

Are We In The New Covenant Yet?

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Christianity teaches that the New Covenant began with Jesus' death and resurrection. However, according to the Hebrew Bible, the events that describe the initiation of the New Covenant is vastly different than Christian dogma wants you to believe.

Because G!d does nothing without revealing it to his prophets first (Amos 3:7) and He is BIG on reiterating concepts with at least two or three prophetic witnesses, it's important we study what G!d specifies through these prophets to better understand important concepts such as the New Covenant and other related events.

THE TERMINOLOGY

In both the Hebrew and Christian Bibles, there is a limited dialogue regarding the "New Covenant". Nevertheless, the one and only time the terminology is used, the LORD provides a few critical clues through His prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 29-31. Specifically, the term is used in Jeremiah 31:31.

"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - " Jeremiah 31:31 NKJV (New King James Version)

FAMILY REUNION

In Jeremiah 31:31, the reader is introduced to the term "New Covenant" and that this New Covenant is made between G!d and two groups of people, the Northern Kingdom or ten tribes of Israel, being the House of Israel, and the Southern Kingdom, primarily consisting of the remaining two tribes, the House of Judah. The slang term "Jew" comes from the tribe of Judah, which later evolved to be "House of Judah". To understand how the kingdom of Israel split into two groups, read 1 Kings 12. Essentially, there was a family feud, but not the Steve Harvey type.

The famous Jeremiah 29:11 quote, which can be found in nearly every Christian Bookstore and Hobby Lobby across the United States, G!d says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future..." (NIV). Technically, this promise is given to Israel, not Christians shopping at Hobby Lobby. When we read Jeremiah chapters 29 through 31, at the time of these prophecies, both houses were in captivity. The House of Israel had been taken captive by the Assyrian Empire much earlier and the House of Judah was taken captive by the Babylonian Empire. Although the prophecy in chapter 29 primarily applied to the Jews held in Babylonian captivity, the prophecy of Jeremiah 30, applies for a much later time. In Jeremiah 30:7 it references a time of trouble for Jacob, meaning the nation of Israel, perhaps it could imply a greater captivity, if you will. Daniel 12:1-2 also uses the same terminology of "a time of trouble" and is referring to the Battle of Gog and Magog. Such an epic battle will be led by

Gog, the ultimate villain, as he and numerous other nations surround and attack the nation of Israel. More details of this battle can be found in Ezekiel 38 and Zechariah 14 among other prophetic passages. Nevertheless, through the prophet Jeremiah, G!d is giving His people hope that even though life will be frightening for them in the future, G!d will literally and physically save them from their enemies similar to how He did when they were in Babylon and years earlier, in Egypt.

Through the prophet Jeremiah, G!d expands in great detail exactly what He means when He says "a future and hope" or "a hope and a future" (depending on which version you are reading) in Jeremiah 30. Notice in Jeremiah 30:3, Adonai, the LORD says, "For behold the days are coming...that I bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah...I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers and they shall possess it.." So here we see G!d plans on rescuing and restoring all of the House of Israel and the House of Judah, uniting both the divided kingdoms and bringing them all back to the land of Israel to safely dwell.

Interestingly, the House of Judah largely consisted of the tribe of Judah, Benjamin, and the Levites, but the House of Israel, the ten northern tribes that were taken prisoners by the Assyrian captivity and assimilated into the nations, have never been tracked, much less regathered. As a side note, texts from both the Hebrew and Christian Bibles reveal some of those Northern tribes merged with the House of Judah and therefore, it can be argued that the Jewish population today represents all or at least some of the twelve tribes, but for the most part, it would appear the vast majority of the ten tribes assimilated with the nations and are considered unidentified or lost. With that said, here in this text of Jeremiah 30, G!d declares He will be regaining custody of all His kids in a glorious and miraculous family reunion in the New Covenant. In other words, the lost will be found!

RESURRECTION | RESTORATION

Jeremiah 30, verse 9, reads, "They shall serve the LORD their God and David, the king whom I will raise up for them." Now, if you aren't familiar with the plethora of other passages in the prophets discussing this same prophecy you might glaze over the "raise up" phrase but this is referring to the resurrection and restoration of the House of Israel and the House of Judah described in Ezekiel 37. I believe this verse indicates the LORD is literally going to resurrect King David, as well as all of the deceased Israelites (twelve tribes), and David will rule and reign once more. Other Jews state this verse means, G!d will provide someone from David's lineage, specifically through the line of David's son, Solomon, to rule. Christians typically assume this David figure refers to Jesus' alleged past resurrection and yet, obviously, this reference to resurrecting, rescuing, and restoring Israel cannot be about Jesus' alleged resurrection because #1 all twelve tribes were not rescued from the Roman Empire, in fact, the Jews weren't rescued at all, though they were oppressed, AND #2 nobody was raised up to be a literal, visible-to-all king of Israel after Jesus' alleged death and resurrection. Just the opposite manifested. The House of Judah was scattered throughout all the nations in the years after Jesus' alleged resurrection, not rescued to dwell in safety, much less restored.

It wasn't until 1948, that a minority of Jews have been and still are being restored to the land of Israel in present modern times, but still not both houses. There still are many Jews scattered throughout the globe as well as the deceased House of Israel and their unknown descendants.

WORSHIP | SACRIFICES RESUME

As we continue to read the surrounding verses and context of the new covenant prophecy, notice we left off at Jeremiah 30:9, an important verse to grasp as it proclaims the House of Israel and the House of Judah, previously defined, will all be serving G!d collectively, not Allah or Jesus, mind you, but "their God". Furthermore, that same verse adds they also will be serving David as their king. David was known as a "man after God's own heart" and one of the greatest kings of Israel to ever have lived, who also authored most of the Psalms. You could say, David, the king/prince, was the ultimate worship leader as he will do once more in the New Covenant. In the prophetic Book of Ezekiel, the prophet Ezekiel also speaks about the reunion of both the House of Israel and the House of Judah in addition to describing David, a ruler or prince that leads the people in worship, including in making various offerings, even sin offerings (Ezekiel 34:23-24, 36:22-24, 37:24-28, 45:16-46:18). Ponder this as you study these passages: If Jesus was the final sacrifice, why does the prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 45-46 and the prophet Zechariah in Zechariah 14:16-21, very clearly detail sacrifices will resume as a critical means of worship in the future for both Jew and Gentile?

WORLD PEACE

Go to Ezekiel 34:23-31. Notice G!d reiterates here through a different prophetic witness being Ezekiel what He said in Jeremiah 30:9 that He will make David be like a shepherd to His sheep (of Israel), the LORD will be their G!d (not Jesus), and David will be a prince or governing ruler. Verse 25 describes the New Covenant as a "covenant of peace" made with them. Notice Ezekiel goes on to describe a time of peace and prosperity, where animals will no longer attack people or each other (Hosea 2:20 & Isaiah 11:6-9, 65:25 also speak to this), the earth will be a lovely garden, Jews will no longer be persecuted by Gentiles anymore, and all will know who the LORD is (Ezekiel 34:25-31). Return with me to Jeremiah, specifically Jeremiah 31:33-34. Please carefully notate that the LORD makes it very plain and understandable in this New Covenant that **"No more shall every man teach his neighbor, his brother, saying 'Know the LORD', for they ALL shall know Me.."** There will be no more wars because there will be no religious or political debates for all will know G!d and His ways in the New Covenant time frame. Other prophetic witnesses such as in Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 speak to similar sentiments of all will know and be taught G!d's instructions and there will be no more war.

Did these descriptive events manifest upon Jesus' alleged resurrection? Of course, not. In fact, Jesus proclaimed the opposite, "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword." (Matthew 10:34 NKJV). The Crusades and other heinous persecution of innocent Jews by the hands of Christians confirm the fruit of the Gospels. Jesus and the faith that developed in his name indeed failed to bring a covenant of peace to the globe. Rather, the prophets of the Hebrew Bible describe obvious physical changes as G!d

more or less will provide a NEW way of life, or perhaps you could say, a type of NEW heaven and NEW earth; hence, the NEW, or more accurately termed, RENEWED covenant, a covenant of peace on earth. By describing the earth and this covenant as "new", it is simply a figure of speech inferring a refreshed version of the existing earth and existing eternal covenant G!d has with Israel. Each covenant G!d has made with humans builds upon the previous. As a simple example, women are still experiencing pain in childbirth, which was part of the very first covenant G!d established. Several more have been established since then, but no covenant nullified the previous, it only builds upon it.

NO ONE CAN DIE FOR ANOTHER'S SINS

Lastly, in all these Scriptures foretelling a future era, have we read anything stating Israelites or anyone for that matter must believe in a Messiah in order to receive eternal life, be resurrected, be forgiven of sins, and miraculously make it to Israel? Do you notice the resurrection of the dead, as well as the rescue and reunion of both the House of Israel and the House of Judah, have been in the forecast even without any belief in Jesus? Moreover, if G!d can reveal all these other details to His prophets, why didn't he reveal the most important detail that a person must believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, to be resurrected, or rescued? Christians are led to believe Jesus died for their sins and therefore, believe they are in the New Covenant, and yet, in addition to the fact that none of the events of the New Covenant have manifested yet, Jeremiah 31:30 quite literally the verse next to the "new covenant" verse, reiterates commands G!d already stated, which is **"every one shall die for his own sin"**. Just like G!d says numerous places elsewhere - nobody can die for your sins - each person is held accountable to G!d for themselves. Study Deuteronomy 24:16, 2 Kings 14:6, Psalm 49:7, Jeremiah 31:30; Ezekiel 18 & 33. Therefore, it is a direct violation of G!d's word for another person, like Jesus, to die for the world's sins.

WAIT & SEE

With all this overwhelming evidence, it is clear the new covenant has not manifested yet. While we can't be certain WHEN exactly these prophecies will manifest, we do know WHO is involved, WHERE to be watching, and WHAT to look for as there will be glaringly obvious signs indicating the New Covenant has been activated. For now, we wait and put our trust in G!d alone.