

WHY THE NEW COVENANT IS NECESSARY IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

1. ISRAEL WAS MAKING NO ATTEMPT TO KEEP THE OLD COVENANT DURING EZEKIEL'S TIME AND GOD'S GLORY LEFT THE TEMPLE BECAUSE OF ISRAEL'S FAILURE.

Ezekiel 10:4 – “Then the Glory of the Lord went up from the Cherub and stood over the threshold of the House.”

Ezekiel 10:18 – “Then the Glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the House and stood over the Cherubims.”

Ezekiel 10:19 – “And the Cherubims lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth ... and every one stood at the door of the East Gate of the Lord's house and the Glory of the God of Israel was over them above.”

Ezekiel 11:23 – “And the Glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain which is on the East side of the city.”

Since that time the Glory of the Lord has not returned to the nation of Israel. It will return at a future time according to Ezekiel 43:1-6.

2. THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN ISRAEL HAD LEFT THE LAW OF MOSES AND TURNED TO THE “TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS”.

When the Scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus in Matthew 15:1-2, they asked Jesus “why do thy disciples transgress the Tradition of the Elders for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.” Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 15:11-14, “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Then came His disciples and said unto Him, ‘knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying?’ But He answered and said, ‘Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch’.”

Paul says in Galatians 1:14 that he had “profited in the Jews religion above many my equals in mine own nation being more exceeding zealous of the traditions of my fathers.” God had to show him on the road to Damascus that he must follow Christ, not Moses or the traditions of the Elders.

3. THE MOSAIC LAW COULD SAVE NO ONE.

Galatians 2:16 – “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the Law, for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.”

4. CHRIST EXPLAINS DURING HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY WHY THE NEW COVENANT IS NEEDED.

Matthew 11:12-13 – “And from the days of John (the Baptist) until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.”

Luke 16:16 – “The Law and the Prophets were until John (the Baptist); since that time the Kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it.”

Speaking to Nicodemus Jesus explains to him that without the New Covenant he will never enter the Kingdom:

John 3:3 – “Jesus answered and said unto him, ‘verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God’.”

John 3:5 – “Jesus answered, ‘verily, verily I say unto thee except a man be born of Water and of Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God’.”

John 3:10 – “Jesus answered and said unto him, ‘art thou a master (teacher) of Israel and knowest not these things?’”

How would Nicodemus know these things? From Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 – “Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you and ye shall be clean from all of your filthiness and from all of your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh, and I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.”

5. THE NEW COVENANT STARTS AT THE CROSS.

Matthew 26:27-28 – “And He (Jesus) took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying, ‘drink ye all of it. For this is my Blood of the New Covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins’.”

The blood of Christ replaced the sacrifices of the Mosaic Law and every jot and tittle (see Matthew 5:18) of the Law was fulfilled by Christ at the Cross.

6. AFTER THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST THE NEW COVENANT IS BEING OFFERED.

Acts 2:38 – “Then Peter said unto them, ‘Repent and be Baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost’”. NEW COVENANT - Water and Spirit.

Acts 9:17-18 – “And Ananias went his way and entered into the house and putting his hands of him (Saul) said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost’. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales and he received sight forthwith and arose and was baptized. Saul was saved under the NEW COVENANT - Water and Spirit.

Acts 10:44-48 – While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the Circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, ‘can any man forbid Water that these should be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?’ Then he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” The NEW COVENANT - Water and Spirit.

Acts 19:1-6 – “And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the Upper Coasts came to Ephesus and finding certain disciples he said unto them, ‘Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?’ And they said unto him, ‘We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, ‘Unto what then were ye baptized?’ And they said, ‘Unto John’s baptism’. Then said Paul, ‘John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance saying unto the people that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus’. When they heard this, they were Baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them and they spoke with Tongues and Prophesied.” – This is the NEW COVENANT - Water and Spirit.

7. WHO IS THE NEW COVENANT EXCLUSIVELY FOR?

Jeremiah 31:31 – “Behold the days come saith the Lord that I will make a New Covenant with The House of Israel and with the House of Judah.”

Hebrews 8:8 – “For finding fault with them He saith, ‘Behold the days come saith the Lord when I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah.”

8. WHY ARE THE NATIONS BEING LET INTO THE NEW COVENANT DURING THE ACTS PERIOD?

Romans 11:11 – “I say then have they (Israel) stumbled that they should fall? God forbid, but rather through their fall Salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.”

Romans 11:17 – “And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild Olive Tree wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the Olive Tree.”

The Kingdom is still being offered to Israel and Gentiles are being grafted in during the Acts period.

9. AT THE CROSS CHRIST BECOMES THE HIGH PRIEST WHICH WOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED IF THE MOSAIC LAW WAS STILL IN EFFECT.

Hebrews 7:15-22 – “And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another Priest, who is made not after the Law of a Carnal Commandment but after the power of an endless life. For He testifieth, ‘Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec’. For there is verily a disannulling of the Commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better Hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God. And in as much as not without an Oath He was made Priest: For those priests were made without an Oath, but this with an Oath by Him that said unto Him, ‘The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec’ (Psalms 110:13). By so much was Jesus made a surety of a Better Covenant”.

10. WHY ISN'T THE NEW COVENANT MADE WITH JUDAH AND ISRAEL STILL IN EFFECT TODAY?

Just as Joel's prophecy of the Day of the Lord in Acts 2:16-21 was only one half fulfilled, so the offer of the New Covenant during the Book of Acts was only partially fulfilled. They will all be fulfilled during Christ's Millennial Kingdom still to come. When Israel rejected the Holy Spirit Paul pronounces the final judgment on Israel at Acts 28:26-28. God had allowed Israel to reject the Father (Isaiah 6:9-10), the Son (Matthew 13:14-15) and the Holy Spirit (Acts 28:26-28). He then reveals His program of the Dispensation of the Mystery; Ephesians the Third Chapter, which is in effect today.

Colossians 2:14 shows that the Cross ended the need for the Mosaic Law. “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the Way, nailing it to His Cross.”

CONCLUSION:

During the Acts Period God was dealing with the nation of Israel. In order for them to be “Born Again” the New Covenant had to be instituted. Paul verifies this in 2 Corinthians 3:6 – “Who hath made us able ministers of the New Covenant.” We feel that all of the verses quoted forces us to place the offer of the New Covenant during the Acts period. When God stopped dealing with Israel nationally the New Covenant naturally stopped as well. After the Dispensation of the Mystery is over, the New Covenant will be fulfilled in its entirety.

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