

PAUL AND THE NEW COVENANT

The New Covenant Revealed in Redemptive History:

Prophet Moses in Deuteronomy 30.

Prophet Isaiah 49:6 ff.

Prophet Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Prophet Ezekiel 37.

Paul the Apostle - Romans 10.

Prophet Moses in Deuteronomy 30

Background to Deuteronomy 30-32 – Moses' farewell message to the Israelites and he commissioned Joshua to be their new leader to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. Moses had completed the book of Deuteronomy (which consisted of the treaty between God and the nation Israel) and it was placed in the ark of the covenant, to be read every 7 years to the people at the feast of Booths (Deuteronomy 31:7, 24-26). This is to remind them of their obligations and God's faithfulness to His obligations. Evidently, Israel did not obey the stipulations and the LORD sent his prophets subsequently for a lawsuit against them. Deuteronomy 30 was a prophecy of this judgement that will happen and the Israelites will lose their land and be exiled. However, embedded in the judgement to come was the promise of a new beginning of a Messianic Age to come, a new covenant not just for Israel but for the Gentiles as well—a covenant of grace possible because of the work of Christ, the coming Messiah. God will fulfill the promises made to Abraham through his seed, who is Christ.

Moses was the paradigm of the lawsuit, and Moses was the paradigm of this happy message of the Messianic Age. The message proclaimed the promises of the Abrahamic covenant which would lead to the New Covenant. Moses recorded the Abrahamic Covenant, the grace covenant made to Abraham, concerning the seed of Abraham in the book of Genesis. He also recorded the prophecies concerning Israel in Deuteronomy 32, the song of Moses. He foresaw the fall of Israel—the banishment from the Promised Land because of their disobedience to the covenant stipulations the nation Israel had made with Jehovah. This was a witness song against Israel. Moses also prophesied concerning the New Covenant, which would be the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant through the Messiah.

Deuteronomy 30 has to do with the prophecy of Israel breaking the covenant and their exile into another land. Jehovah will have compassion on them and there is the promise of the new covenant embedded in the prophecy. Deuteronomy 27 and 28 and 29 has all the curses and blessings of the Mosaic covenant written in it. There is then the prophecy of the diaspora in

chapter 30. Immediately after this is the revelation of the new covenant, which is a matter of life and death to them. (Deuteronomy 30:15ff).

¹¹ "For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. ¹² "It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' ¹³ "Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' ¹⁴ "But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it. (Deuteronomy 30:11-14)

Compare Moses' words with Paul the apostle's words:

*"For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. ⁵ For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. ⁶ **But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down), ⁷ or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." ⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart "-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (Romans 10:3-10)***

The New Covenant explained by Paul

Paul quoted Deuteronomy 30:11-14 to explain the new covenant in Romans 10:8ff. Paul interprets it in terms of Christ, who came in his incarnation and died and rose from the dead, victorious. The word of God's people, the confession with their mouth that Jesus is Lord will save them, not like the Old Covenant which is "Do this and you will live". It's not a works arrangement, but like what Jesus said in John 6:29: **Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God that you believe in Him whom He has sent."** This was Christ's answer at the feeding of the 5,000 when the disciples asked him "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God". That is the work we have to do—to believe in the Son, in exercising our faith because the work has been done by the Jesus, the one who has crossed the sea. Justification is by faith, not by works:

Paul wrote to the Galatians –

"Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. ⁷ Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture,

foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations shall be blessed in you."⁹ So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.¹⁰ For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them."¹¹ Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith."¹² However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them."¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"—¹⁴ in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Galatians 3:6-14)

Christ is the termination of the law, as John says, in John 1:17: "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." Christ is the goal of the new law. Moses quotes from Leviticus 18:5 - 'so you shall keep my statutes and my judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD.' – to characterize the Old Covenant, and to bring a sharp contrast to bring out what is going on in the New Covenant.

While Moses was bringing on the lawsuit against Israel, he was also heralding the new covenant. Paul perceived what Moses was revealing in Deuteronomy 30:11-14. The revelation of the victory over death was achieved by Christ in the covenant he has with the Father. He mediates the Covenant of Grace. Our role is not to merit by ourselves, but it has been merited by Christ and we appropriate this by faith alone by believing in our hearts that Christ has merited the victory for us, and confessing with our mouths calling on the name of the Lord for our salvation. Romans 10 is a beautiful message from Paul regarding this new covenant of grace. There is the contrasting principle between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. They do not work in the same way. That's how Israel lost their land. The terms of the covenant God had with the nation Israel is different from the New Covenant. "Do this and you will live" is not the New Covenant's stipulations.

CHIASTIC STRUCTURE OF DEUTERONOMY 30:1-14

In Deuteronomy 30:1-14 we see Paul's hermeneutics in Romans 10. **The first 10 verses have a chiastic structure which focuses on the New Covenant in verses 6-8.**

A Verse 1 & 2 – "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you *call them to mind* (Heb. t'boveh]w:¹= and I shall cause you to turn, repent) in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, and you return (Heb.= T'b.v;w) to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons,

B Verse 3 - 5 Then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples (Heb. *yam*) where the LORD your God has scattered you. "If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. "And the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

C VERSE 6-8 "Moreover the LORD your God will **circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live. 7 "And the LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. 8 "And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments which I command you today." (ESCHATOLOGICAL REVERSAL)**

B1 Verse 9 "Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers;

A1 Verse 10 – if you obey the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn (שׁוּב) to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul

¹ t'boveh] w: Hebrew Hiphil 2 person, s.m. root = 'biiioiiiiiiiiiii; uuiiiw<v. . . Ref: Davidson, Benjamin, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*, [MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977], p. 223, 704

EXPLANATION OF THE CHIASM IN DEUTERONOMY 30:1-14

A Verse 1 & 2 – You will be caused to repent (when all these curses come upon you) Lev. 26:40-42) when Christ comes down from heaven, you will come to your senses, heed God’s voice and you will repent.

B Verse 3 – 5 – The restoration, the new covenant in terms of a re gathering to the land. This is prophetic idiom. Outward blessings will be beyond, multiplication more than their fathers

C VERSE 6-8 – The heart will be circumcised by God. God will write his law on the tables of hearts circumcised (Isaiah 59, Jeremiah and Ezekiel all prophesied about this.) This is the work of the Holy Spirit. You will repent as the Holy Spirit works in your hearts and you will heed God’s voice. YOU WILL LIVE AND YOUR ENEMIES WILL BE CURSED. (Recalling the judgment of the deluge)

B1 Verse 9 – The gathering of peoples “Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers;

A1 Verse 10 – According to all that Moses command, you will turn to the Lord. You will heed God’s word, and obey with your whole heart. A new day is coming.

OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY 30:1-10

Section A (verses 1 & 2) – The thought is “you will be caused to repent” (call to mind) at the time when all these curses fall upon you. This was a promise that beyond all their unbelief and disobedience, something is going to happen, namely repentance and hearing God’s voice. Then the apodosis² begins, there is the affirmation of the result: “you will repent”. **The circumcised heart refers to the regenerated heart of the new covenant.** When the Holy Spirit is poured down and the heart is circumcised, then you will repent. There is the certainty. Then you will come to your senses and then you will heed God’s voice. A1 - “according to all that Moses command”. The other inward qualification is “with all your heart and soul”, internal change. The regenerated people will be characterized by a new obedience. Spiritual recovery is the realization of the physical blessings.

Section B (verses 3-5) God will restore. There will be a re-gathering to the land. Under the new covenant there will be a re-gathering (a prophetic idiom). God will bless them even beyond the reign of David and Solomon’s boundaries for the nation Israel. Heaven is going to come, not just

² **Apodosis** n., pl., -ses. The main clause of a conditional sentence, as The game will be canceled in The game will be canceled if it rains

Canaan. Something beyond the typological kingdom is coming. This is going to include the Diaspora of the Gentiles as well.

Section C (verses 6-8) – This **is the heart of this whole passage**. Here is a *chiasmus* within a *chiasmus*. GOD WILL CIRCUMCISE YOUR HEART AND THE HEART OF YOUR DESCENDENTS. God will do the divine transforming work within your hearts. You will be inheriting all the wonders of the Eternal Kingdom. It is a gift of God, it is provided by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. God will write his law on the tables of the heart, not on stone. The result is that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesied about this work of the Holy Spirit, also in terms of re-gathering by the work of the Holy Spirit. “YOU WILL” – a definite happening, indicative, not imperative, and YOU WILL heed God’s voice according to all that Moses commanded. The consequences of this, you will live, your enemies, your persecutors will be cursed. There will be redemptive judgment (v. 7).

Section B1 (verse 9). God will prosper you abundantly. God promised external prosperity which sounded very much like the blessings in Deuteronomy 28. “Surely (Heb. *ki*) the Lord will again rejoice over you . . .” The “*ki*” indicates surety and this rejoicing is guaranteed because of Christ’s work which merits for us our righteousness.

Section A1 (verse 10) - The result (*ki*= truly, truly) of the circumcision of the Holy Spirit is that you will surely, certainly (*ki*) obey the LORD your God to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in the book of the Lord, because (*ki*) you will turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul. The force of the “*ki*” in verse 10 is indicating the result clause, which explains the outcome, the fullness that will be achieved. It indicates the surety and certainty. There are 2 ways of translating *ki*, but in the context, one has to see it as a result clause. If you look at v. 11, once again, it begins with this “*ki*” and Moses is prophesying with authority and certainty of the new arrangement beyond the fall of Israel. As we pick up the passages in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel which is definitely speaking about this very same thing, they work into it the language of the new covenant and we at this point understand Moses and his successors in the light of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Paul. Jeremiah in particular expounded it in terms of the New Covenant.

PAUL’S EXPLANATION OF DEUTERONOMY 30 IN ROMANS 10:1-21

The Apostle Paul quoted from Deuteronomy 30 in this passage, explaining the gospel of the New Covenant in the latter days (Messianic Age). Clearly Paul stated in Romans 10:4-13:

⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. ⁵ For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness.

⁶ **But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down), ⁷ or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to**

bring Christ up from the dead)." ⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; ¹³ for "Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved." (Romans 10:4-13)

And he referred to Deuteronomy 30:11-14 proclaiming the Gospel of justification by faith, not by works. The assurance was that this circumcision of the heart is clearly initiated by the LORD. And it will cause his people to hear and obey him in holiness. And the holiness he referred to are the commandments given in the Mosaic covenant. It had been revealed and is the end (Greek: *telos* which means fulfillment, goal). Righteousness is attainable through the work of the incarnate Christ, who is divine and who had risen from the dead.

This gospel is not only for the nation Israel, but also for the Gentiles (Romans 10:12, 19-20). It is initiated by God, not by men seeking him (Romans 10:20). The result will be the confession with the mouth because of what God has done in the heart, enabling the person to believe in him. The elect are regenerated, and sanctified, so that the law can be obeyed. This is a godliness that is sincere and complete. Spiritual blessings are in the new covenant. The spiritual dimension of the new covenant reaches to physical blessings.

The uncircumcised heart is the unregenerate. When God circumcised the heart, then the person will heed God's voice. There will be a whole hearted change. God's people will be characterized by this thing. The promise is for the whole covenant family and its generation. This is the marvelous revelation of the New Covenant salvation and the work of the Spirit of Christ in the believers' hearts.

THE NEW COVENANT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Pentateuch, like the Gospels and Acts are covenantal documents. The purpose is to have the Spirit's documentary historical testament to the fact that God has made covenants – the old covenant in one case and the new covenant in the other. This is the Spirit's documentary for the church underscoring the fact that at the end of the blood of the cross, God has already ratified the new covenant. The account of the passion in the Gospels is the account of the ratification and the institution of the new covenant. The gospel describes the life of the covenant mediator, his wonderful acts, and his teachings and so forth. The gospels and the book of Acts recorded the historical prologue of the New Covenant.

Exodus is like the gospel of Moses. Corresponding to the passion in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, is Exodus 19-40 because these chapters are about the making of the covenant, the

covenant ceremony, the provision of the documents of the two tablets of the covenant, and after the breaking of the covenant, the reestablishment of the covenant. The final confirmation is the 40th chapter of Exodus when the LORD takes residence on the throne. Exodus 1-18 – First half of the gospel of Moses (account of the covenant Mediator) is like the life of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the earlier parts of the books. ³

Matthew 28:18-20 gives us the commission of the New Covenant:

⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

That is the Great Commission of Christ to every believer, and to the Church as a whole. Paul expounds in his epistles the foundation and role of members of the Church. He provides the Indicatives and the Imperatives. Each person is like a part of the temple as it is built up by the Lord to glorify his name.

HOMEWORK: Read through the book of Ephesians and find the Indicatives and the corresponding Imperatives Paul writes about.

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