and his work	JESUS
The seed of ABRAHAM	Genesis 22:18	The One who would bring blessing to the nations	
The seed of DAVID	2 Samuel 7:12-13	The One whose kingdom will endure forever	

C) The SUBSTANCE of the SHADOWS: As we've seen, Christ is pictured in various ways through God's old covenant people; and He's also promised as the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and the seed of David. But apart from all these things, Christ is also typified in and through the old covenant ordinances and institutions. Paul writes to the Colossians in 2:16-17, “Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a mere *shadow* of what is to come; but the *substance* belongs to Christ.” Here, Paul is helping us understand that all the ordinances and institutions of the old covenant were meant to give us a foretaste of the person and work of Christ. In our English translation, he uses the words “shadow” and “substance”; but in the original Greek, Paul uses the terms “shadow” and “body” as he

¹⁵ Roberts says: “All former covenants [have] their great accomplishment in [Jesus Christ]. So that under this covenant the seed of the woman came, to bruise the serpent's head. . .the seed of Abraham came, to bless all the nations and kindreds of the earth; the great prophet, like Moses, came, to reveal completely all the blessed counsels and contrivances of God necessary to be known unto salvation; the primary seed of David came, to sit upon His throne forever; yea, now Christ, the true David, the son of the Highest came, to possess the kingdom of His father David, and to reign over the house of Jacob, the Church, forevermore.” (p1226). And again: “In this new covenant. . .we may see, this seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head (Colossians 2:14-15 with Genesis 3:15). This true Noah saving His elect remnant by water (1 Peter 3:21 with Genesis 6-7). This blessed Seed of Abraham, blessing all nations (Acts 3:25-26; Galatians 3:13-14 with Genesis 12:3). This true Prophet like Moses raised up from among the people Israel (Acts 2:22-23 and 7:37 with Deuteronomy 18:15-20). This Seed and Son of David, sitting upon His throne, and ruling the house of Jacob forever (Luke 1:31-33 with Psalm 132).” (Roberts, p1715).

compares the old covenant to the new. The old covenant ordinances and institutions were *shadows*; but Christ himself is *the body* from which those shadows are cast. All the provisions and ceremonies of the old covenant are simply shadows of Jesus. But in the new covenant, Christ himself has come.¹⁶

Jesus is the true ark of Noah. For when God's wrath fell on all mankind, it was only those safe in the ark who were protected from judgment. Indeed, the ark saved those inside by absorbing upon itself the full force of the judgment being pounded upon it from the outside. There was only one door on the ark, and it was held open for all until the day that it was finally slammed shut; just as Christ is now freely offered—but the day is coming when the head of the house will get up and shut the door. *Jesus is the true Manna* from heaven, for His flesh is true food and His blood is true drink and it's He who has come down out of heaven to give life to the world. *Jesus is the Rock* which followed Israel in the wilderness; for indeed, when God's people disobeyed, it was the Rock that was struck with the staff of judgment instead of them, and it poured forth living waters for them and their little ones. *Jesus is the Bronze Serpent* in the wilderness. For as all those who were struck with the fiery serpents could look upon this sign which God himself had provided as the only cure, so too, Christ was lifted up, that all who look to Him in faith will have eternal life. *Jesus is the Lamb of God.* For as the sacrifices of the old covenant testified to the truth that forgiveness can only come through atonement, and as a sinner among God's people would lay his hand on the head of the animal, and slay it, and the blood would be applied to the altar, so too, Christ's blood was shed on the cross as a sacrifice of atonement. *Jesus is the true Tabernacle.* For He forsook the joys of heaven in order to tabernacle among us, and He has promised to set His dwelling place in our midst forever. *And Jesus is the true Temple.* For it's only in Him that we rightly worship God; for He himself is Immanuel, God with us. And though the temple of His body—like Solomon's temple—was destroyed; after three days it was raised up again.¹⁷

JESUS IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SHADOWS

	THE SHADOW	THE SUBSTANCE
NOAH'S ARK	The only place of safety on the day of God's judgment	<i>Jesus is the true Ark</i>
THE MANNA	The bread sent from heaven that sustains and preserves	<i>Jesus is the true Manna</i>
THE ROCK	The unchanging stronghold who provides for His people	<i>Jesus is the true Rock</i>
MOSES' SERPENT	The appointed sign lifted up to heal all who look upon it	<i>Jesus is the Bronze Serpent</i>
THE SACRIFICES	The innocent lamb that's slain as a sacrifice of atonement	<i>Jesus is the Lamb of God</i>
THE TABERNACLE	The dwelling place of God in the midst of His people	<i>Jesus is the true Tabernacle</i>
SOLOMON'S TEMPLE	The only appointed place to worship and meet with God	<i>Jesus is the true Temple</i>

¹⁶ Paul's language of *shadow* and *body* (Col. 2:17) is reflected in the KJV; special thanks to my father-in-law for pointing it out.

¹⁷ Roberts says: "The same Christ is revealed in all the covenants since the fall. They are as many cabinets one within another; but Christ the jewel within them all. All their *promises* lead to him, and center in him; all their *commandments* refer to him; all their *threats* drive to him; all their *ceremonies* typify him; all their *sacraments* signify him; all their *ordinances* magnify him . . . But in every one of them how differently is the same Christ represented." (*Preface*, V.1). And again: "*He is the true Passover* that is sacrificed for us. *He is the true bread of life*, that true manna that came down from heaven whereof a man may eat and not die. *He is the true Rock* that affords living water indeed to his Church in the wilderness of this world. 'That Rock that followed them was Christ.' And that manna and water are called spiritual meat and drink, because they were types and sacraments representing Christ unto them. *He is the True Serpent* lifted up in the wilderness to heal the mortal stings of the old serpent the Devil, 'that whosoever believeth in him', looks up to him by the eye of faith, may not perish but have eternal life'. . . And what shall I say, He is the mystery and substance of *all the Levitical ceremonies*. . . the body and substance of the types of old. . . For those figures and types were God's way of revealing Christ unto his people, till he was exhibited." (p1587). Again: "All passages, occurrences and events of providence towards Israel, in the wilderness, in Canaan, or in their enemies' lands, did singularly cooperate, by the wisdom, faithfulness, power and goodness of God, to the full accomplishment of this covenant, in Jesus Christ the Mediator, who was the foundation, center, and scope thereof. In the wilderness, *the Pillar of cloud and fire* that guided them day and night; the *Manna from heaven*, and *water out of the Rock*, wherewith they were fed 40 years together; the *Brazen Serpent*; the *Tabernacle* erected in the wilderness with the utensils thereof; Moses' mediation, and kingly government over them; *Aaron's Priesthood*; and their frequent *Sacrifices*; what were they but types of Christ, and of better things in Christ? In Canaan, the *land of Immanuel*, heaven was represented as prepared for them by Christ for their Everlasting Rest; their *Conquering of Canaanites* under Joshua, shadowed out their spiritual victories in Christ Jesus; the *Temple and Sacrifices* there, pointed out Christ the true Temple and Sacrifice. In Babylon, their 70 years *Captivity*, wherein they were as men dead and buried, and yet afterwards their deliverance, God as it were opening their graves, pointed out their natural, dead and hopeless state under sin and their supernatural recover by Christ even beyond hope. . . Thus God by all his providential dispensations took them by the hand, to lead them on to Christ; till at last John Baptist pointed out Christ in person already incarnate; 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.'" (*Mystery and Marrow*, pp904-05).

2. The TASK of JESUS: *What did Christ come to do?*

A) *Jesus came to be our MEDIATOR*: In the book of Hebrews we're told that Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant (12:24). But what exactly does that mean? Well, the best way to understand the function of mediator in the new covenant is to understand that same function in the old covenant. In Galatians 3:19, we're told that the old covenant also had a mediator; and it was Moses. This passage also helps us understand the first function of a mediator, for it says that it was "in the hand" of Moses that God gave His people the Law. In other words, when God gave His people the Law—it was only in and through Moses. We remember the story: God came to all Israel at Sinai, but it was too much for them to bear. They trembled, and stood at a distance, and said to Moses: "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die." (Exodus 20:19). And so, Moses stood between God and Israel; God spoke to Moses, and Moses declared His Word them (Deuteronomy 5:5). What we see is that a mediator *REPRESENTS GOD to the people*. Like Israel, we can't bear to hear or see God face to face outside of a mediator. He's too holy. Most of us would never want to come face to face with a lion in the wild—it's far too dangerous. But we take our children to see them at the zoo, because there's all the difference in the world between seeing a lion face to face, directly; and seeing that same lion through the safety of a protective, middle glass window. John 1:18 tells us: "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." This is who Jesus is for us in the new covenant. Outside the agency of a mediator, we're undone. It's only in and through Christ that we can safely behold the Living God face to face.¹⁸

As the mediator of the old covenant, Moses represented God to the people. But that wasn't the only thing he did. He came before the people on behalf of God—but he also came before God on behalf of the people. We often find Moses up on the mountain, pleading with God to turn from His anger and forgive the sins of His people. At one point, Moses even says: "But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!" (Exodus 32:32). What this tells us is that a mediator doesn't just represent God to the people; *he also RECONCILES THE PEOPLE to God*. He stands in the gap on behalf of sinners. Or, perhaps more accurately, he stands in the middle—between God and sinners—offering up his own body as a shield to take the blow that's due for sin. This is the truth that Paul seems to be emphasizing about Christ our Mediator when he writes in 1 Timothy 2:4-5, "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all. . ." Apart from a mediator, there can be no peace with God; for by nature we're at war with Him. We need someone to stand in the gap on our behalf; and this is exactly what Christ has come to do for us as mediator of the new covenant. Jesus is in every way "in the middle" between God and man; for He himself is, in one person, the God-man. No mere man could ever stand as a mediator before God; nor could God draw near to man outside the agency of a mediator. But like Jacob's ladder, Christ reaches both heaven and earth. It's in Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, that a way has been opened for sinners to be reconciled to God.¹⁹

¹⁸ As Roberts says: "Israel extremely terrified by God's immediate voice and presence, could not endure it, but desired Moses to pass between God and them, and God approved their desires, and so the Law was ordained in the hand of a mediator; [IE,] Moses. In which Mediatory office Moses typified Christ the true Mediator. . ." (Francis Roberts, *Mystery and Marrow*, p782). And again: "[L]apsed sinners cannot endure a covenant fellowship with the Great, the dreadful, the holy and righteous God, immediately, without a Mediator. This is evident in Israel; for, when God immediately by his own voice promulgated and uttered his covenant out of the midst of the fire on Mount Sinai, Israel trembled and fled back afar off, being unable to endure that which was commanded, and fearing that they should be consumed by that great fire. And therefore they desire Moses to speak from God unto them. . . They could not bear God's manifesting his Covenant to them immediately by himself alone. But mediately, by a Mediator." (Roberts, p806). Lastly, Roberts notes: "Israel's extreme fear and terror, by reason of God's mighty voice and dreadful promulgation of His Law, so that they removed and stood afar off; and being unable to hear the voice of God any more immediately, they desired that God would speak to them by a Mediator. . . Thus [the people] are brought to see the necessity of a Mediator between God and them, and pitch upon Moses for that Mediator. Hence, the sinful creature is not able to approach to God, or to converse with God immediately, without the intervention of a Mediator. The distance and disparity between God and sinners is so infinite. God is holiness and purity in the highest; sinners are mere lumps of impurity. They are as chaff or stubble; but God, without a Mediator, is to them a consuming fire." (pp910-911).

¹⁹ *On the mediator reconciling man to God*, Boston says, "The breach between God and man was greater than to be done away by a mere inter-messenger, who traveling between parties at variance, reconciles them with bare words. There could be no covenant of peace between God and sinners, without reparation. . . done to the honor of God through sin. . . Now, the effect of this was, that [Christ] was constituted. . . official mediator, or mediator in respect of office, between God and man: 1 Timothy 2:5-6, 'There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all' . . .

JESUS IS OUR MEDIATOR IN THE NEW COVENANT

OBSTACLE	OUR NEED FOR A MEDIATOR	JESUS' ROLE AS MEDIATOR
<i>God's Holiness</i>	Because of God's holiness, we can't commune with God	He comes to us on God's behalf (represents)
<i>Our Sinfulness</i>	Because of our sinfulness, God can't commune with us	He comes to God on our behalf (reconciles)

B) Jesus came to be our SURETY: We saw that one of the primary tasks of Christ as our mediator is to reconcile a sinful people to God. But how does Jesus do this? Well, if the last section teaches us about *what Christ came to do*; here we learn *how it is He would do it*. Jesus came as our mediator to reconcile us to God. But it's in becoming our Surety that He accomplishes this task. There's only one passage in the New Testament that speaks of Christ as our surety. Hebrews 7:22 says: "so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee [or *surety*] of a better covenant." But though this word is just used once in the entire New Testament, it has a rich heritage in the Old Testament Scriptures. When Jacob was afraid to send Benjamin along with his other sons to go back to Egypt to purchase grain, it was Judah who stepped forward and said: "Send the lad with me and we will arise and go. . . *I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you may require him*. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame before you forever." (Genesis 43:8-9). What was Judah saying? He was taking it upon himself to do anything and everything that was needed in order to bring Benjamin safely back home to his father. From that moment on, Benjamin's well-being was Judah's responsibility. Benjamin's safe return was entirely dependent on his older brother. Judah was single-handedly taking upon himself complete responsibility for bringing Benjamin safely back home. And friends, this is exactly what Jesus does for us as Surety of the new covenant. Just like Judah, He's bound himself to us in such a way that whatever is needed for our salvation is now required *of Him*.²⁰

The two families of heaven and earth being at war, there could be no peace between them, but through a mediator." (p39). Roberts writes: "A true, fit and sufficient Mediator was necessary under the New Covenant. True; that is, more than typical; fit, that is, equally middle between God and man; sufficient; that is, being every way able to reconcile God and man. Moses under the Old Covenant was Mediator; but neither true, fit, nor sufficient. Not true, but typical; being herein a dark type and figure of Christ. Not fit, but very unfit; being no equally middle person, but a mere man, nearer to man than to God. Not sufficient, but very insufficient; being utterly unable to reconcile God and the people, yea himself needing reconciliation to God by a higher Mediator." (p1566). Roberts also notes that all the promises in Scripture "are either promises of a Mediator, or promises in and through a Mediator; in whom all the promises of God are yea, and Amen." (p1567). *On the Mediator needing to be both God and man*, Roberts says: "Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant. . . The Greek word in all these places [of Scripture] does most properly signify, *a mediator*; or, *a middler* (that I may so express it) because he is, both a middle person, and a middle officer between God and man, to reconcile and reunite God and man. . . [Jesus Christ] is the only middle person between God and man, being in one person *God-man*. And he is the *Middle Officer*, intervening, or interposing, or coming between God and man by office, satisfying God's justice to the full for man's sins by his obedience to the death, and continually interceding for his elect; to whom he reveals and effectually applies this his satisfaction, intercession, [and] redemption. . . for their actual reconciliation unto God. Hence (as one observes) Jesus Christ as a true Mediator. . . suffered in the middle of the world, that is, at Jerusalem. . . He was crucified in the midst between the two thieves; [and] He died in the air on the cross, in the midst between heaven and earth'. . . Thus Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and man; middle in person, and middle in office. Yea Jesus Christ is Mediator of the New Covenant, and that more peculiarly and eminently than of any other covenant. Moses was a typical mediator under the Old Covenant; he went between God and Israel, he typed out Christ the only true Mediator (1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 13:8; Galatians 3:19). But Christ is the true Mediator of the New Covenant, the better Covenant most eminently and singularly. . . " (pp1589-90). And Boston notes, "the Son of God was constituted substantial Mediator, or Mediator in respect of nature, between God and man. Being from eternity God equal with the Father, he so stood related to heaven; and having from eternity consented to become man, he so stood related to earth. . . A type of this his substantial mediation was Jacob's ladder, which was set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven (Genesis 28:12). A clear emblem of the divine and human nature in Christ, through whom, as substantial Mediator, there was a way opened, towards a communication for peace, between heaven and earth." (p38). And again: "The two families of heaven and earth being at war, there could be no peace between them, but through a mediator. But where could a mediator be found, to interpose between such parties, who would not either have been too high, or else too low, in respect of one of the parties at variance? Man or angel would have been too low, in respect of God; and an unveiled God would have been too high, in respect of sinful men, unable to bear intercourse with such heavenly majesty. Wherefore, the Son of God, that he might be fit to mediate; as he being God equal with the Father, was high enough in respect of the party offended; so he consented to become low enough, in respect of the party offending, by his becoming man." (Boston, p39).

²⁰ The NASB text translates Genesis 43:9 as: "you may hold me responsible for him"; but it notes in the margin that the literal translation is indeed the same wording that we have rendered above; namely, "from my hand you may [or *shall*] require him." Thomas Boston has a very insightful chapter on Jesus' suretiship in his *View of the Covenant of Grace*, pp46-58. Towards the beginning of this section, he notes: "In. . . Hebrews 7:22, the only text wherein Christ is expressly called a surety, it is evident, that his suretiship therein mentioned, respects his priestly office, wherein he deals with God for us. . . the suretiship is not *to* the sinner, but *for* him. . . as in the case of Judah's suretiship for Benjamin, to his father (Genesis 43:9 and 44:32)." (pp46-47).

Often, when someone becomes surety for another, it has to do with *taking on a debt*. And this aspect also helps to further clarify what Jesus has undertaken for us in the new covenant. Proverbs uses the same word that Judah had used in warning of the dangers of becoming a surety for a stranger's debts (22:26); for when you do so, you're pledging to pay that debt yourself. And in Philemon, when Paul writes with his own hand that he will repay any debts that Onesimus had owed, he was becoming his surety (v19). In the new covenant, Jesus has bound himself as our surety to do whatever is required for our salvation; and in pledging himself to do this, He's taken on himself the sole responsibility of making payment for two debts we could never pay ourselves: *1) Jesus became surety for our DEBT OF PUNISHMENT*. There was a debt of blood that was owed to God, on account of our sins. But when Christ became our surety, that debt was charged to *His* account. And this is, indeed, the reason it was necessary for Him to make such a payment at the cross. The reason that our debts were being so strictly *required of Him*, was that our debts had been, in fact, *legally transferred to Him*. Indeed, the payment of blood was demanded of Christ because He himself had become our Surety. *2) Jesus became surety for our DEBT OF OBEDIENCE*. In Galatians 5:3, Paul tells us that we are debtors to the whole Law. For indeed, the Law requires *dying* as the penalty for sin, but it also requires *doing* as the condition for life. Because of our sin, there was now an added debt of *passive obedience*—but the Law has always bound its hearers to a personal, perfect and perpetual *active obedience*. If Christ had paid the debt of our punishment but not the debt of our obedience, He would have left us in the same condition as Adam in the garden before the fall: Our sin would be removed, but our condition would be perilous! He would have given us a second chance—but in no way brought us safely home. Praise God that as our surety, Christ didn't just pay the debt for our sins, but He paid the debt for our obedience. In the new covenant, Jesus didn't just make salvation possible again—He made it certain.²¹

²¹ Roberts says: "A surety is properly one that willingly promises and undertakes to pay and discharge the debt, if the debtor fail and be not able to make satisfaction himself. Thus Paul willingly and spontaneously, from the love that he had to his converted Onesimus, promised and undertook to make satisfaction to Philemon for any wrong that Onesimus had done to him: 'If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.'" (p1591). And Boston writes: "A surety is one who undertakes for another, obliging himself whether for paying his debt, civil or criminal, or for his performing a deed." (p46). Boston lays out the two ways Christ has become our Surety: *"1) He became surety for their debt of punishment*, which they, as sinners, were liable in payment of. . . That was the debt owing to the divine justice, for all and every one of their sins, original or actual. . . This was their debt of punishment; a debt which they themselves could never have cleared, though paying to the utmost of their power, through ages of eternity. But this their debt Christ became surety for. . . Here is a suretiship that never had a match! David, in a transport of grief for the death of his son Absalom, wishes he had died for him (2 Samuel 18:33); Reuben will venture the life of his two sons for Benjamin (Genesis 42:37); and Judah will venture his own son for him (43:9) while yet there was hope that all would be safe. But our Lord Jesus deliberately pledges his own life for sinners, when it was beyond all peradventure, the precious pledge would be lost in the cause, and that the death he would suffer, would be a thousand deaths in one. . . Now, in the second Adam's suretiship for the criminal debt of his spiritual seed, there was not an ensuring of the payment thereof one way or other only. . . but there was an exchange of persons in law; Christ substituting himself in their room, and taking the whole obligation on himself. . . And, in virtue of that substitution, Christ became debtor in law, bound to pay that debt which he contracted not; to restore that which he took not away (Psalm 44:4). For, becoming surety for them, to the end there might be laid a foundation, in law and justice for exacting their debt of punishment from him, their guilt was transferred on him (Isaiah 53:6, 'The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all'). This was pointed at, in the laying of the hand on the head of the sacrifices under the law, especially on the head of the scape-goat (Leviticus 16:21). . . All the sins of all the elect were at once imputed to the Surety, and so became his, as his righteousness becomes ours, namely, in law-reckoning. . . He was indeed without sin *inherent* in him, but not without sin *imputed* to him. . . This relation of our sin to Christ, is necessary from the nature of suretiship for debt; in which case, nobody doubts but the debt becomes the surety's, when once he has stricken hands for it. And how else could the law have justly proceeded against Christ? How could our punishment have been, in justice, inflicted on him, if he had not had such a relation to our sin? If the law could not charge our *sin* on him, in virtue of his own voluntary undertaking, it could have no ground in *justice* to inflict our *punishment* on him. *2) He became surety for their debt of duty or obedience*, the which also is a debt according to the style of the holy Scripture; Galatians 5:3, 'A debtor to do the whole law.' The law as a covenant of works, though it was broken by them, and they had incurred the penalty thereof, yet had neither lost its right, nor ceased to exact of them the obedience which at first it required of man, as the condition of life. . . Christ became surety for this debt of theirs too, namely, the debt of obedience to the law as a covenant, which was, and is the only obedience to it for life; obliging himself to clear it, by obeying in their room and stead, and fulfilling what the law [did] demand of them. . ." (Boston, pp49-51). As it was necessary for our Mediator to be both God and man, this is true of our Surety as well. *Our Surety had to be God*, for no mere creature could be trusted by the Father with the task of doing all His will perfectly, as it was required of the Surety to do. And because no mere creature's blood was valuable enough to save its own soul, let alone billions of other souls. Further, salvation could not come through man, for salvation is from the Lord (Jonah 2:9). Boston explains: "The demands in this covenant were high, and quite above their ability to answer; and besides, they themselves were false and fickle. They broke their word in the first covenant, when able to have kept it; how could they be trusted in this new bargain, when their ability was gone? So there was an absolute necessity of a surety for them in it." (p48). And Witsius says: "for man to glory in

JESUS IS OUR SURETY IN THE NEW COVENANT

OBSTACLE	OUR NEED FOR A SURETY	JESUS' ROLE AS SURETY
<i>The debt of Punishment</i>	The Law requires dying as the penalty for sin	Jesus' passive obedience pays our debt of sin
<i>The debt of Obedience</i>	The Law requires doing as the condition of life	Jesus' active obedience pays our debt of duty

C) Jesus came to be our KINSMAN-REDEEMER: In the Old Testament, if someone among God's people had become destitute and weren't able to help themselves, there was provision in the Law for a close relative to stand in their place and act on their behalf. In the original Hebrew, this person was called a *Goel*; which properly signifies *kinsman-redeemer*. Sometimes, this word is simply translated “kinsman” or “relative”, such as in Ruth 2:20, where Naomi reveals to Ruth that Boaz is one of their “closest relatives.” Other times, this same word is translated “redeemer”, such as in Job 19:25, where Job declares, “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives. . .” A *Goel* was a kinsman; and a *Goel* was a redeemer; indeed, a *Goel* was a *kinsman who redeems*. And in Old Testament Israel, there were primarily three ways that a kinsman-redeemer acted on behalf of his brother: 1) If anyone became so poor that he had to sell the land of his inheritance, his kinsman would REDEEM it; that is, he would purchase it and return it back to him (Leviticus 25:25). 2) If anyone became so impoverished that, it would seem, after he had already sold away his inheritance, he was then forced to sell himself away as a slave into the hand foreigners; then his kinsman would RANSOM him; that is, he would buy him back from bondage, restoring his freedom (Leviticus 25:47-49). 3) If two brothers lived together, and one of them died without having a son, then the wife of the deceased was to be given to the husband's brother (or the nearest kinsman). It was the kinsman's responsibility to then RAISE UP a son for the deceased brother, to establish for him a name and preserve his covenant line (Deuteronomy 25:5-7).

Jesus is our kinsman-redeemer in the new covenant. He looked down from heaven, and saw that we were destitute. Adam's sin had plunged us into ruin, and we were unable to help ourselves. And so, Christ himself came into the world as our kinsman-redeemer, to do for us what we were powerless to do for ourselves: “I looked, and there was no one to help, and I was astonished and there was no one

anyone, as his Savior, and give him the honor of the new creation, to resign himself to his pleasure, and become his property, and say to him, 'thou art lord of my soul'; is an honor to which no mere creature can have the least claim. 'In Jehovah shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory,' (Isaiah 45:25). 'My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior,' (Luke 1:47). . . It appears then, that none but he who is true God, could possibly be Surety. . . it is necessary. . . that 'his own arm should bring salvation unto him' (Isaiah 63:5).” (V1, pp199, 201). *Our Surety had to be man*, for His task as Surety was to obey the same covenant of works—as a man, born under the Law—which Adam had failed to obey. As Calvin writes: “The second requirement of our reconciliation with God was this: that man, who by his disobedience had become lost, should by way of remedy counter it with obedience, satisfy God's judgment, and pay the penalties for sin. Accordingly, our Lord came forth as true man and took the person and the name of Adam in order to take Adam's place in obeying the Father. . . to pay the penalty that we had deserved.” (*Institutes*, 2.12.3). And Witsius notes: “The legal covenant entered into with the first man [IE, as the head of the Covenant of Works], is founded on the very nature of God. . . So that it would be a contradiction if these precepts of the law of nature should not be proposed to [the second] man [IE, as the head of the Covenant of Grace]. . . I therefore proceed. . . [it] can be nothing else but the performing the same precepts. . . I add, that as those precepts were given to man, so no creature but man could perform them. This appears, 1) Because the law, which is suited to the nature of man, requires, that he love God with all his soul, and serve him with all the members of his body. . . None can do this but man. . . 2) The same law requires the love of our neighbor; but none is our neighbor but man, who is of the same blood with us. . . All these things put together, incontestably prove that our Surety ought to be man; that he might satisfy the law for us. This is what the apostle means when joining these two together by an inseparable connection, Galatians 4:4, 'made of a woman, made under the law.' For he intimates, that the principal and immediate scope and end of Christ's incarnation was, that in the human nature he might be subject to the law, to which it is under obligation; and so that God, according to the same right, might renew with him the same covenant which he had before entered into with the first man. . .” (V1, pp193-94). *And so our Surety had to be both God and man*; for, as Calvin says, “neither as God alone could he feel death, nor as man alone could he overcome it.” (*Institutes*, 2.12.3). And as Witsius declares, “Had he been God only he could neither have been subject, nor have obeyed, nor suffered; if mere man, his obedience, subjection, and suffering, would not have been of sufficient value for the redemption of the elect. . . And therefore it behoved our Surety to be man, that he might be capable to submit, obey, and suffer; and at the same time God, that the subjection, obedience, and suffering, of this person God-man, might on account of his infinite dignity, be imputed to others, and be sufficient for saving all, to whom it is imputed.” (V1, p200). And indeed, as Roberts likewise declares, “He must be man, that he might as our Surety suffer for us, shed his blood and die for our offenses, become a curse and sin for us, it being most congruous that he should have some communion with us, who suffers for our faults; this he could not do as God; He must be God, that he might undergo the wrath of God without sinking, satisfy God's justice to the full by his suffering; obtain eternal redemption for us, reconcile us to God by his death, put away our sin by the sacrifice of himself, purge our conscience from dead works, redeem us from the curse and wrath of God, [and] that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us. . . this he could not do as mere man.” (Roberts, *Mystery and Marrow*, p1579).

to uphold; so My own arm brought salvation to Me” (Isaiah 63:5). No other could help, for all of us alike are under the same bondage. *Only God* could redeem; for only He is able to pay such a price. And yet, *only man* could redeem, for our redeemer must be a near kinsman. “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law. . .” (Galatians 4:4-5). Jesus came as our kinsman and He has redeemed us at the cost of His own blood (1 Peter 1:18ff). *1) Christ has REDEEMED OUR LOST INHERITANCE.* Our father Adam had in his possession the inheritance of eternal life, but he sold it away for a bite of forbidden fruit. And when he did so, we were left destitute. But Christ has come into the world as our kinsman-redeemer, to purchase back for us the inheritance that Adam had lost (1 Peter 1:4). *2) Christ has RANSOMED US FROM SLAVERY.* For just as Adam sold away our inheritance—he also sold us into bondage. When he sinned and became the slave of sin, we too were sold into bondage together with him as his children. So that, by nature, we have become the slaves of sin. But Christ has come into the world as our kinsman-redeemer, to pay the price of our ransom, in order to “set us free” (Galatians 5:1). *3) Christ has RAISED UP FRUITFULNESS for God.* When Adam sinned, and spiritually died, there was a pervasive infertility that swept across the entire human race, so that we were left desolate and barren. But Christ has now come as our kinsman-redeemer, taking us as His own bride; so that, joined with Him, we might yet bear fruit for God (Romans 7:4).²²

JESUS IS OUR KINSMAN-REDEEMER IN THE NEW COVENANT

OBSTACLE	OUR NEED FOR A KINSMAN-REDEEMER	JESUS' ROLE AS KINSMAN-REDEEMER
<i>Our Bankruptcy</i>	When Adam sinned, he sold away our eternal inheritance	He has redeemed our lost inheritance
<i>Our Bondage</i>	When Adam sinned, he caused us to become slaves of sin	He has ransomed us from our slavery
<i>Our Barrenness</i>	When Adam sinned, he left our nature desolate and barren	He has raised up fruitfulness for God

²² Boston writes: “Under the law, when a man was not able to act for himself, to assert and use his own right, one that was akin to him, had a right to act for him, coming in his room, and standing up in his right. And such a one was called his *Goel*; which properly signifies a kinsman-redeemer. Hence that word is sometimes rendered *a kinsman*; as Numbers 5:8, *If the man have no kinsman (Goel) to recompense the trespass unto*; Ruth 3:12, *I am thy near kinsman (Goel)*; howbeit there is a kinsman (*Goel*) nearer than I.’ Sometimes it is rendered *a redeemer*; as Proverbs 23:11, *Their Redeemer (Goel) is mighty*; Isaiah 47:4, *As for our Redeemer (Goel), the Lord of hosts is his name.* One’s acting in that capacity is called ‘doing the kinsman’s part,’ or ‘redeeming,’ to wit, by right of kin (Ruth 3:13 and 4:6). However, such a one might refuse to do the kinsman’s part; as Ruth’s kinsman-redeemer did, who resigned his right to Boaz, and in token thereof drew off his own shoe, and gave it to him (Ruth 4:6-8). Now, Christ the second Adam saw sinners, his ruined kinsmen, quite unable to act for themselves. Not one of them all was able to redeem himself, and far less his brother. . .If he should have declined it, and drawn off his shoe to them. . . there was none who durst have ventured to receive it, or put his foot in it. ‘I looked,’ says he, ‘and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation’ (Isaiah 43:5). He took on himself the character of their kinsman-redeemer. . .” (Boston, p42). And later, Boston notes the following things which “the kinsman-redeemer was to do for his kinsman, unable to act for himself; all which Christ the second Adam undertook in the covenant: *1) He was to marry the widow of his deceased kinsman, to raise up seed to his brother* [Ruth 3:9; 3:10-13 and 4:10 with Ezekiel 16:8. . .Our nature was in a comfortable and fruitful condition, while the image of God, impressed thereupon in Adam, remained with it; but that image being removed, in the spiritual death caused by his sin, there ensued an absolute barrenness, as to the fruits of holiness, in our nature thus left. But our kinsman-redeemer consented to marry the widow. . .It was a low match indeed for him; and would have been so, even if the family of Adam had been in its primitive state and splendor; but now it was considered as in the depth of poverty and disgrace. . .And the great end, in subordination to the glory of God, for which this more intimate union and match with our nature was gone into by our kinsman-redeemer, was to render it yet again fruitful in the fruits of true holiness. . . *2) He was to redeem the mortgaged inheritance of his poor kinsman* [Leviticus 25:25]. . .Our father Adam waxing poor, through the deceitful dealing of the tempter with him, quite sold away the inheritance of eternal life, for a morsel of forbidden fruit; and his children waxen more poor still, through their own personal fault, had set themselves farther and farther from it. They could not have raised, amongst them all, what would have redeemed so much as one man’s part of it. . .Wherefore the second Adam, as kinsman-redeemer, took the burden of the redemption on himself, and agreed to pay the price of that purchase; dying for us, that we might live together with him (1 Thessalonians 5:10). *3) He was to ransom his poor kinsman in bondage, paying the price of his redemption* [Leviticus 25:47-52]. . .Being sold in the loins of our first father, we were brought into bondage under the curse of the Law. So we are by nature the Law’s bondmen, and consequently slaves to sin and Satan; never to have been released without a ransom, the full worth of so many souls. This ransom was stated in the covenant; to wit, that the kinsman-redeemer should give himself a ransom for his poor kinsmen; and he agreed to it, for purchasing their liberty (1 Timothy 2:5-6). The ransom was great, soul for soul, body for body; a person of infinite dignity, for his poor kinsmen in bondage. . .” (Boston, pp43-45). Ball notes: “*He must be God* that he might bear the weight of God’s wrath without sinking under it. . .*He must be man*, our near kinsman, that he might have right of redemption . . .” (Ball, p265). And Roberts writes: “*He must be man*, our near-kinsman, that he might have the right of redemption, be a merciful and faithful high priest, being in all things like his brethren; *and he must be God*, that he might be fully able to redeem us, to destroy death, and him that had the power of death, the devil, deliver us from the guilt of sin, and curse of the Law, and preserve us safe to his heavenly kingdom.” (Roberts, *Mystery and Marrow*, p1579).

3. The OFFICES of JESUS: *How did Christ come to serve?*

The term “Christ” is an English transliteration of the Greek title *Christos*; which, in turn, comes from the Greek *Chrio* (“to anoint”). It means, “anointed one.” This Greek title, *Christos*, was designated as the translation for the Old Testament Hebrew word with the same meaning. And in the Hebrew, the term “anointed one” is literally, *Mashiah* (which is, in turn, where we get the title “Messiah”). To put it another way, the term “Messiah” is actually a Hebrew word (*Mashiah*), which means “anointed one”; and “Christ” is the Greek translation. So, both “Christ” and “Messiah” mean “anointed one”. It's just that the Hebrew term is *Mashiah* and the Greek translation for the Hebrew word is *Christos*.

	TERM	LANGUAGE	TRANSLITERATION	MEANING
OLD TESTAMENT	<i>Mashiah</i>	Hebrew	<i>Messiah</i>	“Anointed one”
NEW TESTAMENT	<i>Christos</i>	Greek	<i>Christ</i>	

In the Old Testament Scriptures, particular individuals were to be anointed with oil for one of three distinct purposes: God was commissioning this individual to service as either *a prophet*, *a priest*, or *a king*. God had made clear in the Law that *priests* were to be consecrated with oil at the beginning of their service (Exodus 29:7; 30:30). And though it wasn't explicitly commanded in the Law, the Lord later makes it clear that *kings* and *prophets* were to be anointed in the same way (1 Samuel 9:16; 10:1; 16:13; 1 Kings 19:15-16; 2 Kings 9:1-3). This anointing served as *a testimony of God's calling* to the particular office an individual was being commissioned, and it symbolically represented *the provision of God's Spirit* for the wisdom and power needed for faithful service to the Lord. In many ways, this is exactly the function that *ordination* serves now in the new covenant. But though there were many priests or prophets who were ordained at any given time, the term *Mashiah*—or “anointed one”—was reserved for one person in particular. The *Mashiah*-priest was the High Priest (cf. Leviticus 4:3,5,16; with 21:10); just as the *Mashiah*-king was the only king (cf. 1 Samuel 24:6; 2 Samuel 1:16). The term *Mashiah*, “anointed one,” was very specific, and it was reserved for *The Priest* among priests, and for the only and rightful *King of God's people*. And it's for this reason that this same term, *Mashiah*, also came to describe the unique, divinely commissioned *Anointed One* still to come (Psalm 2:2; 132:17). This coming *Mashiah* was the hope of God's people from the very beginning. They knew One was coming who was *anointed above all the rest* by God himself (Psalm 45:6-7). For though many served as prophets, priests, and kings in Israel—they all looked forward to *the Anointed One* yet to come.²³

	IDENTITY	PARTICULAR OFFICE	PRIMARY FUNCTION
THE ANOINTED ONES	Many Individuals	Those who served as prophets and priests	To minister to God's people
THE ANOINTED ONE	One Individual	<i>Either the High Priest or the Reigning King</i>	<i>To prefigure God's Messiah</i>

When Jesus began His public ministry and was given the opportunity to preach in the synagogue, He took the scroll that was given to Him, found the place that He wanted, and began to read these words from Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, *because He has anointed Me* to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.” (Isaiah 61:1-2). Luke then tells us: “And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’” (Luke 4:17-21). In Jesus' first recorded sermon, He's telling us exactly who He is. How could He have made it any clearer? Jesus was declaring that *He is God's Anointed One*. Indeed, Christ had been freshly anointed just prior to this; at the baptism of John. But it wasn't John who anointed Jesus. For Scripture had to be fulfilled, and as the passage in Isaiah reminds us, God's

²³ See Berkhof's Systematics on *The Names and Natures of Christ*. On the High Priest, Henry Ainsworth notes on Leviticus 4:3: “*Anointed [priest]*: That is, the high priest (as both Gr. and Chald. do expound it); for the high priest only, in the ages following was anointed (Leviticus 21:10; and 16:32; Exodus 29:29).” And again on Leviticus 21:10: “*Oil of Anointing*: A holy oil, wherewith only the high priests and kings in Israel were anointed, and ordained to their office. . .” (from his *Annotations*). One example of how God's people longed for the unique and divinely commissioned *Anointed One*, and indeed understood this term *Mashiah* to refer to him is Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:10. For even before kings began to exist in Israel, Hannah lifted up her voice and sang: “The Lord. . .will give strength to *His king*, and will exalt the horn of His anointed [*Mashiah*].”

true *Mashiah* was to be anointed—not by another man—but by *God himself* (cf. Psalm 45:6-7). In the same way, the High Priests and kings who had served as pictures and types of God's true and coming *Mashiah* were anointed with oil; a symbol of God's Spirit. But in Matthew 3:16, we're told that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit himself, when “the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him” (cf. Acts 10:38). Jesus is *God's Anointed One*. He is the *Mashiah*. And He is the One whom God has anointed *prophet, priest, and king* of His people.²⁴

A) JESUS is God's PROPHET: Most of the passages in the Hebrew Bible that refer to *Mashiah* are speaking of either the High Priest or the Anointed King. But *Mashiah* was associated with the office of prophet as well (Psalm 105:15). And the role of a prophet was to speak the Word of God. This is why we find the prophets constantly declaring: “Thus says the Lord. . .” (Isaiah 43:1). The prophets expounded the true meaning of the Law and called God's people to live accordingly, submitting their lives to His revealed will. Their message was one of *salvation and judgment*—salvation for those who demonstrated true faith and repentance, but judgment for those who refused to listen to the voice of the Lord. There were many prophets in the old covenant, but we're told that the greatest of them was Moses. At the end of his ministry, Deuteronomy 34:10 tells us: “Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses. . .” God would speak His Word to Moses up on the mountain, and he, in turn, would come down to deliver God's Word to His people. But Moses himself prophesied of *another prophet* yet to come who would be greater than him. In Deuteronomy 18, he said: “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, *you shall listen to him.*” And again, “The Lord said to me. . . I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.” (vv15-19). Who is this prophet God would raise up, *who would speak God's words, and to whom we must listen?* God himself tells us at the Mount of Transfiguration. For when Peter offers to make booths for Moses and Elijah, who had appeared to them, a cloud formed and a voice thundered from heaven, declaring of Jesus: “This is My Son, My Chosen One; *listen to Him!*” (Luke 9:35). *Jesus is God's Anointed Prophet*, who, like Moses, came down in order to speak God's

²⁴ As Calvin writes: “Now it is to be noted that the title 'Christ' pertains to these three offices: for we know that under the law prophets as well as priests and kings were anointed with holy oil.” (*Institutes*, 2.15.2). And thus: “the office enjoined upon Christ by the Father consists of three parts. For he was given to be prophet, king, and priest.” (*Institutes*, 2.15.1). Roberts says: “For, as in former times men were anointed with material oil, with the Holy Anointing Oil, denoting their designation and vocation to, their endowments and qualifications for, those three eminent offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; so Jesus Christ was anointed with the true spiritual immaterial oil, 'with the oil of gladness above his fellows' [Psalm 45:7], [namely] 'with the Holy Ghost and with power' [Acts 10:38] most plentifully and abundantly, whereby he was most plenarily and transcendently qualified for, and most authentically called unto his triple office of Prophet, Priest and King to his Church. . .” (p1601). Of the Spirit coming upon Jesus at His baptism, Calvin says of Matthew 3:16: “But here two questions arise. The first is, why did the Spirit, who had formerly dwelt in Christ, descend upon him at that time? This question is answered by a passage of the prophet Isaiah. . . 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord God hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted' (Isaiah 61:1). Though the grace of the Spirit was bestowed on Christ in a remarkable and extraordinary manner (John 3:34) yet he remained at home as a private person, till he should be called to public life by the Father. Now that the full time is come, for preparing to discharge the office of Redeemer, he is clothed with a new power of the Spirit, and that not so much for his own sake, as for the sake of others. . .” And finally, as the Westminster Larger Catechism asks in question #42: “*Why was our Mediator called Christ?* Our Mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure, and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the offices of prophet, priest, and king of his church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.” The declaration of the Father at Jesus' baptism by John is significant: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” (Matthew 3:17). *The first clause* harkens back to Psalm 2:7, which also affirms Jesus as God's Anointed One, since, in the Psalm, the Son of verse 7 and the Anointed *Mashiah* of verse 2 are the same individual. So, when the Father declares Jesus to be His Son, alluding to Psalm 2:7, He's also declaring Him to be the Anointed *Mashiah* of Psalm 2:2. This also helps to clarify how the Pharisees already understood from the Hebrew Bible that the *Mashiah* was indeed God's Son (cf. Matthew 26:63). *The second clause* of Matthew 3:17 harkens back to Isaiah 42:1, which connects Jesus the Anointed One also with the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah; for the passage reads: “Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. . .” Another helpful insight from this passage is it goes on to say in Isaiah 42:1: “. . . I have put My Spirit on Him. . .” This serves to clarify *with what*, specifically, God's Anointed One would be anointed. Psalm 45:6-7 says God's *Mashiah* would be anointed with “the oil of joy. . .” But was this to be literal oil? The only other place in the Hebrew Bible that uses this same expression is Isaiah 61:3, where God's Anointed One is now, in turn, anointing God's people with “the oil of joy. . .” And surely no one would argue in the context that here, “the oil of joy” is literal. So, in the same way, we ought not to think the *Mashiah* was to be anointed with literal oil in Psalm 45:6-7. Rather, Isaiah 42:1 clarifies what Isaiah 61:1 had seemed to infer; namely, that the Christ of God would be anointed with God's Spirit. So, to summarize: The *Mashiah* would be anointed by God himself, and He would be anointed with God's Spirit; and this, of course, is exactly what we see happen at Jesus' baptism.

Word, in His name, to His people (John 5:43); performing also signs and wonders to testify He had come from God (John 5:36). His teaching wasn't His, but the One who sent Him; for He spoke only the words that were given to Him by the Father (John 7:16; 12:48ff). And Jesus didn't only proclaim the word of God, He himself *was and is* the Word of God; for in Him the Word of God has put on flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Moses foretold that our eternal destiny hinges entirely on our response to God's Prophet. And Jesus tells us, *Moses was speaking of Him* (John 5:46; Acts 3:22ff).²⁵

A PROPHET LIKE MOSES: JESUS IS GOD'S ANOINTED PROPHET

	THE PROOF GOD HAD SENT HIM AS HIS PROPHET	THE TASK GOD HAD GIVEN HIM AS HIS PROPHET
MOSES	The signs and wonders he performed (Deut.34:11)	To speak God's word he received from above (Deut.5:5)
CHRIST	<i>The signs and wonders He performed (Acts 2:22)</i>	<i>To speak God's word He received from above (Jn.7:16)</i>

B) JESUS is God's PRIEST: As God's Anointed One, Jesus isn't only commissioned to the office of Prophet—He's also consecrated as the Lord's Great High Priest. But Jesus' role as Priest would take on a unique function that was distinct from his role as Prophet. For indeed, if the Lord Jesus fulfilled His work as Prophet primarily *in His life*—then He accomplished His role as Priest predominately *in His death*. The High Priest was the only one who had access to the holy of holies, and even he could enter only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, in order to atone for the sins of God's people. He brought the blood of the sacrifice with him and sprinkled it seven times on the mercy seat (which was a slab of gold that rested on the ark of the covenant). It was at the mercy seat that God met with the High Priest (Exodus 25:22), and it was in and through the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat that the sins of God's people were atoned for (Leviticus 16:15ff, 30). Jesus is both *the sacrifice* and *the priest*. As the lamb of God, He offered up His body once for all as a propitiation through His blood; and as our High Priest, He has ascended into heaven—the true holy of holies—in order to present himself to

²⁵ Sadly, Jesus also resembles Moses in another way as well. For just as the Jews rejected Moses whom God had sent to them, when he appeared to them the first time, so it was with Christ (Acts 7:25). Boston includes the following in the office of Christ as Prophet: "In the capacity of Prophet, he was constituted 1) *the Messenger of the covenant* (Malachi 3:1), to bring the good tidings of that treaty of peace into the world; and not only so, but, by the authority of heaven, to proclaim the treaty to sinners. . . 2) In the same capacity he was constituted *the Witness of the covenant* (Isaiah 55:4), 'Behold, I have given him for a Witness to the people.' God knew the world to be a guilty world, whose consciences witnessed their demerit of death; and that therefore they would be very slow to believe the good news from heaven, touching the covenant of peace; and for this cause he would give them one competent to witness the truth thereof; and pitched upon Jesus Christ for that effect. . . He came down from heaven, where the covenant was made, unto earth, in favor of which it was made; wherefore he could witness in the earth, what he had seen in heaven about it (John 3:31-32). . . 3) He is in the same capacity constituted *the Interpreter of the covenant* (Job 33:23), to teach it unto men. We are not only slow to believe the covenant, but it is hard for us to understand it. . . we cannot understand it in a saving manner, unless 'the Son of God hath given us an understanding (a supernatural one) that we may know him that is true' (1 John 5:20)." (*View of the Covenant of Grace*, pp207-08). The Westminster Larger Catechism #43 informs us: "*How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?* Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in his revealing to the church, in all ages, by his Spirit and word, in diverse ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation." Scripture tells us that God's Anointed Prophet would resemble *Moses*. But it seems he would also resemble *Elisha*. As we mentioned earlier in our study, God had declared in Malachi 4:5-6, the last two verses in the entire Old Testament, that He was going to send "Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord." And in Luke 1:17, the angel Gabriel told Zacharias that it would be his son, John, who would "go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah. . ." So then, John was to be a prophet *like Elijah*. But if we look back to Elijah's ministry, we discover that, though he himself was a great prophet, he was followed by another prophet even greater than him, clothed with a double portion of his spirit (2 Kings 2:9-10). As Elijah had been the forerunner to Elisha, so too, John would be the forerunner to God's true Anointed Prophet. And so, we might also reason, if John's ministry was to resemble that of Elijah, then the ministry of the Messiah would, in turn, resemble that of Elisha. And this is exactly what we find in Jesus' ministry; it so closely patterns that of Elisha that it's uncanny: 1) Elisha possessed a supernatural knowledge both of people (2 Kings 8:10-15) and future events (2 Kings 7:1-2ff); even as Jesus does, who not only predicted his own death and resurrection, and the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, but knew what Nathaniel was doing under the fig tree and told the woman at the well everything she had ever done (John 1:43-51; 4:15-30). 2) Elisha cleansed the leper Naaman, healing him completely in a miraculous way (2 Kings 5), even as Jesus miraculously cleansed the lepers (Luke 5:12-16) and many others who were sick and dying. 3) Elisha even raised up the dead boy of the Shunammite (2 Kings 4), as in the same way, Christ raised the up the boy of the woman from Nain, giving him back to his mother (Luke 7:11-17); as He also raised up from the dead the daughter of the synagogue official (Luke 7:40-56). 4) Elisha multiplied loaves of barley and ears of grain in order to provide food for the many (2 Kings 4:42-44); as Christ multiplied bread and fish for the multitudes (Matthew 14:15). 5) Elisha defied the rules of nature when he divided the waters of the Jordan (2 Kings 2:14) and when he caused an iron axe head to float to the top of the water (2 Kings 6:1-7), as Christ also did when He walked on water (Matthew 14:22-27). 6) Elisha opened blind eyes (2 Kings 6:20) even as Christ was accustomed to do (John 9; Luke 18:35-43). Lastly, 7) Elisha's grave was a source of resurrection for others (2 Kings 13:20-21), as Jesus' death has brought us to life (John 12:24).

God on our behalf (Hebrews 9:23-24). And Jesus is both *the priest* and *the mercy seat*. For not only did He present His own blood to God as our High Priest, but He himself is the sprinkled mercy seat through whom we now have free access to God. Indeed, it was only the High Priests who were able to enter the holy of holies under the old covenant; but we are now beckoned to come boldly into the very presence of God, because God meets with us *in and through Jesus* (Hebrews 10:19-22). In the former times, the High Priests entered into the holy place year after year; but Jesus dealt with our sins once for all when He offered up himself (Hebrews 7:27; 9:26). And having ascended to heaven, He has taken His blood within the veil (Hebrews 6:19), where it now perpetually cries out to God on our behalf (Hebrews 12:24). And even *Jesus himself* cries out to God on our behalf. For having finished His work of *atonement*, He now engages in His priestly work of *intercession* (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). In the old covenant, the High Priests were taken only from Aaron's descendants, and they all eventually died. But as David looked ahead and spoke of the Christ, he prophesied that it would be different for God's Anointed One. In Psalm 110:4 he says, "The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'" Unlike the other priests, *Christ's priesthood wouldn't come from Aaron*; indeed, like Melchizedek, His priesthood began long before Aaron existed. *And Christ's priesthood will never end*, for He serves as God's Priest *forever*.²⁶

²⁶ The Westminster Larger Catechism, Question #44 informs us: "*How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?*" Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be reconciliation for the sins of his people; and in making continual intercession for them." Boston writes, "The first covenant was made without a priest, because then there was no sin to take away; the parties therein represented, as well as the representative, were considered as innocent persons. But the second covenant was a covenant of peace and reconciliation between an offended God and sinners, not to be made but by the mediation of a priest, who should be able to remove sin, and repair the injured honor of God: Zechariah 6:13, 'He shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.'" (pp59-60). And Ball notes: "Now Christ's oblation was the truth prefigured in the priests sacrificing of the beast, and his entrance into heaven was the truth prefigured in the priests carrying of the blood into the holiest of all." (p295). *On Christ as our sacrifice*, Boston also says: "His blessed body suffering and bleeding to death on the cross, and his holy soul scorched and melted within him with the fire of the divine wrath, both in the mean time united to his divine nature, were the sacrifice burning on the altar, from the which God smelled a sweet savor, to the appeasing of his wrath, and satisfying of his justice fully." (p62). *And of His applying the blood as High Priest*, Roberts writes: "[Christ's] presenting his obedience and death, together with the infinite satisfaction and merit thereof, before His Father in heaven, desiring continually that for the same all His elect in their persons and sacrifices may be fully and eternally accepted of God (1 John 2:1-2; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). . . was notably typified in the action of the High Priest of old. He killed the sin-offerings, and then brought the blood of them within the veil into the holiest of all, and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat. This was one continued action of the High Priest; his act was not complete, till the blood was represented within the veil, before the mercy seat. Thus Christ first shed His blood, and offered himself by dying; and then entered as our intercessor within the veil, into heaven itself, there to present His blood before God, to sprinkle it as it were on and before the mercy seat, and to present His satisfaction and merit perpetually there for us." (p1619). *Concerning Christ's priestly work of intercession*, Ball says: "As the high priest went into the sanctuary with the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast, so Christ entered into the holiest of all with our persons in our behalf, and does carry all his people upon his breast, and presents his desires unto his Father for them." (p297). Boston also draws out the following concerning Christ as our intercessor: "Now, Christ administers the covenant, as Intercessor thereof, these following ways chiefly: [*First,*] Effectually procuring, by his interest in heaven, the actual in-bringing of his elect, at the time appointed, into a covenant state of union, communion, peace, and favor with God [John 17:20]. . . His intercession is the spring that puts all the wheels in motion. . . Providence manages favorably towards the conversion of the man; the word powerfully affects him, while on others it falls like rain on a rock, running off as fast as it comes on; the business of eternal salvation is closely laid to heart with him; the law does its office upon him, and so does the gospel also in its turn; and these things cease not, until he is brought into a new state, and is become a new creature. Whence did all this take its rise? Why, the man had an unknown friend in the court of heaven, who spoke for him to the King; and all this is the fruit of that intercession made for him. . . [*Secondly,*] Maintaining the peace between God and them, while they are here in this world. Having purchased their peace with heaven by the sacrifice of himself, and by his intercession brought them into a state of peace, he does not leave it to themselves to maintain it. If it were so, it would soon be at an end. . . but Christ intercedes for them. . . upon the ground of his satisfaction for them, he answers all accusations against them [1 John 2:1; Romans 8:33-34]. . . Wherefore, their state of peace with God is inviolably maintained. . . [*Thirdly,*] Procuring them access to God, and acceptance with him, notwithstanding of their imperfections, while in this life. Saints on earth never want business in the court of heaven. Yet being sinful, they are in themselves unfit to come into the presence of the King. But the Intercessor of the covenant introduces them, procuring them access by his interest in the court (Ephesians 2:18). And by his means they are allowed access with boldness [3:12]. He makes their persons accepted, notwithstanding of the sinfulness cleaving to them; they are accepted in the beloved [1:6]. And in him they have an altar that sanctifies their gifts (Hebrews 13:10). So that their spiritual sacrifices, howbeit they want not their blemishes, yet are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). Their prayers made in faith, though smelling rank of the remains of the corruption of nature, yet being perfumed by the Intercessor with the incense of his merit, are accepted in heaven. . ." (pp223-26). Lastly, we might mention here that if Jesus' death shows forth *the work of His priesthood*, then His resurrection attests to *the proof of His priesthood*: In the wilderness, there were some who rose up against the Lord, questioning whether or not God had really appointed Aaron as the High Priest. So, in Numbers 17, God himself interposes with a sign, in order to testify to all Israel who is the High Priest that He had chosen. Each tribe was to give Moses a staff with the name of the tribe written on it; the staffs were, in turn, to be placed in the holy of

A PRIEST LIKE AARON: JESUS IS GOD'S ANOINTED PRIEST

	THE PRIESTLY WORK OF ATONEMENT (PAYING)	THE PRIESTLY WORK OF INTERCESSION (PLEADING)
AARON	Entered holy place with the blood of atonement (Lev.16)	Bore Israel's names on his shoulders (Exod.28:6-12)
CHRIST	<i>Entered heaven to present His blood to God (Heb.9:24)</i>	<i>Bears us up in prayer before the Father (Heb.7:25)</i>

C) *JESUS is God's KING*: In His life and ministry, Christ served as God's *Prophet*. In His suffering and death, He engaged as God's *Priest*. But it was after Jesus' birth that magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem asking, "Where is He who has been born *King* of the Jews?" (Matthew 2:1-2). The magi's question reminds us that God's Anointed One would not only serve as a *prophet* and *priest*, but also as a *king*. Many years before, the Lord had told David that He would raise up one of his descendants after him and that *He would establish his kingdom forever* (2 Samuel 7:12-13). God was announcing that His Anointed King would come forth from David's line. The prophets later used the imagery of a garden to declare the same truth: "a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit." (Isaiah 11:1). But though Isaiah describes this King here as "*the stem* of Jesse," he goes on to later describe this King as "*the root* of Jesse" (v10). God's Anointed would come forth *from David*, but He would also exist *before David*. And in Psalm 110:1, we learn that this Anointed King wouldn't only be *David's son*—but that He was also very much *David's Lord*. When Samuel was sent, *as the last of the judges*, to anoint God's chosen king, the one whom the Lord instructed him to anoint was different than he had expected (1 Samuel 16:6-7). In the same way, when John was sent, *as the last of the prophets*, to bear witness to God's Anointed One, he testified of Jesus, saying: "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God." (John 1:33-34). John's testimony here that Jesus is "the Son of God" brings everything together for us. He's referring back to Psalm 2, where we learn that God's Anointed wouldn't only be *David's son*—He was and is the very *Son of God* (vv1-7). This is how the Christ is both *the stem* of Jesse and *the root* of Jesse. And it's how He would come from *David's line*, and yet, at the same time, be *David's Lord*. And so, when John testifies that Jesus is the Son of God, he's declaring that Jesus is the Son of David—who is the Son of God—who is God's Anointed King. *Jesus is the Lord's Anointed*. It's He who is "the Son of the Most High"; it's to Him that the Lord has given "the throne of His father David"; and it's He that "will reign over the house of Jacob forever," whose "kingdom will have no end." (Luke 1:32-33). Jesus is the Christ; and as such, He demands our allegiance. As the closing words of Psalm 2 exhort us: "Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way. . .How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!"²⁷

holies; and the one whom God had chosen as High Priest *would sprout* (vv4-5). This would be a miracle, for these were *dead sticks* that were given to Moses. Indeed every other time this word is used in the Pentateuch, it's translated as either "staff" (such as Moses' staff) or "tribe". But sure enough, on the next day, Aaron's staff "had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore rip almonds." (v8). This was God's own special sign which He put forth to all Israel in order to testify whom is the One He himself has appointed as High Priest. And just as with Aaron's staff—God himself has testified to all Israel whom is the One He has chosen as His Anointed Priest—for when the dead body of Christ was placed, as it were, before God; just as Aaron's staff, God was pleased to bear witness that this was His chosen One by raising Him from the dead.

²⁷ The Westminster Larger Catechism, Question # 45 says: "*How doth Christ execute the office of a king?*" Christ executeth the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people to himself, and giving them officers, laws, and censures, by which he visibly governs them; in bestowing saving grace upon his elect, rewarding their obedience, and correcting them for their sins, preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings, restraining and overcoming all their enemies, and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory, and their good; and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who know not God, and obey not the gospel." Roberts likens Christ to Melchizedek, who was a king as well as a priest: "As, of Melchizedek, first King of Righteousness, then King of Peace; a singular type of Christ our King, who first *justifies* and then *pacifies*." (p1624). Calvin notes: "Christ was called Messiah especially with respect to, and by virtue of, his kingship. Yet his anointings as prophet and as priest have their place and must not be overlooked by us." (*Institutes*, 2.15.2). And again: "A visible symbol of this sacred anointing was shown in Christ's baptism, when the Spirit hovered over him in the likeness of a dove (John 1:32; Luke 3:22). . .For the Spirit has chosen Christ as his seat, that from him might abundantly flow the heavenly riches of which we are in such need." (2.15.5). And: "Now Christ fulfills the combined duties of king and pastor for the godly who submit willingly and obediently; on the other hand, we hear that he carries a 'rod of iron to break them and dash them all in pieces like a potter's vessel' (Psalm 2:9). We also hear that 'he will execute judgment among the Gentiles, so that he fills the earth with corpses, and strikes down every height that opposes him' (Psalm 110:6). We see today several examples of this fact, but the full proof will appear at the Last Judgment, which may also be properly considered the last act of his reign." (2.15.5). Again, Calvin notes: "David laughs at the boldness of his enemies who try to throw off the yoke of God and his Anointed, and says: 'The kings and people rage in vain. . .for he who dwells in heaven is strong enough to break their assaults' (Psalm 2:2,4). Thus he assures the godly of the everlasting preservation of the church, and encourages them to hope, whenever it happens to

A KING LIKE DAVID: JESUS IS GOD'S ANOINTED KING

	THE FORERUNNER OF GOD'S ANOINTED KING	THE TESTIMONY OF GOD'S ANOINTED KING
DAVID	Anointed by Samuel, last of the Judges (1 Sam.16)	David said the one from his line is also his Lord (Ps.110:1)
CHRIST	<i>Attested by John, last of the Prophets (John 1:29ff)</i>	<i>Jesus is the Christ, son of David and Son of God (Lk.1:32)</i>

As Jesus stood before His accusers, on the night before His sufferings, there's a startling exchange that takes place between the high priest and himself. We read of it in Mark 14:61-62: "the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, '*Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?*' And Jesus said, *I am*; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.'" Jesus was finishing His earthly ministry the very same way He began it. For *at the beginning* of His public ministry, He had testified He was the Lord's Anointed (Luke 4:16-21). Now, as He makes His *final public appearance* to Israel, He testifies to the same truth. *Jesus is the Christ*. He is *the Lord's Anointed Prophet*, whom God raised up like Moses, who spoke God's Word in His name to His people. He is *the Lord's great High Priest*, who offered up His own body once for all as a sacrifice for sin, and has taken His blood within the veil, where it ever pleads to God on our behalf. He is *the Lord's Anointed King*, the son of David and the Son of God, who will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and whose kingdom will have no end. But as Scripture tells us, it was "necessary for the Christ to suffer" before entering His glory (Luke 24:26). And so, *Jesus suffered as a priest*, when false witnesses rose up and accused Him in His priestly work, wherein the temple of His body would be destroyed and rebuilt after three days (Mark 14:57-58). And *Jesus suffered as a prophet*, when the men who were holding Him in custody beat Him and were saying, "Prophecy, who is the one who hit You?" (Luke 22:64). And *Jesus suffered as a king*, when the soldiers put a purple robe on Him, and "after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head. . .and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'" (Matthew 27:29). Indeed, *it was necessary* for the Christ to suffer. For just like *Moses*, God's Anointed Prophet would be rejected when He first came to His people (Acts 7:25); and just like *Aaron*, many of the leaders of the congregation would gather themselves together against the Lord and His Anointed Priest (Numbers 16:11); and *just like David*, God's Anointed King would be hated and hunted before ascending the throne. But having ascended to heaven, Christ has now taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God; where He continues to serve as God's Anointed until the day that He comes again in His glory. For *as our Prophet*, Jesus continues to be our teacher, revealing to us the whole will of God; *as our Priest*, though He's finished His work of atonement, He yet continues to intercede for us before the Father; and *as our King*, He governs and protects us from all our enemies, until the day that we too will reign together with Him.²⁸

JESUS IS GOD'S ANOINTED PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING

OFFICE	TYPE	WORK	FUNCTION	HUMILIATION	EXALTATION
PROPHET	Moses	Speaks God's Word in His name	Reveals Salvation	Rejected	Teaches us God's Word
PRIEST	Aaron	Atones for sin and bears in prayer	Purchases Salvation	Usurped	Intercedes for us to God
KING	David	Rules land and conquers enemies	Applies Salvation	Persecuted	Governs and Protects us

be oppressed. Elsewhere, speaking in the person of God, David says: 'Sit at [My] right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool' (Psalm 110:1). Here he asserts that, no matter how many strong enemies plot to overthrow the church, they do not have sufficient strength to prevail over God's immutable decree by which he appointed, his Son eternal King." (Calvin, 2.15.3).

²⁸ The Heidelberg Catechism speaks of Jesus as our prophet, priest, and king in question #31: "*Why is he called 'Christ', meaning 'anointed'?*" Because he has been ordained by God the Father and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our chief prophet and teacher who perfectly reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God for our deliverance; our only high priest who has set us free by the one sacrifice of his body, and who continually pleads our cause with the Father; and our eternal king who governs us by his Word and Spirit, and who guards us and keeps us in the freedom he has won for us." And Roberts says: "Jesus Christ *Reveals* the whole way and mystery of salvation, as a Prophet; *Acquires and Purchases* salvation revealed, as a Priest; [and] *Applies*, efficaciously salvation revealed and purchased as a King." (p1601). And again, Roberts says: "Christ's benefits towards us are chiefly of three sorts, [namely] 1) He makes known unto us the whole counsel and will of God touching sinner's salvation in His word; enlightening our minds by His Spirit to understand the same. This He does as a *Prophet*. 2) He suffers and satisfies for the sins of His elect. . .He ever lives to make intercession for them, and thereby to impetrate all saving blessings upon them. All these and such like blessings he works for us, as a *Priest*. 3) He effectually applies to us all the benefits and purchases of His mediation. He subdues, calls and governs us by the spiritual scepter of His word and Spirit. . .He restrains and conquers all our enemies. . .And He will come again at last to judge the world, to take us home unto himself. . .Now all these and such like benefits He vouchsafes to us, as a *King*." (*Mystery and Marrow*, pp1601-02).

III. The Significance of the New Covenant

1. The ESSENCE of the New Covenant: *What's the same in the New Covenant?*

We mentioned in our first lesson that Thomas Boston began his treatise, *A View of the Covenant of Grace* with these words: “As man's *ruin* was originally owing to the breaking of the covenant of works, so his *recovery*, from the first to the last step thereof, is owing purely to the fulfilling of the covenant of grace.” The gospel is the story of man's ruin and his redemption; and, as another put it, “Covenant Theology is just the gospel.” I hope you've seen this in our study together. The Covenant of Grace is simply the good news of what God has done for us in Jesus. In Adam, we were ruined. But God has made a way for redemption in and through Christ. And this is the singular message of the Scriptures. Both the Old Testament (or *Old Covenant*) and the New Testament (or *New Covenant*) declare the same truth: Salvation is freely offered to sinners *by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone*.²⁹

In each manifestation of the Covenant of Grace in the Old Testament, we've seen Jesus: *When God drew near to Adam and his wife* in the garden after they had sinned, and made a promise in Genesis 3:15, it was a gospel promise. To be sure, it was veiled in strange and mysterious language—but it was a gospel promise nonetheless. And *God's covenant with Noah* was just as much about the gospel, for as we saw, Noah himself was saved from the coming judgment only by sovereign grace (Genesis 6:8); and indeed, this grace was upheld and mediated only in and through sacrificial atonement (8:20-21). Even Noah was set forth as a type of Christ, through whom all who were together with him in the ark were saved from the judgment and preserved safely to the new earth. *God's covenant with Abraham* was likewise a gospel covenant. In fact, Paul explicitly tells us that the Scripture “preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham” (Galatians 3:8); for when God told him: “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 22:18), He was speaking of Christ, who would come forth from him, and bring blessing to the world. *God's covenant with Israel at Sinai* was no less a gospel covenant, for as Scripture clearly tells us, they had the same good news preached to them under Moses that we do (Hebrews 4:2,6); and even Christ himself said to the Jews: “if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me” (John 5:46). Last but not least, *God's covenant with David* was all about the gospel; for the promises the Lord made to him in 2 Samuel 7 had to do with the distant future, in which God would raise up one of his descendants, and establish the throne of His kingdom forever.

What we're saying is that there's a fundamental unity between the new covenant and all the previous old covenant manifestations of the Covenant of Grace. *It's one Covenant of Grace*. New Testament or Old, it's all about the gospel. Old covenant or new, it's all about Jesus. Every manifestation of the Covenant of Grace is like an instrument playing in a brilliant orchestra; and starting with the promise in the garden, God began conducting His masterpiece. Each manifestation is like another instrument joining in, adding to the whole. And with the inauguration of the new covenant, there's a culmination as the symphony rises to its climax. But the music hasn't changed; it's all about Jesus and the gospel.³⁰

²⁹ Thomas Boston's quote is from his *View of the Covenant of Grace*, p1. The quote about Covenant Theology just being the gospel is attributed to Mark Dever; it's cited from Ligon Duncan's course on Covenant Theology in his lesson on the Gospels.

³⁰ As Ball says: “the Old and New Testament. . .for substance [are] one and the same. They both flow from the free grace and mercy of God looking at poor sinners in Jesus Christ. They have both one common matter: the obedience of faith required, and life everlasting, and all secondary good things promised by the imputation of the righteousness of faith, and free adoption in Jesus Christ. They have both one object Jesus Christ, who being promised to the fathers in prophetic Scriptures, God has in due time exhibited under the Gospel. They have both one general end, [namely], the praise of the glorious grace of God in Jesus Christ. Both covenants are struck with mankind, as. . .sinners, and those which work not, but believe in him that justifies the ungodly. In both the same spirit sealed up the truth of the covenants to all under covenant; for seeing the adoption, and inheritance in some measure belonged to the fathers in the Old Testament, the earnest of that inheritance cannot be denied them. But the new covenant does in many things out-strip the old, which do[es] nothing [to] derogate from their substantial and real unity and agreement.” (pp163-64). And Roberts notes: “Every dispensation of the Covenant of Faith since the fall, preached Christ and the gospel in Him. . .” (p1101). And again: “The substance of the Covenant of Faith is still the same, but yet it still more and more excels itself in gradual perfections, till it attain[s] to the most perfect of all dispensations, the new covenant.” (p1216). And: “The substance of God's covenants of Faith was but one. . .The circumstances were very various; but the essence and substance of them all was one and the same, [namely] the revealing and tendering of one and the same Messiah Jesus Christ to His people, as their only all-sufficient Savior through faith.” (Roberts, p1222). Again: “Jesus Christ was represented, in the first covenant, as the seed of the woman; in the second, as the true Noah; in the third, as the seed of

THE ESSENCE OF THE NEW COVENANT: *WHAT'S THE SAME IN THE NEW COVENANT?*²

	THE ELEMENTS	THE ESSENCE
THE OLD COVENANT	God's dealings with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David	JESUS AND THE GOSPEL
THE NEW COVENANT	The birth, life, death, resurrection, and present reign of Christ	

2. The ECONOMY of the New Covenant: *What's different in the New Covenant?*²

And so, the first thing we have to understand is that the new covenant is exactly the same as the old as it relates to its essence: Both are equally about the gospel, both serve to point us to Jesus, and in both we are not only saved, but also called upon to live our lives as Christians by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. But though the new and the old covenants are the same in their *essence*—the way they differ is in their *economy*. Or, to put it another way, though they are the same in *substance*, they're different in *administration*. This is the way Paul speaks about the new covenant in Ephesians 1:10, where he marvels that we now live in “*an administration* suitable to the fullness of the times. . .” (cf. 3:8-9). In the new covenant, we live in *a different administration* of the Covenant of Grace. The old covenant is about the gospel as much as the new; but as we mentioned earlier, if the old covenant is like a mango plucked from the tree, the new covenant is that same mango when it's peeled, sliced up, and ready to eat. The difference doesn't have to do with *the nature* of the covenant, but with how it's *outwardly presented*. The way the new covenant is different from the old is *in its administration*.³¹

Abraham; in the fourth, as the seed of Israel; in the fifth, as the seed of David; in the sixth, as the true David; in the seventh, which is the new covenant, as actually God-man, Immanuel, God with us.” (Roberts, *Preface*). And lastly: “The agreement between the old covenant, given at *Mount Sinai*, and this new covenant, from *Mount Sion* (that I may use the Apostle's terms), does stand especially in these particulars, and such like, [namely], 1) Both of them are covenants of the same sort and nature . . . [being] covenants not of works but of faith, and through Jesus Christ revealing righteousness, life and salvation to lapsed sinners in and by Jesus Christ through faith. . . 2) Both of them have the same Author of efficient cause, the Lord God. . . 3) Both of them have the same impulsive or moving causes, [namely] the riches of God's mere grace, in and through the merit of Jesus Christ alone. . . 4) Both of them expressed in general the same bounty and benevolent affection to their federates, accepting into covenant with God, not only parents, but also their seed and posterity together with the parents. . . 5) Both of them contain for substance, the same subject matters or articles of agreement between God and His federates. . . 6) Both of them have for substance one and the same Mediator, Jesus Christ. Though *typically* represented in the mediation of Moses, in the old covenant; *truly*, in His own person actually exhibited in human flesh, in the new. . . 7) Both of them have the same general way of sanction, dedication or fundamental establishment, [namely] by blood, and death of sacrifices. . . 8) Both of them had the like general season of publication; [namely] about fifty days after the sacrificing of the passover. The old, fifty days after the typical passover was offered up in Egypt (Exodus 12:6-7, 18 with 19:1). The new covenant was published on the Feast of Pentecost, fifty days after Christ our true passover was offered up for us at Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-2; 1 Corinthians 5:7). . . 9) Both of them were further confirmed and established in the same way, for the general, [namely] I. By promises. . . [and] II. By visible tokens of the covenants. . . 10) Both of them effect, produce and constitute one and the same Church of Christ essentially and substantially. . . 11) Finally, both old and new covenant agree in the same common end, [namely]. . . the revealing of Jesus Christ for sinner's happiness. . . and the glory of their covenant God in all. . .” (Roberts, pp1703-06). And Bavinck likewise writes: “The Old and the New Testaments are in essence one covenant. . . They have one gospel. . . one mediator, namely, Christ, who existed also in the days of the Old Testament. . . exercised his office of mediator. . . and is the only mediator for all humans and in all times. . . It included one faith as the way of salvation. . . the same promises and benefits of God's communion, forgiveness, justification, and eternal life. . . The road was the same on which believers in the Old and the New Testaments walked, but the light in which they walked was different.” (Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, V3, p223).

³¹ Calvin says: “The covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours in substance and reality that the two are actually one and the same. Yet they differ in the mode of dispensation.” (*Institutes*, 2.10.2). And again: “I freely admit the differences in Scripture, to which attention is called, but in such a way as not to detract from its established unity. . . I say that all these [differences] pertain to the manner of dispensation rather than to the substance. . .” (*Institutes*, 2.11.1). Interestingly, the Greek word for “administration” in Ephesians 1:10 and 3:9 is *oikonomia*, which is also where we get the English word *economy*. This sheds light on why this term, “economy” seemed to be interchangeable with the term “administration” in some of the older writers (most notably in the title of Herman Witsius' work, *The Economy of the Covenants*). Regarding the Scripture in Ephesians 1:10, there is some dispute about whether the “administration” Paul is speaking of is the present or the future; but Charles Hodge says this about *oikonomia* in Ephesians 1:10 and its meaning: “The apostle is speaking of God's purpose, of what He intended to do. It was a purpose having reference to a plan or economy of his own; an economy here designated as that of the fulness of times. This phrase does not indicate a protracted period—the times which remain—but the termination of the times; the end of the preceding and commencement of the new dispensation. The prophets being ignorant of the time of the Messiah's advent, predicted his coming when the time determined by God should be accomplished. Hence the expressions, 'end of the ages,' (1 Corinthians 10:11); 'end of days,' (Hebrews 1:1); 'fulness of the time,' (Galatians 4:4); and here, 'the fulness of times,' are all used to designate the time of Christ's advent. By the economy of the fulness of times is therefore to be understood, that economy which was to be clearly revealed and carried out when the fulness of time had come.”

THE ECONOMY OF THE NEW COVENANT: *WHAT'S DIFFERENT IN THE NEW COVENANT?*

	THE ESSENCE (SUBSTANCE/NATURE)	THE ECONOMY (ADMINISTRATION/FORM)
THE OLD COVENANT	THE SAME	DIFFERENT
THE NEW COVENANT		

A) *The DISTINCTIVES of the New Covenant:* What does this look like in particular? In the new covenant, there's a difference in *emphasis*. In the old covenant, the mango came to us in its skin; the kernel was packaged together with the husk. Gospel truths were set forth to us, but those truths were communicated in and through earthly pictures. But now in the new covenant, the gospel is set forth to us front and center, extracted from its earthly and temporal packaging. And as a result, there's also a difference in *clarity* with the new covenant. While the gospel kernel was wrapped with an outward husk, it was more hidden from view. Old Testament believers had enough gospel light to guide them in their way, but whereas their light was like the light of dawn, ours is like the brightness of noonday. In the new covenant, the Covenant of Grace also reaches its *consummation*; for now, Christ himself has come. What had been promised in the old covenant is now actually performed in the new; and what had been foretold in the old covenant is now truly fulfilled in the new covenant administration. And as a result, there's also an *abrogation* of the old covenant ceremonies and institutions, for these things were only given to a particular people (the Jews), and for a particular time (before the coming of Christ); and thus, they served only a temporary purpose. But now that Christ has come, they're no longer needed; for now that we have the kernel, we can do away with the husk. And in turn, believers in the new covenant now also enjoy a greater measure of *freedom*; for though it's true that the former ceremonies and institutions set forth Christ; still, they were also heavy and burdensome requirements for the people of God; and from these we've been liberated in the new covenant administration. The gospel is now also preached with much greater *effect*; for though the content was the same in the old covenant, yet now, God applies His Word powerfully to the hearts of His people, by His Spirit, in a much greater proportion. Indeed, if we are to make a *comparison* between the two administrations, we have to acknowledge that though the old was full of glory—it's eclipsed by the glory of the new.³²

³² Note: the chart below is taken from the Lesson on Sinai (Part 2); please see this lesson for a more thorough treatment of this subject. Roberts begins his treatment of the differences between the old and new covenants by informing us what those differences *are not*: "The disagreement or difference between the old and this new covenant is manifold. . . But the difference is not so easily assigned as the agreement between these two covenants; because sundry false differences, either corruptly devised, or inconsiderately embraced, are pretended and obtruded. . . Here therefore I shall [first] propound the disagreements between the old and new covenant, negatively, what they *are not*. . . The disagreement and difference between the old and new covenant, does *not* stand in these particulars following, [namely] 1) Not in this, that the old covenant is a Covenant of Works, holding forth righteousness, life and salvation, only upon terms of perfect and perpetual personal doing; but the new covenant is a Covenant of Grace, holding forth righteousness, life and salvation upon terms of believing in Christ. . . 2) Not in this, that the old covenant is a mere carnal earthly covenant, containing mere carnal, external and earthly blessings, as Canaan, honor, [and] riches, but the new covenant is a spiritual and celestial covenant, containing also spiritual and eternal blessings. . . 3) Not in this, that the old covenant is a mixed covenant, partly legal, partly evangelical; mixed of two diverse covenants, the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. . . But the new covenant is a pure evangelical covenant. . . 4) Not in this, that the old covenant (in a far other sense) is mixed, [namely]. . . having promises mixed; some evangelical, belonging to those to whom the gospel belongs; some domestic or civil, especially respecting the house of Abraham, and policy of Israel; but that the new covenant is purely evangelical. . . 5) Not in this, that God's covenant is threefold: of nature, of grace, and subservient to the Covenant of Grace. . . 6) Not in this, that the old covenant admitted and accepted, as federates with God, all the natural seed of Abraham, Isaac, [and] Jacob, though only professing faith; but the new covenant accepts none as federates, but elect and regenerate persons. . . 7) Finally, the true difference between old and new covenant stands not in this, that the old covenant comprised in it as federates with God all persons professing true faith and obedience to God, and all their seed, but the new covenant is made so personally with them that actually make such profession, that it terminates in their persons, not taking in their seed as federates with them. . . These especially are those unsound and unjustifiable differences between the old and new covenant, some whereof are unadvisedly expressed by men of sounder judgement; others are most corruptly contrived for the abetting of error by men of corrupt minds." (pp1706-08). Calvin says: "The Lord held to this orderly plan in administering the covenant of his mercy; as the day of full revelation approached with the passing of time, the more he increased each day the brightness of its manifestation. Accordingly, at the beginning when the first promise of salvation was given to Adam (Genesis 3:15) it glowed like a feeble spark. Then, as it was added to, the light grew in fullness, breaking forth increasingly and shedding its radiance more widely. At last—when all the clouds were dispersed—Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, fully illumined the whole earth (cf. Malachi 4)." (*Institutes*, 2.10.20). Accordingly, Roberts notes: "Every dispensation of the Covenant of Faith since the fall, preached Christ and the gospel in Him; but the later dispensations do this still much more clearly and fully than the former, and [the] last most fully and clearly of all." (p1101). And again: "God's covenants with Adam and Noah, were as the day-dawning of saving light and grace to poor sinners; His covenant with Abraham was as the sunrise; His old covenant, comprising those with David and the captives, was as the morning light growing clearer and clearer till the

THE DISTINCTIVES OF THE NEW COVENANT: *THE GOSPEL AND HOW ITS MINISTERED*

	IN THE OLD COVENANT	IN THE NEW COVENANT
EMPHASIS	The gospel was packaged in a temporal husk	The gospel is set forth without the temporal husk
CLARITY	The gospel was revealed but indirectly and darkly	The gospel is set forth with full noon-day clarity
CONSUMMATION	Redemption was promised, pictured, signified	Redemption is performed by Christ the substance
ABROGATION	The Ceremonial Laws applied to OT church	The Ceremonial Laws abrogated for NT church
FREEDOM	God's people were held in custody and burdened	God's people are set free from that bondage
EFFECT	God's Word produced little effect on most hearts	God's Word has a much greater effect on hearts
COMPARISON	Thus, the old covenant was full of gospel glory	But the glory of the new covenant is much greater

The difference in the administration of the new covenant also extends to **THE CHURCH**. Again, it's not that the *ESSENCE* of the church has changed: God's old covenant people were the church just as much as we are today. And just as that church was visible and invisible—made up of both those who truly embraced the *covenant reality* and those merely under *its realm*—so it is now. Further, as their church included as members *all professing believers, together with their children*, so does ours. And as they were called to follow their Lord as the *church militant*, before entering glory and transforming into the *church triumphant*, so must we. The essence hasn't changed, but the *ADMINISTRATION* is different now in the new covenant: For under the old covenant, Christ was promised, salvation was promised, an inheritance was promised. But now, Christ has come, redemption has been purchased, and the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon us; so that whereas the church under the old covenant was comparable to a child in its minority—yet to receive his inheritance—*we've now entered into a full possession of all the benefits of the Covenant of Grace* under the new covenant administration. And whereas the church in the old covenant was essentially limited to the Jews—the *new covenant church has taken on a universal scope*, made up of men and women from every tribe and tongue and nation under heaven. The difference in administration also extends to **THE SACRAMENTS**. Under the old covenant, the sacraments unfolded progressively: *The first sacrament* was given under Abraham (circumcision), and *the second* under Moses (passover). The purpose of *circumcision* was to initiate someone into the covenant community; and the *passover* served to continue to nourish them in their faith. In the new covenant, God has given us the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. Like circumcision, *baptism* is administered just once, and it serves to initiate someone into the community of God's people; whereas *the Lord's supper* is to be received often by the people of God as a means strengthening and nourishing their faith. There's also a difference in administration as it relates to **THE OFFICES** of the church in the new covenant. Again, the essence doesn't change. It's not that God has done away with shepherds and overseers in the new covenant church; but now these offices have taken a new form: Whereas formerly there were prophets, priests, and kings, the new covenant church is shepherded by elders appointed to equip God's people for the upbuilding of the whole.³³

perfect day; but His new covenant, is as the brightest noon-tide, the perfect day; the mid-day of clearest light, wherein the Sun of righteousness shines forth in His strength most gloriously.” (p1713). So that: “This new covenant outshines the old, as far as the sun outshines the moon. Yea as the moon derives and borrows all her clear light from the sun, having nothing but a dim blackish darkness of her own; so the old covenant (having only a darkish blackish body of itself) derived and borrowed as it were all her clearest light from Christ, and the mysteries of the new covenant.” (p1714). Bavinck explains the differences in this way: “The Old and the New Testaments as different dispensations of the same covenant of grace are related as promise and fulfillment (Acts 13:32; Rom.1:2), as shadow and substance (Col.2:17), as the letter that kills and the Spirit that makes alive (2 Cor.3:6ff), as servitude and freedom (Rom.8:15; Gal.4:1ff; etc). . .as particular and universal (John 4:21; Acts 10:35; etc). . .The new thing in the New Testament, therefore, is the shedding of the non-arbitrary but still temporary sensory national forms under which one and the same grace was revealed in the old day. . .Factually the old dispensation may long linger, but legally it has been abolished. Better still, nothing was abolished, but the fruit was ripe and broke through the husk. . .Nothing of the Old Testament is lost in the New, but everything is fulfilled, matured, has reached its full growth, and now, out of the temporary husk, produces the eternal core. . .Israel only possessed a shadow, but now the substance itself has emerged.” (*Dogmatics*, V3, pp223-24). And Vos asks: “Is the covenant under the administration of the new day different from the earlier covenant? Not in essence; certainly in form. It contains greater blessings. Its essence and its benefits are more clearly revealed. It extends to all nations. It no longer has a ceremonial and typological service. The record of sin that was against us has been destroyed or nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). There are no longer intermediaries between the believing covenant member and God, except the one Mediator, Christ. The Holy Spirit has been poured out. The glory of Christ Himself is beheld in the mirror of the gospel. There will be no more change in administration until the end of the world.” (*Dogmatics*, V2, p136).

³³ Many of these things we've dealt with in detail over the course of our study; our purpose here is only to briefly summarize

THE DISTINCTIVES OF THE NEW COVENANT: *THE CHURCH AND HOW ITS GOVERNED*

	IN THE OLD COVENANT	IN THE NEW COVENANT	SCRIPTURE
THE CHURCH	In its Minority and Limited to Jews	In its Maturity and Universal in Scope	Gal.4:1-5 and Eph.3:1-7
THE SACRAMENTS	Circumcision and Passover	Baptism and the Lord's Supper	Col.2:11ff; 1Cor.11:23ff
THE OFFICES	Prophets, Priests, and Kings	Elders to Shepherd God's people	Eph.5:11ff; 1Tim.3:1ff

B) The DESIGNATIONS of the New Covenant: What are the names and titles that Scripture uses to refer to the new covenant? In three short verses in the book of Hebrews, we're given three unique designations for the new covenant: In Hebrews 8:6, the new covenant is called *a better covenant*; in Hebrews 8:7, it's called *a second covenant*; and in Hebrews 8:8, the author refers to it in the way that we're most familiar with, calling it *a new covenant*. We'll take these one by one, starting with the last.

In Hebrews 8:8, the author quotes from Jeremiah 31, where the Lord declares through the prophet: "Behold, days are coming," says the Lord, "when I will effect *a new covenant* with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. . ." Here in this passage, God promises to make A NEW COVENANT with His people; and this is set in contrast with the covenant that He made with them at Sinai, which would be *the old covenant*. Most of the time we've used this phrase, the old covenant, we've taken it as referring to all the Old Testament manifestations of the Covenant of Grace, together as a whole; and this is, indeed, one way this phrase can be used. But it can also be

some of the things we've learned. *On the church:* Of the church in her minority (in the old covenant) and maturity (in the new covenant), see especially Galatians 4:1-5. Calvin notes: "The young man, though he is free, 'though he is lord of all' his father's family, still resembles a slave; for he is under the government of tutors. But the period of guardianship lasts only 'until the time appointed by the father' after which he enjoys his freedom. In this respect the fathers under the Old Testament, being the sons of God, were free; but they were not in possession of freedom, while the law held the place of their tutor, and kept them under its yoke. That slavery of the law lasted as long as it pleased God, who put an end to it at the coming of Christ." (Galatians 4:1). And Roberts notes that though the church of Christ "was essentially one under both old and new covenant", yet, among other things, they were different in that, "The Church under the old covenant was as an heir in minority; but the Church under the new covenant is as an heir come to maturity of age." (p1712). Of the church's universal scope in the new covenant, see especially Ephesians 3:1-7. Roberts writes: "The old covenant was of less and more limited extent, only to the nation of the Jews, the natural seed of Abraham. . .and [only] to some few Gentile proselytes embracing the Jewish religion . . .But this new covenant is enlarged and extended to all nations of the world. . ." (p1710). Roberts draws out how incredible this is for us as Gentiles when he notes: "[God's] own peculiar people the Jews must wait many ages for this [new] covenant, and pass many gradual preparatories, especially under the old covenant, before they could be fitted for, and capable of this covenant; and yet we strangers, aliens, enemies to God, were at once exalted from our deepest pagan misery, to this highest new covenant felicity." (p1718). *On the sacraments:* Roberts says: "Ever since God's promises were in Scripture called covenants, they have been confirmed by visible and sensible tokens: As the covenant with Noah, by the token of the rainbow; the covenant with Abraham and Israel at Sinai, by the ordinary tokens of circumcision and the passover, and for a time in the wilderness by the four extraordinary tokens, the cloudy fiery pillar, sea, manna, and water out of the Rock; the covenant with David and with the captives, by circumcision and the passover. Thus this last and most excellent covenant is confirmed by two sacramental tokens excelling all that went before, [namely] baptism and the Lord's supper; which are, in signification, clearer; in virtue, greater; in utility, better; in act, easier; [and] in number, fewer. . .Those sacraments were bloody, these not bloody; those signified darkly Christ to come afterwards, these signify clearly Christ come already; those were painful and costly, these without pain, and cheap; those did wax old and vanish away with the Old Covenant, these are still to continue in force till the world's end with the New Covenant. Now both in those Old, and these New covenant tokens; some were first, for initiating of persons visibly into the mystical body of Christ the Church, as circumcision. . .which, baptism under the New Testament most fully answers, and plainly succeeds them (Colossians 2:10-13; 1 Corinthians 10:1-2). Some were second, for continuing and nourishing up persons initiated in the Church by Christ the spiritual meat and drink of the soul. As the passover. . .which the Lord's supper under the New Testament most fully answers, and evidently comes in the room of them (1 Corinthians 5:7; 10:3-4, 16-17; 11:23-30)." (pp1678-79). And: "Baptism signifies, our putting on Christ, and union to Him; the Lord's Supper our continued communion with Him (1 Corinthians 10:16). . .Baptism denotes our admission into the mystical body of Christ the Church; the Lord's Supper, our spiritual maintenance and continuance in that body (1 Corinthians 12:13)." (p1325). Vos categorizes the sacraments in this way: "Before Christ, a) From Adam to Abraham—no sacrament; b) From Abraham to Moses—one sacrament; c) From Moses to Christ—two sacraments." (V2, p137). *On the offices:* Roberts writes: "The new covenant ministry [is both] *extraordinary*, as apostles, prophets, evangelists; and *ordinary*, as pastors and teachers were given of Christ to his church, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. . ." (p1236). There are other differences in administration as it has to do with Christ's governing of His church in the new covenant, such as: When are we to gather and what are we to do when we gather? Who are those that partake of the sacraments and how are they to be administered? What are the offices that Christ has instituted in further detail (IE, teaching versus ruling elders; and deacons), and how can it be known when God calls a man to service in such an office? These questions are important but best suited for another study; we've done what we can here to simply give a brief overview of the main differences in administration.

used to refer exclusively to the covenant that God made with Israel at Sinai; and this is how it's being used as it's contrasted here with the new. We've already examined this passage in Jeremiah 31 earlier in our study; and it's not our purpose to get back into the details here. But what is Scripture telling us when it describes this as being a *new* covenant? What is it about this covenant that's *new*? Well, the first thing we could say is that it's new in all the ways we just finished talking about. This covenant isn't new at all, as it relates to its true essence or substance; for as we've seen, Israel's covenant at Sinai was just as much about the gospel as our covenant is today. The newness, rather, has to do with its form and administration. *The new moon* is called new, not because it's a different moon than the one that appeared in the sky a day earlier, but because it marks the very beginning of the monthly lunar cycle. It's not new at all in its essence—but only in its form and outward appearance. In the same way, the new covenant is called new, not because it's something completely different than the old, but because of its outward form and administration. The new covenant is also called new because it replaces the former covenant, rendering it old and obsolete (Hebrews 8:13). *New wine* is called new, not because it comes from different grapes, but because it comes from the most recent harvest, replacing the old. In the same way, the new covenant is called new because it has come as the latest and most recent of God's covenantal dealings, and because it serves to replace the old. Indeed, God's previous covenant was rendered old only with the arrival of the new; but now that the new has come, the old is obsolete. Finally, the new covenant is called new because it continues to be the administration of God's choice for as long as the world endures. Scripture tells us, “The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease . . . *They are new every morning*” (Lamentations 3:22-23). God's mercies are new each and every day because they never cease to exist; and so, because the Lord's mercies perpetually flow to us, they are counted as being ever new. It's the same with the new covenant; for since this is the administration of the Covenant of Grace that will endure forever and never end, it's for this reason that it's called new.³⁴

WHY THE NEW COVENANT IS CALLED A NEW COVENANT

	EXAMPLE	DESCRIPTION	SCRIPTURE
IT REFERS TO ITS FORM	New Moon	It's not a different moon—but the same moon in a new form	Ephesians 1:10
IT REPLACES THE OLD	New Wine	It's not made from different grapes—but from the latest harvest	Hebrews 8:13
IT REMAINS FOREVER	New Mercies	It's not different mercies—but a fresh continuance every day	Lam. 3:21-22

³⁴ Roberts says: “This covenant is already above 1600 years old, and yet it is still *new*. . . It is called a new covenant, because: 1) *It is a recent and lately established covenant*. . . In Scripture, late, fresh, recent things, lately done or made, or lately begun, are called new. So, fruit lately brought forth, is called new fruit. . . So this covenant, being in comparison of all other covenants of God with man, but lately made. . . and the last covenant that ever God made, is justly called, a *new* covenant. 2) *It succeeds, and antiquates or makes old the former covenant, which was given at Mount Sinai [cf. Hebrews 8:13]*. . . As the Sinai covenant is counted old, because it gives place to this covenant to succeed, so this covenant is called new, because it supersedes and comes in place of the Sinai covenant. 3) *This covenant is another and very diverse from that Sinai covenant which it succeeds, supersedes, and antiquates*. In Scripture phrase, that which is another, diverse, or any way different from what was before, is called new. . . John calls [love] both an old commandment and a new; old, for the matter and substance, new, for the manner and circumstance of urging it upon them. In this sense, this covenant, being another and a very diverse covenant, both from the old covenant and from all that went before; not in substance, but in circumstance; not in essence, but in accidents; not in inward constitution, but in outward administration; is called a new covenant. . . 4) *This covenant does advance the Church of God and members of Christ to a new state and condition*. Under this covenant the Church is so reformed, refined, renewed, and the whole face of all things in the Church made new; that effectively it may well be called, a new covenant. . . 5) *This covenant was a very unknown covenant, and wholly unheard of by the Church of the Jews till the days of Jeremiah, who first mentions the same prophetically*. Now things unknown and unheard-of, are called new; as the Athenians and strangers spent their time in nothing else but to tell or hear some new thing (Acts 17:21). . . 6) *This covenant is eminent, excellent, admirable, far surpassing all former covenant expressures; therefore it may fitly be called a new covenant*. In Scripture-language choice, rare, eminent, excellent, admirable things, are called new. . . New wine (Psalm 4:7). . . that is, most excellent, admirable wine indeed. . . 7) *Finally, because this covenant is still to continue recent, fresh, vigorous, new; and never to wax old or wear away while this world lasts, therefore in a special manner it is called new; as the former by reason of its waxing old, and wearing away, is called old [Hebrews 8:13]*. . . Nor is it unusual with Scripture, to style things new in this sense. As the new heavens and new earth, which the Lord has promised to create; are so called, not only because of their admirable excellency, and the perfection of their renewed state; but also in regard of their constant continuance, they shall still remain before the Lord; as it were fresh, vigorous, [and] new (cf. Isaiah 66:22).” (pp1254-59). And again, “The Church of Christ. . . was essentially one under both old and new covenant, as the new moon and the old is one essentially, differing only accidentally.” (p1712). Turretin says: “It is called ‘new’ not as to the substance of the covenant (which is the same in both) but: 1) as to the circumstances and mode . . . in which way it can be called new both intensively as to degree of light and extensively as to amplitude, extending itself indiscriminately to all nations; 2) as to the excellence and glory of this dispensation which far surpasses the old (2 Corinthians 3:9-10), as new is elsewhere taken for what is remarkable and superior (Revelation 5:9; Psalm 33:3); 3) as to perpetual duration, by which it happens that it is as it were always new, while those things which ought to cease are called old.” (Institutes, V2, p232).

The new covenant is also called A SECOND COVENANT. In Hebrews 8:7, we're told: "For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for *a second*." So then, Scripture is referring to the new covenant as *a second covenant*; but this can create some confusion if we're not careful. One reason for the confusion is that these same terms, *first* and *second* covenant, are also used to describe the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. And indeed, these are fitting names, for the very *first covenant* that God made with man was the Covenant of Works, which the Lord made with Adam while he was yet sinless in the garden. And it was after he had sinned that God drew near to him once again and entered into a *second covenant* with him, which was rooted in the Lord's mercy, known as the Covenant of Grace. But this is not the way the author of Hebrews is using these terms here in this passage. When he refers to the first and second covenants, he's rather (once again) contrasting the new covenant with the covenant that God had made with Israel at Sinai. This resolves some questions, but it also creates questions of its own. For though the covenant which God made with Israel at Sinai, and the new covenant, both belong to the Covenant of Grace; still, it's difficult to understand why they would be called the first and second. Indeed, as we just mentioned, the first manifestation of the Covenant of Grace in the Old Testament was God's promise to Adam, after he had fallen, in Genesis 3:15. And this was followed by God's covenant with Noah, as well as His covenant with Abraham. So it's difficult to see how Sinai is spoken of as *the first covenant*. And it's equally difficult to understand how the new covenant is spoken of as *the second*, especially in light of the fact that it's the Davidic covenant, not the new covenant, that comes after the covenant at Sinai! In short, these two covenants are called first and second because *they are set forth as representing the two distinct administrations of the Covenant of Grace*. For though there were many manifestations of the Covenant of Grace in the Old Testament, God's covenant at Sinai was the most illustrious; so that it serves to represent all the others. It's in this respect that Sinai is counted as the first covenant. And as Hebrews 8:7 reminds us, it's because the first was flawed that God made place for the second. We might well think of the contrast as that of a special old book from antiquity. Most of the time, it's the *first edition* that's most prized. But often, after that initial edition has already been published, it goes through some significant changes and revisions, which are made to further expand upon, clarify, and perfect the edition, bringing it to final form. It's the same book; but now it's the *second edition* that's become more valuable than the first. In the same way, we might think of Sinai and the new covenant as being different editions of the same book: *The first* is to be prized; but *the second* even more so.³⁵

WHY THE NEW COVENANT IS CALLED A SECOND COVENANT

	THE MEANING	THE SIGNIFICANCE
FIRST	Sinai as representing the entire OT administration of the Covenant of Grace	Like the imperfect 1 st edition
SECOND	New Covenant as representing NT administration of the Covenant of Grace	Like the perfected 2 nd edition

Lastly, the new covenant is also termed A BETTER COVENANT. Hebrews 8:6 says, "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a *better covenant*, which has been enacted on better promises." In what sense is the new covenant better than the old? It's better in all the ways that we've been talking about here in this section: The new covenant is better than the old as the light of noonday is better than that of a candle. It's better than the old as a lavish

³⁵ Regarding the confusion we noted above, William Strong wrote a book called *A Discourse of the Two Covenants*, in which he compared the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace; and Ezekiel Hopkins wrote a volume called *The Doctrine of the Two Covenants*, in which he examined the same two covenants. As we quoted earlier in our lesson on Sinai, Roberts says, "It's evident [in Hebrews 8:7], that he calls that Sinai covenant the first covenant, and the new covenant, the second. But how can we understand this; seeing the Sinai covenant was not the first covenant; God's covenants with Adam, Noah and Abram going before it? Nor is the new covenant the second after the Sinai covenant, God's covenants with David, and with his captives in Babylon, coming between them. . .The Sinai covenant, and the new covenant, are the two most illustrious, famous and eminent covenant expressures among all the rest. For, 1) These were made with greatest solemnities. 2) These were tendered to the greatest number of people; the old covenant to the whole national Church of Israel, the new covenant, to the whole ecumenical or general Church gathered out of all nations in the world Jewish and Gentile. Whereas the covenants with Adam, Noah, Abram, [and] David, were directed but to their particular persons, families and their seed. . .[Moreover], these two covenants, beyond all other, were managed with peculiar administrations most remarkably distinct and opposite to each other. The three covenants preceding the Sinai covenant being preparatory and homogeneal in their ministrations to it; the [covenant] following the Sinai covenant being [an additional explanation] of it. . .So that in these regards, these two covenants may be called the first, and the second; because they are the first and second most illustrious covenants; although in regard of time, and order of discovery, the old covenant was not precisely the first; nor this new, the second." (pp1263-64).

feast is better for a hungry man than a painting of one; or as a gushing river is better for a thirsty man than it's shadow. The new covenant is better than the old as having my wife face to face is better than looking at a picture of her; and as being married to her is better than the promise of having her hand in marriage. The new covenant is better than the old as being a free man is better than having to live in custody; and as growing into maturity is better than remaining a child. The new is better than the old as having a torrential downpour of God's Spirit is better than having drops. And indeed, the new covenant is better than the old as having a church made up of all nations is better than a church that's limited to just one. Again, it's not that the new covenant is something different from the old in its true essence or substance. Just as the new moon is the same as the old in its essence, and just as the older wine came from the same grapes as the new, both old and new covenants belong to the Covenant of Grace. But if compare these two distinct administrations, we have to acknowledge *the new is better*.³⁶

WHY THE NEW COVENANT IS CALLED A *BETTER COVENANT*

GOOD	Light of a candle	Painting of a tasty feast	Betrothal	Childhood	Drops of the Spirit	<i>The old covenant</i>
BETTER	Light of noonday	The lavish banquet itself	Marriage	Maturity	A torrential downpour	<i>The new covenant</i>

C) The DIGNITY of the New Covenant: There is a beautiful passage in Ezekiel 37, where the Lord proclaims: “My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them. They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.” (vv24-28). In one sense, the prophet is looking forward to a day yet to come; but in a very real sense, he's also speaking of the new covenant.

And as he does so, the first thing we see is that the new covenant is **THE FULFILLMENT** of all the previous manifestations of the Covenant of Grace. *In verse 27*, the Lord declares, “and I will be their God, and they will be My people.” This, of course, isn't anything new. This has been the heartbeat of the Covenant of Grace from the very beginning. It was the goal of God's covenant *with Abraham* (Genesis 17:7-8); just as it was the goal of God's covenant *at Sinai* (Exodus 6:6-7). But it's in the new covenant that it finds its fulfillment, because this doesn't happen apart from Jesus. It's in Christ that God the Creator has become God our Redeemer; that we've become His people, and He's become our God. So again, the new covenant is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament manifestations of the Covenant of Grace; and we also see this *in verse 26*, where it's called “an everlasting covenant.” This is significant, because this same phrase was also used to describe God's covenant *with Noah* (Genesis 9:16); His covenant *with Abraham* (Genesis 17:7-19), and His covenant *with David* (2 Samuel 23:5); but now, all these old covenant forms are brought to their true and proper fulfillment in and through the new covenant. And we don't only see this truth in verse 26, we also see it *throughout this passage*. For in the new covenant, *David will be king* over God's people (verse 24). And in the new covenant, God's people will be characterized as a people who keep God's Law, which He gave to them *at Sinai* (verse 24). Moreover, in the new covenant, the people of the Lord will live on the land that God had

³⁶ As Roberts says: “Now this new covenant is called a better covenant and testament in opposition to the old covenant and testament. And this, not in essence and substance, but in accidents and circumstance; [namely] 1) Because it is established on better promises. . . more spiritual and heavenly; more clear. . . and universal, to all nations. 2) Because it is not an earthly, servile, slavish, terrible dispensation. . . but a heavenly, free, filial and comfortable dispensation. . . 3) Because it was dedicated with better sacrifice and blood, than the old covenant. . . the true sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ crucified. . . 4) Because it is administered by a better priesthood. . . [the] priesthood of Jesus Christ. . . 5) Because it [thus] has many excellencies, privileges, and prerogatives above the old covenant. . .” (pp1264-65). And again: “The new covenant is deservedly said to be established upon better promises, [namely] upon better promises than the old covenant was established upon. Why? For this reason especially: Because the old covenant did principally run upon promises of outward and temporal blessings, as the inheritance of the land of Canaan, long life there, honor, wealth, peace and all outward prosperity there. . . But here the whole current of the new covenant runs only upon spirituals. That, was a more carnal; this, a more spiritual covenant. That, had more of earth in it; this, more of heaven.” (Roberts, p1350). In another place, Roberts further clarifies how the new covenant promises are better: “1) Better in regard of perspicuity and clearness. . . 2) Better in regard of spirituality. . . 3) Better in regard of divine efficacy and sufficiency. . . 4) Better in regard to extent. . . 5) [and] Better in regard of duration. . .” (pp1673-75).

given to *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* (verse 25). In other words, the new covenant is the fulfillment of the Noahic Covenant; it's the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant; it's the fulfillment of the Mosaic Covenant; and it's the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. What we see here in Ezekiel 37 is that the new covenant brings to fulfillment all the Old Testament manifestations of the Covenant of Grace.³⁷

THE NEW COVENANT: *THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE*

	SCRIPTURE IN EZEKIEL 37	OT MANIFESTATION	FULFILLMENT
THEME	<i>"I will be their God, and they will be My people" (Ezekiel 37:27)</i>	Abraham and Moses	The New Covenant
DURATION	<i>"I will make. . .an everlasting covenant with them" (Ezekiel 37:26)</i>	Noah, Abraham, David	
ATTRIBUTES	<i>"David will be king...they'll keep My statutes and...live on the land"</i>	David, Moses, Abraham	

As the new covenant is the fulfillment of the Covenant of Grace, it's also THE FINAL EDITION of the Covenant of Grace. In other words, the new covenant administration is permanent; it will never be replaced or come to an end. While the Old Testament manifestations of the Covenant of Grace were temporary, the new covenant will endure as long as the world remains. We see this emphasized throughout this passage as well, for as the prophet looks ahead to the new covenant, he clearly speaks of it using a language of permanence and perpetuity. For indeed, in the new covenant, God's people will live on the land, together with their sons, and sons' sons, *forever* (verse 25). In the new covenant, David, the specially appointed servant of the Lord, will be prince of God's people *forever* (verse 25). And in the new covenant, God himself will set His sanctuary in the midst of His people *forever* (vv26, 28). And just as we mentioned above, verse 26 tells us the new covenant is "an *everlasting* covenant." God's covenants with Noah, Abraham, and David were described in the same way, but whereas they were everlasting *as it related to their essence and substance* (as being part of the Covenant of Grace), the new covenant is also everlasting *as it relates to its form and administration*. Indeed, the Covenant of Grace itself is permanent; but whereas the old covenant is described as *that which fades away*, the new covenant is described as being *that which remains* (2 Corinthians 3:11). And it's under this new covenant administration that Jesus himself will continue to shepherd His people until the day that He comes again "to be glorified in His saints. . .and to be marveled at among all who have believed. . ."³⁸

³⁷ Roberts puts it thus: "As God's covenants surpass all other covenants, so this new covenant is the last and best of all God's covenants." (p1696). And again: "As God's covenants are the marrow of Holy Scriptures; and the new covenant the flower and spirits of the covenants; so Jesus Christ our mediator, is the life and soul of the new covenant." (p1650). He adds: "The New Covenant is the Rock, Christ the water that flows from it. The New Covenant is the cloud, Christ the manna that rained from it. The New Covenant is the honey-comb, Christ the honey that drops from it. The New Covenant is the cabinet, Christ is the jewel that's locked up in it." (p1694). And, "Hence, how great are the privileges of God's new covenant people! . . . To be in covenant with God not only by outward, but also by inward federation, is most advantageous; such are safe in the ark, when the rest of the world is drowned; such are blessed with Abraham, when all the rest of the world are cursed; such are God's peculiar treasure and special people with Israel, when all the rest of the world are not His people. But to be God's sincere new covenant people, in power as well as form, in truth as well as name, is most glorious. As the new covenant's pre-eminencies are above those of all other covenants, so the new covenant people's privileges are above all other federate's privileges." (Roberts, p1714). On the theme and goal of the Covenant of Grace, Boston writes: "Hebrews 8:10 [says], 'I will be their God.' This is more than reconciliation, and adoption; it is the height of the relation to God, which a sinful creature could be advanced unto. They were by nature 'without God' (Ephesians 2:12); but inasmuch as the Son of God did, in the covenant, undertake to give himself for them, in their nature perfectly to satisfy the law, in his holy birth, righteous life, and exquisite death; a ransom of infinite value, quite beyond all created things whatsoever, grace, pardons, heavens; there was made, upon that consideration, a promise of God's giving himself to them, as the adequate reward of that service; which being performed by the Mediator, this reward was purchased for them. Hence God says to Abraham, 'Genesis 15:1, 'I am thy exceeding great reward.' Now, to the believer being justified, reconciled, and adopted into the family of God, this heritage falls in accomplishment of this promise, Romans 8:17: 'And if children, then heirs; heirs of God.' Galatians 4:7, 'And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ'; God himself being the heritage. He becomes their God. . ." (p131). And Rhodes notes: "Matthew also draws our attention to the fact that Jesus will be called Immanuel, which means: 'God with us.' 'I will be your God, and you will be my people' has been the recurring melody of the covenant. Jesus quite literally embodies this principle—he is God with us." (Chapter 7).

³⁸ Roberts says: "All other covenant administrations have waxed old and worn away; only this covenant administration remains still fresh and new, and shall not vanish away till the world's end. This new covenant succeeds and supersedes them all; but no other shall succeed or supersede this new covenant." (pp1238-39). Again: "The old covenant endured only from the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai, till the death of Jesus Christ. . .But the new covenant abolishing the old. . .continues still new from Christ's death till the end of the world. . ." (p1712). And in another place, in speaking of Hebrews 13:20-21, he writes, "This new covenant is everlasting in a double sense; [namely] 1) *Absolutely Everlasting*, so as it shall never know any end, in regard of the primary essence and substance of it. The Lord will be their God, and they His people forever, even in glory. . . 2) *Respectively Everlasting*. . .[that is,] everlasting in respect of the . . .administration of it. This New Testament ministration. . . shall continue till the world's end. The Old Testament ministration [i.e., of the Covenant of Grace] is called, 'that which is

THE NEW COVENANT: *THE FINAL EDITION OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE*

	AS IT RELATES TO ITS SUBSTANCE/ESSENCE	AS IT RELATES TO ITS FORM/ADMINISTRATION		
OLD COVENANT	EVERLASTING	“that which fades away”	Temporary	First Edition
NEW COVENANT		“that which remains”	Permanent	Final Edition

3. The EPILOGUE of the New Covenant: *What's still to come in the New Covenant?*

It's now time to draw our study to a close. But as we do, there's one last subject we need to address. It's true that we've saved this topic for the final section; but it's not because it's an afterthought; rather, we wanted to save the best for last. What we are going to discuss in this final section is very precious to me; and my prayer and earnest desire is that it might also become something very precious to you.

The truth is, there's a surprise ending in the new covenant. Maybe you've read a book or seen a film with a surprise ending. Everything in the story was going just as it should have; and you fully expected it to turn out in a certain way. But just as the story is drawing to its close, *it takes a dramatic turn*; and you're left awed and speechless. Well, we're at the point now in our study where it seems we should be closing up shop. We've learned a lot about the covenants. We now have an understanding of the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace; and we've seen how the Covenant of Grace is really just another name for the gospel. We've discovered that there's a fundamental unity between the Old and New Testaments. But at the same time, we've also learned how the new covenant is distinct from the old; and perhaps we've been amazed and humbled in particular that God's new covenant church has become universal in scope; so that instead of being limited to just one nation, God's grace is now extended worldwide. This seems a fitting place to say: *And God's people lived happily ever after.*

But the story doesn't end here. And in particular, *the story doesn't end here for ethnic Israel*. From what we've learned so far, we might be left with the impression that Gentiles have essentially taken the place of ethnic Jews in the new covenant church. That is, there's still a few believing Jews; but by and large, the church of the new covenant is primarily *a Gentile church*. It makes sense to us: In the Old Testament, God's people were largely Jews. But at Pentecost, the floodgates were burst open, so that now the nations have been included in God's plan of salvation. And at the same time, we know that the Jewish nation rejected their own Messiah; so it appears to us that God has given them over to the stubbornness of their ways; perhaps—we even think—fittingly so. And then, our own experience tends to validate these assumptions; because when we look at the church, it's predominately Gentile; and in fact, overwhelmingly so; to such an extent that it's a rare thing to even come across a Jewish believer in Christ. In Ephesians 3:1-10, Paul spoke about something that he referred to as *a mystery*; and the mystery was this: that *the Gentiles* have been grafted into the body of Christ. It's commonplace to us, but it would have been something astonishing and wonderful for Jews who were living in the days of the old covenant. Well, in Romans 11:25, Paul speaks about *another mystery*; and the mystery that he refers to *in this passage* has to do with *the Jews*. It will likely be just as astonishing and wonderful to us, but what Paul is going to share with us in Romans 11 is that *God isn't done with ethnic Israel*.³⁹

done away'; the New Testament's ministration is called, 'that which doth remain' [2 Corinthians 3:11].” (p1265). He also says: “This new covenant also is better in this respect, that it continues forever, from the death of Christ till the end of the world; forasmuch as Christ Jesus the Surety of this covenant, was made an everlasting Priest with an oath, whereof God will never repent: 'The Lord sware and will not repent, thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek; by so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better Testament.' Christ's New Testament priesthood is everlasting and unchangeable; consequently the New Testament itself is everlasting and unchangeable.” Roberts also applies the everlasting nature of God's covenant with us as a comfort in facing death. He writes: “the serious apprehensions of death approaching, sometimes perplex the children of God, fill them with fears, sadness, and discomfort. They had need therefore to store up choicest cordials against that hour. Now against death what cordial can more comfort and revive God's people than this; that the Lord is their God by his everlasting new covenant? . . . The Lord is still the God of his covenant people in death as well as in life; and in death they all live unto him. He is their God by an everlasting covenant, therefore he is their God forever; their God in life, their God in death, their God to all eternity. Death cannot disannul an everlasting covenant. . . After Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God's covenant people, had been dead and buried long ago, God told Moses out of the burning bush; 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. . . ' God's covenant with them lived still, though they were dead; and they were still his covenant people, and he their God. Even death dissolved not this covenant union and relation. . . What a comfort is this! The Lord will continue thy God in death, as well as life; in the grave, as well as in the land of the living.” (Roberts, pp1548-49).

³⁹ We're going to get into Romans 11 below and make our conclusions from the text itself. But at the outset, we also wanted to

TWO MYSTERIES INVOLVING GOD'S DEALINGS IN THE NEW COVENANT

	THE CONTENT OF THE MYSTERY	THE WONDER OF THE MYSTERY
EPHESIANS 3:1-10	Gentiles would also be co-heirs in the body of Christ	Common now but shocking in old covenant
ROMANS 11:25-26	Jews will yet again be co-heirs in the body of Christ	Common in old covenant but shocking now

A) EXPOSITING the TEXT: As we come to this passage in Romans 11, it would be good to begin with some context. Throughout chapters 9-10, Paul had been dealing with the **JEWS' REJECTION OF CHRIST**. In Romans 9, he writes: "What shall we say then? That *Gentiles*, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but *Israel*, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. . ." (vv30-32). And then later, in Romans 10, Paul quotes Moses and Isaiah as the Lord rebukes Israel and announces His future plan for including Gentiles: "Moses says, 'I will make you jealous by *that which is not a nation*, by a nation without understanding I will anger you.' And Isaiah is very bold and says, 'I was found by those who did not seek Me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me.' But as for *Israel* He says, 'All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.'" (10:19-21). This last passage, in fact, represents the final words that Paul speaks in *Romans 10*; and thus serves as the immediate context of *Romans 11*. But what's important for us to see in all these passages leading up to Romans 11 is that when Paul uses the term "Israel" in this context, *he's talking about ethnic Jews*.

provide a small sampling of quotes from significant theologians on this subject. To begin, Iain Murray shows this isn't a strange or outlandish teaching when he notes: "From the first quarter of the seventeenth century, belief in a future conversion of the Jews became commonplace among the English Puritans." (*The Puritan Hope*). Witsius says: "We may reckon among the benefits of the New Testament the restoration of the Israelites, who were formerly rejected, and the bringing them back to the communion of God in Christ." (V2, p413). And Vos writes: "The Jews for the most part apostatized, but they were not all put aside so that the Gentiles simply take their place. Rather, the Gentiles were grafted as branches on the domesticated olive tree to share in the rich oil of the covenant (Romans 11)." (V2, p135). And he concludes: "It seems to us that the conversion of Israel is clearly predicted. But that will not occur in order to make Israel a special nation and give it back its old separate position; that would be an anachronism in the days of the New Testament. Nor will it be in order to return the Jews to the holy land." (V5, p279). Vos asks, "Where is the conversion of the Jews spoken of as a sign of the end? In general, in all the prophecies of the Old Testament that speak of the apostasy and the return of the Jews; more specifically, in Zechariah 12 and Romans 11. Romans 11 speaks of a national conversion, that is, a conversion of the majority. . . what is meant is something as a whole, something national. . ." (V5, p279). Interestingly, Vos later addresses why some are fearful to embrace this doctrine: "What makes the treatment of the further details of this conversion [of ethnic Israel] so difficult? Because for one thing it has been associated with the anticipated return of the Jews to the Holy Land, for another with the millennial kingdom. This already happened quite early (Justin, Irenaeus). In reaction, the opponents of chiliasm have not infrequently denied the general conversion of the Jews (e.g. Augustine)." (V5, p279). Jonathan Edwards asserts: "Nothing is more certainly foretold than this national conversion of the Jews is in the eleventh chapter of Romans. And there are also many passages of the Old Testament that cannot be interpreted in any other sense, that I cannot now stand to mention. Besides the prophecies of the calling of the Jews, we have a remarkable seal of the fulfillment of this great event in providence by a thing that is a kind of continual miracle, [namely] their being preserved a distinct nation in such a dispersed condition for above sixteen hundred years. The world affords nothing else like it. There is undoubtedly a remarkable hand of providence in it. When they shall be called, then shall that ancient people that were alone God's people for so long a time be God's people again, never to be rejected more; they shall then be gathered into one fold together with the Gentiles; and so also shall the remains of the ten tribes wherever they be, and though they have been rejected much longer than the Jews, be brought in with their brethren, the Jews. The prophecies of Hosea especially seem to hold this forth, that in the future glorious times of the church both Judah and Ephraim, or Judah and the ten tribes, shall be brought in together, and shall be united as one people as they formerly were under David and Solomon as [in] Hosea 1:11, and so in the last chapter of Hosea, and other parts of his prophecy. Though we do not know the time in which this conversion of the nation of Israel will come to pass, yet thus much we may determine by Scripture, that it will be before the glory of the Gentile part of the church shall be fully accomplished; because it is said that their coming in shall be life from the dead to the Gentiles (Romans 11:12,15)." (*History of Redemption*). And Spurgeon says: "I think we do not attach sufficient importance to the restoration of the Jews. We do not think enough of it. But certainly, if there is anything promised in the Bible it is this. I imagine that you cannot read the Bible without seeing clearly that there is to be an actual restoration of the children of Israel. 'Thither they shall go up; they shall come with weeping unto Zion, and with supplications unto Jerusalem.' May that happy day soon come! For when the Jews are restored, then the fullness of the Gentiles shall be gathered in; and as soon as they return, then Jesus will come upon Mount Zion to reign with his ancients gloriously, and the halcyon days of the Millennium shall then dawn; we shall then know every man to be a brother and a friend; Christ shall rule with universal sway." (*Sermons, VI, 1855*). And Charles Hodge writes: "As the rejection of the Jews was not total, so neither is it final. . . The future restoration of the Jews is, in itself, a more probable event than the introduction of the Gentiles into the church of God." (*Romans*). We'll also be quoting others, such as Matthew Henry, John Gill, Roberts, and Haldane; along with more recent authors such as Douglas Moo. For a helpful summary of this subject, see Witsius' *The Restoration of the Jews*.

This is where we pick up with Romans 11, where Paul's main object in *verses 1-10* is to show us that **THE JEWS' REJECTION OF CHRIST IS NOT TOTAL**. He begins in verse 1 with an emphatic *declaration*: “I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!” (cf. v2a). Paul goes on to use himself as a living *attestation* of this very truth: “For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.” (vv1b-2). Again, it's clear from what Paul's saying here that he's talking about ethnic Israel; and he proceeds to set forth an *illustration* of the same truth from the Old Testament: “Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? ‘Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.’ But what is the divine response to him? ‘I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’” (vv2-4). Elijah thought he was the only one left in Israel who believed in the Lord during a time of great apostasy. If he was killed, it seemed faith in the Lord would vanish entirely. But God's response to Elijah showed that however bad things might get in Israel, the Lord himself was preserving a remnant of Israelite believers. Paul concludes with this *application*: “In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.” (verse 5). In other words, Paul's telling us that the situation today in Israel is just like it was in Elijah's day. It may have seemed like there were no believers in Israel during that time—but God was at work all the while, behind the scenes, preserving a remnant for himself. And He's doing the same thing today. That's Paul's whole point here in this first section of Romans 11. The Jews' rejection of Christ is not total, because God is at work, behind the scenes, preserving for himself a remnant. Paul does end this section with a final *clarification*, in verses 6-10, that the vast majority of Israelites are still indeed hardened. But even in the midst of this general hardening, God is preserving His remnant.⁴⁰

ROMANS 11:1-10: THE JEWS' REJECTION OF CHRIST IS *NOT TOTAL*

	WHAT SCRIPTURE DECLARES IN ROMANS 11:1-10	REFERENCE
PAUL'S DECLARATION	“I say then, God has not rejected His people. . .”	Rom.11:1-2
PAUL'S ATTESTATION	“For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham. . .”	Rom.11:1
PAUL'S ILLUSTRATION	“Or do you not know what the Scripture says. . .about Elijah?”	Rom.11:2-4
PAUL'S APPLICATION	“In the same way. . .there has also come to be at the present time a remnant”	Rom.11:5
PAUL'S CLARIFICATION	“What then? . . .those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened”	Rom.11:6ff

But that's not all. Paul's aim isn't just to tell us that God has an elect remnant among the Jews. It's not until the second part of the chapter that we get to the surprise ending; because what we're going to see is that just as the Jews' rejection of Christ is not total; it's also true that **THE JEWS' REJECTION OF CHRIST IS NOT FINAL**. As we get into this second part of the passage, it might be helpful to see that Romans 11 is structured around two questions; which, in turn, naturally divide the text into two distinct sections. In verse 1, Paul had asked: “*I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!*” Well, as we get to verse 11, Paul asks a second question: “*I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be!*” He's referring to ethnic Jews, as a whole; for though God has a remnant among them, the great majority of them are hardened. Well, here in this second question, Paul's asking whether or not they did *stumble so as to fall*. In other words, he's asking if this hardening is going to last—if this is the end for Israel—if they've fallen for good—if they've stumbled in such a way that they'll never rise again. And Paul's answer is an emphatic, *no*. Let that sink in: Paul's telling us that though Israel has stumbled, becoming hardened as a nation; *it won't be the final word*.⁴¹

⁴⁰ As Thomas Blake notes from this passage: “[The Apostle limits] this doctrine of [the Jews'] rejection. . . *That it was not total*. . . That it was not total, he first asserts, secondly proves. Asserts, verse 1, ‘I say then, has God cast away his people? God forbid.’ Proves by a threefold argument: 1) By instance in himself, verse 1: ‘For I am also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin,’ and he does not dispute for his own rejection. 2) By instance in the elect of God, verse 2: ‘God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.’ 3) From a parallel Scripture out of 1 Kings 18, which parallel he first lays down, verses 2-4. . . And afterward applies, verse 5: ‘Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.’ And so falls into a digression concerning grace and works (verses 6-11).” (*Treatise of the Covenant of God*, p324).

⁴¹ On Romans 11:11, Hodge says, “This verse begins with the same formula as the first verse of the chapter, and for the same reason. As there the apostle wished to have it understood that the rejection of God's ancient people was not entire, so here he teaches that this rejection is not final.” And Haldane writes on Romans 11:11: “Having proved that God had not cast away His people, by referring to the fact that even then a remnant, according to the election of grace, was preserved, Paul supports his denial of their rejection by the consideration that in process of time the whole nation shall be restored. This restoration, as

ROMANS 11:11-27: THE JEWS' REJECTION OF CHRIST IS *NOT FINAL*

	THE TWO QUESTIONS	THE TRUE MEANING
ROMANS 11:1	"God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!"	The Jews' rejection of Christ is <i>not total</i>
ROMANS 11:11	"they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be!"	The Jews' rejection of Christ is <i>not final</i>

Verses 11-16 show us *there was a design in Israel's hardening*, but it wasn't to cast Israel away. Rather, as Paul says in verse 11: "But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles. . ." In other words, God had a design in giving the Jewish nation over to stumbling; but that design was never that they would stumble so as to fall—it was that by their stumbling the Gentiles might be saved. They've been hardened, to be sure. But that hardening came for a purpose—and it's to end in recovery. Paul is going to get back to the Jews' recovery in verses 25-26, but before he can talk more about the Jews, he knows he needs to address us as Gentiles. He doesn't want us to become arrogant about the way things have become in the church; and so, in verses 17-24, *Paul sets forth for us a lesson from Israel's hardening*. The church is like an olive tree: Abraham is the root; his descendants are the branches. Some of those branches were broken off; they represent ethnic Jews. Other branches were grafted in among the others, taken from wild olives; they represent the Gentiles. And Paul's urging his Gentile audience not to be arrogant; because, first of all, they're growing as branches on a Jewish tree, not the other way around (vv17-18). And secondly, they're grafted into this tree by faith, and so they ought to fear; for if God didn't spare the natural branches—but cut them off for their unbelief—then He won't spare us either (vv19-22). Paul then closes this section by coming back to the Jews; and this is what he says: Not only is the Lord able to cut off Gentile branches because of their unbelief; He's also able to graft the natural ones back in. For, as Paul tells us, if the wild branches can be grafted in "contrary to nature," how much more "will the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?" (vv23-24).⁴²

ROMANS 11:11-24: WHAT WE LEARN FROM ISRAEL'S HARDENING

	THE SUBJECT OF THE TEXT	THE SUBSTANCE OF THE TEXT
ROMANS 11:11-16	<i>The design</i> in Israel's hardening	Israel didn't stumble so as to fall—but <i>that the Gentiles might be saved</i>
ROMANS 11:17-24	<i>The lesson</i> in Israel's hardening	God can cut off the wild branches—or <i>graft back in the natural ones</i>

If Paul had stopped there, we would've been left with the impression that God is very able to graft the Jewish people back into the new covenant church. But we would have been left wondering whether or not that was something God was actually going to do. Thankfully, Paul *doesn't* stop there. Right after he tells us in verses 23-24 that God is able to graft the natural branches back into their own tree,

has been already remarked, forms the subject of nearly the whole remainder of the chapter." And again: "*I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall?*" . . . the Apostles own question. . . naturally springs out of the declaration made in the four preceding verses concerning the blindness of those called 'the rest,' in contradistinction to the remnant comprehended in the election. The question is, 'Has the great body of the Jewish nation stumbled, that they should fall forever, and is this the purpose of their fall?' Paul replies with a strong negative. Nothing was further from the purpose of God with respect to His ancient people. They had stumbled. . . but still it was but a temporary stumbling, from which the nation will finally recover."

⁴² As Hodge says on Romans 11:11: "The particle *hina*, "that," here as usually, expresses design. Have the Jews stumbled, in order that they should fall? . . . Was it the design of God, in permitting the stumbling of the Jews, that they should finally perish? In other words, was their rejection designed to be a permanent casting them out of the kingdom of Christ?" (Paul supplies the obvious answer here: *May it never be!*). And Haldane says: "God had a double purpose in [Israel's hardening]. His design in their stumbling was not that they should fall forever, but rather that through their fall salvation should come to the Gentiles, and that, through this, the nation of Israel might ultimately receive the Messiah." Blake writes: "[The Apostle limits] this doctrine of [the Jews'] rejection with a double caution: I. That it was not total; II. That it was not final. . . He speaks to the Gentiles, and to take down their [exaltation] over the Jews, he shows that this rejection of theirs is not final. And this, as the former, is: 1) *Asserted*, verse 11: 'I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? ([namely], irrecoverably fall) God forbid.' 2) *Proved* by giving account of a twofold end of this rejection of the Jews: A) The call of the Gentiles, verse 12: 'But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for the provoke them to jealousy.' B) A more glorious return of the Jews, in emulation of the Gentiles, verse 12: 'Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?' Hereupon he falls upon a large discourse of his zeal toward them, and their re-ingrafting (verses 13-15). . ." On verses 17-24, Roberts says: "The Jews, the *natural branches* of the *good olive-tree*, were some of them first broken off through unbelief; before the Gentiles, the *branches of the olive-tree wild by nature*, were grafted in, in their stead by faith (their fall being the Gentiles' rise, their diminution the riches of the Gentiles, and their casting away the reconciling of the world). Nor were the Jews totally and finally broken off, but only *till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*, that the salvation of the Gentiles may provoke the Jews to jealousy, and at last all Israel may be saved." (p1298).

this is what Paul says in Romans 11:25-26: “For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; *and so all Israel will be saved*. . .” Before we unpack what Paul is saying here, we need to address two other misguided views of this passage: First, there are some who contend that though Paul is using the term “Israel” in verse 25 to speak of ethnic Jews, he’s using that same term “Israel” in verse 26 [IE, “all Israel”] to speak of *mystical Israel*; that is, God’s people as a whole, made up of both Jew and Gentile alike. This interpretation requires a bit of exegetical gymnastics; changing “until” to “in order that,” so that the passage now says: “a measure of hardening has happened to the Jews *in order that* the fullness of the Gentiles might come in; that all God’s people, Jew and Gentile, will be saved.” Aside from having to depart from the plain reading of the text, this interpretation falls short because of *the context of the passage*. As one writer points out: “In these three chapters (Romans 9-11) the term ‘Israel’ occurs no less than eleven times. And in the preceding ten cases it refers indisputably to the Jews, in contrast with the Gentiles. What compelling reason can there be. . .to accept another meaning here?” And not only is the context *before* verse 26 compelling; but even immediately *afterwards*, in verse 28, Paul’s still talking about the Jews. This view also falls short because of *the purpose of the passage*. Remember, the whole reason Paul is writing all this is to humble the Gentiles (vv18,25); but the notion that God had hardened the Jews in order to make way for the Gentiles would actually serve to do the opposite—kindling their pride all the more. A second view of this passage understands “all Israel” in verse 26 as indeed referring to the Jews, but specifically, to the small remnant of elect Jews that God would preserve throughout time. This view also requires some exegetical gymnastics; but this time it involves changing “and so” to “nevertheless” in verse 26; so that the passage reads: “a measure of hardening has indeed happened to the Jews until the very end; *nevertheless*, all of God’s elect from among the Jews will be saved.” Aside from having to depart, once again, from the plain reading of the text, this view also falls short; this time, because of *the subject of the passage*. In verse 25, Paul describes what he’s about to share with us as a profound mystery; but is there really anything “mysterious” about the fact that God is saving a small number of elect Jews? This view also falls short because it fails to fit with *the logic of the passage*. There’s a clear connection between verse 25 and what Paul had said just prior to that; and in verses 23-24, Paul isn’t talking about preserving the branches that remain—but grafting back in the ones which were cut off.⁴³

⁴³ The quote is from Iain Murray’s, *The Puritan Hope*, pp62-63. Calvin was, in fact, a proponent of the *Mystical Israel* view, as is evident from his commentary on Romans 11:25. The *Remnant of Israel* view, as Iain Murray explains, “was apparently common in the early seventeenth century, but it was almost uniformly rejected by English and Scottish exegetes of the Puritan school.” (p64). Murray himself expositis much of Romans 11 in a helpful way (cf. pp59-72). Charles Hodge writes: “1) Many understand the apostle as not predicting any remarkable future conversion of the Jewish nation, but merely declaring that the hardening or blinding of the nation, was not such as to prevent many Jews entering the Christian church, as long as the Gentiles continued to come in. Thus all the true Israel, embracing Jews as well as Gentiles, should ultimately be saved. 2) The second general view supposes the apostle, on the contrary, to predict a great and general conversion of the Jewish people, which should take place when the fullness of the Gentiles had been brought in, and that then, and not till then, those prophecies should be fully accomplished which speak of the salvation of Israel. The former of these views was presented, in different forms, by the great body of the authors who lived about the time of the Reformation; who were led by the extravagancies of the Millenarians, who built much on this passage, to explain away its prophetic character almost entirely. . .The second view has been the one generally received in every age of the church, with the exception of the period just referred to.” (Romans 11:25). And Witsius says: “From what we have said before, it appears, that they depart from the apostle’s meaning, who, by *all Israel*, understand the *mystical Israel*, or the people of God, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, without admitting the conversion of the whole Jewish nation to Christ, in the sense we have mentioned. Notwithstanding this may be confirmed by the following arguments: 1) *First*: The apostle speaks of that Israel, to whom he ascribes his own pedigree (verse 1) whom he calls his flesh, that is, his kindred (verse 14) and the natural branches (verse 21) whom he constantly distinguishes from the Gentiles; to whom he testifies, blindness is happened. All this is applicable to Israel properly so called. 2) *Secondly*: He lays before us a mystery; but it was no mystery that a very few Jews were converted to Christ together with the Gentiles; for we have daily instances of that. 3) *Thirdly*: He reminds the Gentiles not to exult over, or despise the Jews, from this argument, that, as they themselves were now taken in among the people of God, so, in like manner, the Jews were in due time to be taken in again. But if the apostle meant, that the body of the Jewish nation was to continue in their hardness; and but a few of them to be saved, who, joined to the Gentiles, should form a mystical Israel, the whole of that discourse would be more adapted to the commendation of the Gentiles than of the Israelites; and encourage rather than repress the pride of the Gentiles. 4) *Fourthly*: As the fall and diminishing of Israel (verse 12) and their casting away (verse 15) are to be understood; so likewise the receiving and saving them; for here the rules of a just opposition must be observed. But the fall, diminishing, and casting away of Israel are to be understood of the generality of the Jewish nation; therefore the receiving and saving of Israel in like manner.” (V2, pp414-15). And the ESV Study Bible provides this helpful summary: “Various interpreters have claimed that Paul is speaking of: 1) the salvation of the church of Jesus Christ, both Jews and Gentiles, throughout history; or 2) the saving of a remnant of Jews throughout history; or 3) the salvation of the end-time generation of the Jewish people in the future. The first view is unlikely since throughout chapters 9-11 Israel and Gentiles are distinct ethnic entities. Furthermore, in 11:25 Israel refers to ethnic

EXAMINING THE TWO MISTAKEN VIEWS OF ROMANS 11:25-26

	TAKE ROMANS 11:25 AS SAYING	TAKE "ALL ISRAEL" AS MEANING
MYSTICAL "ISRAEL"	The Jews were hardened <i>so as the Gentiles will be saved</i>	God's elect people, Jew and Gentile alike
REMNANT of ISRAEL	The Jews were hardened <i>and yet their elect will be saved</i>	Small number of elect Jews through time

In verses 23-24, Paul had spoken of *the possibility* of Israel as a nation being grafted back in to God's new covenant church. In verses 25-26, he's declaring *the certainty* of it. Way back in verse 11, Paul had asked if God was finished with Israel; and he had answered with an emphatic, *no*: "May it never be!" But as it's often the case with Paul, he got a bit sidetracked along the way as he sought to provide a fuller explanation. In verses 11-16, he felt the need to explain that even Israel's present hardening is indeed part of God's sovereign design to extend salvation to the nations. And then in verses 17-24, having just spoken of God's plan to include the nations, Paul felt the need to address us as Gentiles; reminding us that we've been grafted into a Jewish tree, and we're only here by faith; and that God is not only able to cut off the wild branches because of unbelief—but also to graft the natural ones back in again. This is the context of Paul's words in Romans 11:25-26: "*For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved. . .*" The "partial hardening" is the present situation among ethnic Jews; it's partial because God still has His remnant among them, even now; but it's the majority who are hardened. However, as Paul tells us, this hardening that has happened to Israel, will only continue "until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. . ." at which point, "all Israel will be saved." In other words, presently, God is indeed at work primarily among the Gentiles; but there is a future time coming when "the fullness of the Gentiles" will be reached. And Paul's telling us that when that happens, "all Israel will be saved." Who is "all Israel"? It's the same Israel he's been talking about over the course of Romans 9-11; it's ethnic Jews as a whole; corporately; as a nation. Presently, there's a remnant of Jews who have come to faith in Christ, but by and large, Israel as a nation has rejected Him. Well, just as Israel as a nation has rejected Him until now—Paul's telling us—Israel as a nation will return to Him once again. Paul's not saying that every Jew who has ever lived will ultimately be saved; he's not talking about some kind of universal salvation for the Jews—but rather—that there's a time coming when ethnic Jews will repent of their sins, return to the Lord, and put their faith in Christ. Paul's also not telling us that when this happens, every single Jew will be brought to salvation. But just as by and large, the Jewish nation has rejected their Messiah; the time is coming that by and large, the Jewish nation will turn back to Him.⁴⁴

Israel, and it is difficult to see how the referent could suddenly change in verse 26. Finally, verse 28 indicates that ethnic Israel is still distinguished from the Gentiles, for 'they' in verse 28 clearly refers to ethnic Israel. The third view, that Paul refers to the salvation of Israel at the end of history, seems most likely because: 1) it fits with the promises of God's future work in verses 12 and 15; 2) it is difficult to see how the salvation of a remnant of Jews all through history would qualify as a mystery; 3) the future salvation of ethnic Israel at the end of history accords with the climactic character of this passage; and 4) it demonstrates finally and fully how God is faithful to fulfill his saving promises to his people (9:6). 'All Israel does not necessarily refer to every single Jewish person but to a very large number, at least the majority of Jews.' (*ESV Study Bible* on Romans 11:26).

⁴⁴ As Witsius notes: "We may reckon among the benefits of the New Testament the restoration of the Israelites, who were formerly rejected, and the bringing them back to the communion of God in Christ. Paul has unfolded this mystery to the Gentiles, Romans 11:25-27. . . On this place observe, 1) *First*: That the apostle here explains some *mystery*; that is, a secret thing, not known but by revelation, and taken notice of by few, and happening beyond the expectation and judgment of reason; [in sum], the whole method and manner of executing which, lies in a great measure concealed. . . 2) *Secondly*: That it is the interest of the Gentiles to be acquainted with this mystery, to prevent their entertaining higher thoughts concerning themselves, and lower concerning the Israelites. . . 3) *Thirdly*: The apostle here speaks of the people of Israel, not figuratively but properly so called; who were at this time blind, obdurate, stupid, and hardened, of which [in] verse 7 Isaiah foretold this judgment of God against Israel at large [cf. Isaiah 29:10-11]. . . In short, this is that forlorn condition of the blinded nation of the Jews, which taking its rise in the apostles' time, continues to this our day. 4) *Fourthly*: That this blindness is *in part* happened to Israel. The whole nation, from its first origin even to the end of the world, is considered as one whole; a certain part of which are those, who either have, or now do, or hereafter shall live in the days of the wrath and indignation of God; blindness has seized that part only. 5) *Fifthly*: That blindness is to continue upon them no longer, than till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. . . Which indeed, began to be done by the apostles and their fellow-laborers; but could not be done perfectly. . . This therefore still remains to be done successively. . . The offer of grace was first made to the Israelites. When they refused it, it was sent to the Gentiles; but when the fulness of them shall be brought in, it will be again given to the Israelites. . . 6) *Sixthly*: That when the fulness of the Gentiles is brought in, all Israel shall be saved; that is, as our Dutch commentators well observe, not a few, but a very great number, and in a manner the whole Jewish nation, in a full body." (Witsius, V2, pp413-14). And Hodge writes: "The second general view supposes the apostle. . . to predict a great and general conversion of the Jewish people, which should take place when the fullness of the Gentiles had been brought in, and that then,

THE JEWS' RESTORATION TO CHRIST WILL BE CORPORATE: ROMANS 11:25-26

THE PRESENT	Israel as a nation has rejected Christ	Only a small number of Jews are saved	The harvesting of Gentiles
THE PROMISE	Israel as a nation will embrace Him	Only a small number of Jews won't be	A re-harvesting of the Jews

This brings us back to verses 11-16, where we'll close our study of this passage. Notice what Paul says in verses 12 and 15 as he talks about Israel's hardening and restoration: "Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! . . . For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" What Paul says here is important, first of all, because it serves as a confirmation of our interpretation of verses 25-26. Notice that it's the very group of people who had *rebelled* that are now being *received*; it's the same ones who had *rejected* the Lord that are now being *readmitted*. For

and not till then, those prophecies should be fully accomplished which speak of the salvation of Israel. . . [This] second view has been the one generally received in every age of the church. . . That it is the correct interpretation, appears evident for the following reasons: [1] The whole context and drift of the apostle's discourse is in its favor. In the preceding part of the chapter, Paul, in the plainest terms, had taught that the conversion of the Jews was a probable event, and that it would be in the highest degree beneficial and glorious for the whole world. . . [2] It is evident that Paul meant to say, that the Jews were to be restored in the sense in which they were then rejected. They were then rejected not merely as individuals, but as a community, and therefore are to be restored as a community; see verses 11, 15. . . [3] It is plain from this and other parts of the discourse, that Paul refers to a great event; something which should attract universal attention. . . [4] The gradual conversion of a few Jews is no mystery, in the scriptural sense of the word. . . [5] The words, *all Israel*, in the next verse, cannot, as the first interpretation mentioned above would require, be understood of the *spiritual* Israel; because the word is just before used in a different sense, 'blindness in part has happened unto Israel'. . . [6] The words [*akhris hou*] correctly rendered in our version, *until*, cannot, so consistently with usage, be translated, *as long as*, or *so that*, followed as they are here by the aorist subjunctive; see Revelation 15:8; 17:17; compare Hebrews 3:13. . . [7] The following verses seem to require this interpretation. The result contemplated is one which shall be a full accomplishment of those prophecies which predicted the salvation of the Jews. The reason given in verses 28-29, for the event to which Paul refers, is the unchangeableness of God's purposes and covenant. . . From all these considerations, it seems obvious that Paul intended here to predict that the time would come when the Jews, as a body, should be converted unto the Lord. . ." (Hodge on Romans 11:25). Haldane notes on Romans 11:25: "Having in the two preceding verses exhibited first the *possibility*, and next the *probability*, of the restoration of the Jews, according to the order of God's providence, the Apostle, in this and the following verses, down to the 28th, goes on to prove the *certainly* of the future conversion and restoration of Israel. He here addresses the Gentiles as his brethren, thus expressing his affection for them, and stimulates their attention, by declaring that he was about the reveal to them a mystery—a thing hitherto hidden or unknown. The restoration of the Jews is called a mystery, for though declared in the Scriptures, it was not understood. And in this mystery there were two parts, both of which are here unfolded; first, that blindness is happened to Israel in part only; and, secondly, that this blindness should continue till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. This mystery was opened to prevent the Gentiles from being wise in their own conceits, that is, from being puffed up on account of the preference they now enjoyed." And again on verse 26: "Here the Apostle further unfolds the mystery of which he would not have his brethren to be ignorant. In the foregoing verse he had declared that blindness had come upon Israel—that blindness which he had before shown was inflicted on part of the Jewish nation by the judgment of God (verses 8-10), which would continue till a certain period was accomplished. He now declares that at that period all Israel shall be saved. The rejection of Israel has been general, but at no period universal. This rejection is to continue till the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in. Then the people of Israel, as a body, shall be brought to the faith of the Gospel." Matthew Henry writes: "The Jews shall continue in blindness, till God has performed his whole work among the Gentiles, and then their turn will come next to be remembered. This was the purpose and ordination of God, for wise and holy ends; things should not be ripe for the Jews' conversion till the church was replenished with the Gentiles, that it might appear that God's taking them again was not because he had need of them, but of his own free grace. . . *All Israel shall be saved*, verse 26. *He will have mercy upon all*, verse 32. Not every individual person, but the body of the people. Not that ever they should be restored to their covenant of peculiarity again, to have their priesthood, and temple, and ceremonies again (an end is put to all those things); but they should be brought to believe in Christ the true Messiah whom they crucified, and be incorporated in the Christian church, and become one sheep-fold with the Gentiles under Christ the great Shepherd." (Haldane on Romans 11:26). And Gill affirms: "*And so all Israel shall be saved*: Meaning not the mystical spiritual Israel of God, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, who shall appear to be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, when all God's elect among the latter are gathered in, which is the sense many give into; but the people of the Jews, the generality of them, the body of that nation, called 'the fulness' of them (Romans 11:12), and relates to the latter day, when a nation of them shall be born again at once; when, their number being as the sand of the sea, they shall come up out of the lands where they are dispersed, and appoint them one head, Christ, and great shall be the day of Jezreel; when they as a body, even the far greater part of them that shall be in being, shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their King; shall acknowledge Jesus to be the true Messiah, and shall look to him, believe on him, and be saved by him from wrath to come." (Romans 11:26). And Moo likewise concludes: "Israel's present hostility toward God, manifested in her general refusal of the gospel (cf. 9:30-10:21), is itself part of God's plan, for it is the result of God's act of hardening. . . But this hardening is both limited ('partially' in v25b; cf. 11:3-7) and temporary ('until' in v25b), designed both to allow Gentiles to 'come in' (vv25b, 30; cf. 11:11-15) and to stimulate Israel herself to repentance (v31; cf. 11:11). . . [God's] faithfulness [to Israel] presently takes the form of a preservation of a remnant (11:3-6). But in the future God's unwavering commitment to Israel will be spectacularly revealed in the salvation of the nation as a whole (v26a)." (Moo, *Romans*, p713).

just as it was the Jewish nation, as a whole, that stumbled and became hardened; it's the Jewish nation, as a whole, that will, one day, return and be restored. Indeed, the partial hardening that's come upon ethnic Israel isn't the end of the story. But notice, secondly, that their restoration isn't the end of the story, either. Look at the logic that Paul's using in verses 12 and 15: If Israel's *rebellion* led to riches for the world—then how much more their *reception*? And if Israel's rejection led to reconciliation for the world—then what will their acceptance be but *life from the dead*? Do you see what Paul's saying? Not only is God going to restore the Jews—but when He does so—it's going to unleash unprecedented blessing upon the nations *all over again*; to such an extent that the work God is doing now among the nations will only pale in comparison. Paul is talking about conversions; he's talking about awakening; he's talking about revival blessings that are so rich, we can only dream about them. But how does he know all this? We're given a hint in verses 26-27, where Paul quotes a passage from Isaiah, applying it to the restoration of the Jews. The passage comes from the very end of *Isaiah 59*, and according to Paul, it describes the corporate repentance of Israel as a nation. But we shouldn't stop reading there, because *Isaiah 60* is the amazing account of what will transpire afterwards: “Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes round about and see; they all gather together, they come to you. . . A multitude of camels will cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba will come. . . All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered together to you, the rams of Nebaioth will minister to you; they will go up with acceptance on My altar, and I shall glorify My glorious house.” (Isaiah 60:3-7). The names are significant; for *Midian*, *Sheba*, and *Ephah* were all sons of Abraham's concubine Keturah; whom he sent away to the east (Genesis 25:1-6). Do these make up the vast populations of Buddhists and Hindus living in Asia? Further, Kedar and Nebaioth were the sons of Ishmael (Genesis 25:12-13); *Nebaioth* was his firstborn, yet Muslim tradition traces the ancestry of their prophet to Adnan, who is claimed to be a descendant of *Kedar*. Could it be that there are certain breakthroughs in our missional and evangelistic efforts that will only come following the time of the restoration of the Jews? It's difficult to know. But what is certain is that those days will be so full of blessing and outpouring, that Paul can only describe them as “life from the dead. . .”⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Witsius speaks of both an *intensiveness* and *extent* in the phrase “life from the dead” in Romans 11:15. He says, “Lastly, to this restoration of Israel shall be joined the riches of the whole church, and as it were, life from the dead [cf. Romans 11:12,15] . . . The apostle intimates, that much greater and more extensive benefits shall redound to the Christian church from the fulness and restoration of the Jews, than did to the Gentiles, from their fall and diminution; greater, I say, *intensively*, or with respect to degrees, and larger with respect to *extent*. As to the intensiveness or degrees, it is supposed, that, about the time of the conversion of the Jews, the Gentile world will be like a dead person, in a manner almost as Christ describes the church of Sardis (Revelation 3:1-2), namely, both that light of saving knowledge, and that fervent piety, and that lively and vigorous simplicity of ancient Christianity, will, in a course of years, be very much impaired. . . but upon the restoration of the Jews, these will suddenly arise, as out of the grave; a new light will shine upon them, a new zeal be kindled up; the life of Christ be again manifested in his mystical body, more lively, perhaps, and vigorous than ever. Then, doubtless, many Scripture prophecies will after their accomplishment, be better understood, and such as now appear dark riddles, shall then be found to contain a most distinct description of facts; many candles joined together give a greater light; a new fire laid near another, gives a greater heat. And such will the accession of the Jews be to the church of the Gentiles.” (V2, p419). And again: “And not only so, but also many nations, among whom the name of Christ had long before been forgotten, shall be seen to flock again to the standard of salvation then erected. For there is a certain fulness of the Gentiles, to be gathered together by the successive preaching of the gospel, which goes *before* the restoration of Israel, of which verse 25 [speaks], and another richness of the Gentiles, that comes *after* the recovery of Israel. For, while the gospel, for many ages, was published now to this, then to that nation, others gradually departed from Christ; but when the fulness of the Jews is come, it is altogether probable, that these nations will in great numbers, return to Christ. . . Agreeably to which James has said [in] Acts 15:15-17, 'And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, after this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doth all these things.' The reparation of the fallen tabernacle of David signifies the restoration of true and spiritual worship among the Israelites. And when that shall come to pass, the rest of mankind, who never gave up their names to Christ, and the nations, upon whom his name was formerly called, but who, by their thoughtlessness, lost the benefit of the gospel, will then with emulation seek the Lord. And what is more evident than that prophecy in Isaiah? The prophet, [in] chapter 59:20-21, having foretold the restoration of Israel according to the apostle's commentary, immediately, [in] chapter 60:1, exclaims, 'Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee.' [And] verse 3, 'and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising,' etc. Moreover, the riches of the church at that time are described [in] verse 17, 'for brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron'; the most magnificent words to the same purpose, follow these. . . We have not indeed, the least doubt, that there are many prophecies both in the Old and New Testament to this purpose, the full meaning of which we ardently pray the supreme Being may teach his people by the event, the only undoubted interpreter of prophecies.” (Witsius, V2, pp419-21). And John Murray notes on Romans 11:12: “the fullness of Israel will involve for the Gentiles a much greater enjoyment of gospel blessing than that occasioned by Israel's unbelief. Thus here awaits the Gentiles, in their distinctive identity as such, gospel blessing far surpassing anything experienced during the period of Israel's apostasy, and this unprecedented enrichment will be occasioned by the conversion of Israel on a scale commensurate with that of their earlier disobedience.”

THE JEWS' RESTORATION TO CHRIST WILL BE GLORIOUS: ROMANS 11:11-16

THE PRESENT	Israel's Rejection	<i>A blessing for the nations</i>	Did result in "riches for the world...riches for the Gentiles"
THE PROMISE	Israel's Reception		Will result in unprecedented time of "life from the dead"

B) RECOLLECTING the PAST: As we've seen, Scripture explicitly testifies to these things. But the restoration of ethnic Israel isn't only something that's *foretold* in passages such as Romans 11; it's also something that's *fore-pictured* throughout the Old Testament Scriptures: Think about **THE STORY OF JOSEPH**. His own kinsman hated him and were jealous of him, and so they sold him away into the hands of Gentile foreigners; and they thought they had done away with him. But even as Joseph's brothers were plotting against him for evil—God was plotting for the salvation of the world. For while they tried to pretend he was dead, Joseph was very much alive; and indeed, he had become Prince in a foreign land, among a foreign people. For all authority was given to him, and a people who did not know him gladly bowed the knee to him; and while his brothers tried to forget about him, Joseph was literally off, saving the world. For a great famine had swept across the whole earth; and even the land of Israel had nothing to eat; indeed, the only place there was bread was where Joseph was, among the Gentiles. And truly, the whole reason Joseph's brothers in Israel were starving while the nations were feasting on bread, was that they had forsaken their brother, who was the only source of bread. And though Joseph could have sent for them during this time; yet he chose to hide himself in Egypt—that is—*until the time came when his brothers returned to him*. We're well acquainted with the story now, but before this actually happened, it would have been shocking to us. We wouldn't have expected it. We would have thought the story would end here, with Joseph as the exalted Prince of the Gentiles; but it doesn't; because God was purposing not only to save the world—but also to reconcile Joseph's brothers to himself. And so, a time came during the course of the famine that Joseph's own kinsmen according to the flesh also came, along with the other nations, to where he was in Egypt. And when the right moment came, Joseph revealed himself to them; and they acknowledged their iniquity; and they were reconciled to him; and indeed, as a result, *all Israel* came down to live with him in Egypt.

SEEING THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS IN THE STORY OF JOSEPH

	REJECTION	EXALTATION	RESTORATION
JOSEPH IN GENESIS	Joseph's kinsman rejected him	He was made prince over all Egypt	His kinsman did return to him
ISRAEL IN ROMANS	The Jews have rejected Christ	Salvation has come to the Gentiles	Israel will yet repent and return

And think back again to **ISRAEL'S EXILE AND RESTORATION**. When God had cast Israel out of their land, it seemed that this was truly the end. God had finally had enough, and now it was time for judgment. Everything was torn away from them: The Davidic king was dethroned; the temple was burned to the ground; and they themselves were cast away from the land that God had promised to their forefathers. God was done with them forever. At least, *so it seemed*. But He wasn't done with them forever. It wasn't true. This wasn't the end of the story for Israel; for, as the prophets declared, though God was sending judgment, He would "not execute a complete destruction" (Jeremiah 4:27) upon them, but preserve "a remnant within them" (Isaiah 10:20-21). Indeed, *God would preserve a remnant*. And not only that, but the prophets went on to proclaim that a day was coming when God would bring Israel back into the land once again. And so, not only would the Lord spare a remnant; *He would also grant restoration*. In other words: *the exile wouldn't be total*, for God would preserve a remnant; and *the exile wouldn't be final*, for though Israel had been cut off from the land, God was going to graft them back in once again. Does this sound familiar? It's exactly what Paul had just told us about ethnic Israel in Romans 11. Have they been hardened? Yes. But their hardening *isn't total*, for God is preserving a remnant among them. Have they been cut off as branches? Yes. But *it's not the final word*, for God will cause them to return once again. When Israel was cast away to Babylon, they were like dead men in their graves. Their situation was so hopeless they were likened to corpses buried in the ground. Today, Israel's situation is no better; but we serve a God who *raises the dead*.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ This parallel isn't an original thought. Francis Roberts put it this way: "The Jews' captivity and dead hopeless condition in Babylon, as also their strange resurrection out of their graves there by a wonderful deliverance; seem to shadow out the spiritual bondage and misery of the Jews during all the time of their breaking off from Christ by unbelief, and also of their restoration, and re-implantation of them again into Christ by faith, *which shall be as life from the dead*. And Paul [quoting]

SEEING THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS IN THE EXILE OF ISRAEL

	WHAT IT SEEMS	WHAT GOD SAYS	
ISRAEL BANISHED	This must be the end	Israel's exile wouldn't be final	He will bring them back to the land yet again
ISRAEL HARDENED		Israel's hardening won't be final	He will bring them back to himself yet again

C) ANTICIPATING the FUTURE: Paul brings Romans 11 to a close with these words: “For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.” (verses 30-32). God's design is to show mercy; and just as He showed mercy to us as Gentiles, when we were lost in our rebellion and sin; so too, Paul's telling us, God is purposing to do the very same for ethnic Jews. Don't misunderstand what we're saying. It's not that God is going to revert to the old covenant administration when He gathers Israel back to himself. We're not saying that ethnic Jews will return to the physical land of Israel; and we're certainly not saying that the physical temple will be rebuilt, or that this will usher in some kind of earthly, millennial kingdom. We're simply affirming the truth that Scripture is here declaring, that a day is coming when Israel as a nation will again return to the Lord.

God isn't finished with Israel. And shouldn't that excite our hearts? There's a bright future for them in the new covenant. We ought to be brought to awe and worship, that our God is able and that He's purposed to do such a thing. But it should also drive us back to prayer; because God isn't going to do this in a vacuum. For just as the Lord has predestined ends; He's also predestined the means to bring about those ends; and in particular, God has predestined prayer as the means by which we call upon Him to do what we cannot do; and to do what indeed He himself has purposed and promised to do. Friends, it would be good to remember that our Jewish brothers in the days of the old covenant often came before God interceding for us, the Gentiles, when we were outsiders. Can we not do the same for them? May the Lord Jesus gather His fold, both of Jew and Gentile; and bring us safely home to His heavenly kingdom: *“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”*

Thank you, Lord Jesus

Isaiah, which had immediate reference to the captive Jews in Babylon, Isaiah 59:20-21, interprets and applies it mediately to the Jews calling and re-ingrafting into Christ, after the Gentiles fulness should be come in (Romans 11:25-27); which notably insinuates to us, that the Jews misery in, and recovery out of Babylon, were types of their future misery in being broken off from Christ by unbelief, and of their happy reviving and being re-ingrafted into Christ by faith. After which restoration of the Jews by their conversion, all these promised blessings of God's tabernacle, Spirit, Word, and public ministry shall be continued unto them, but much more spiritually till the end of the world.” (Roberts, *Mystery and Marrow*, p1198; cf. p1298).