

The New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31-34

The New Covenant Introduction

The New Covenant Introduction

Your Bible is divided into two main parts:

1. The Old Testament
2. The New Testament

The New Covenant Introduction

Two big questions:

1. What is a *Testament* anyway?
2. Why the two-part division?

The New Covenant Introduction



The word “testament” needs explanation. In this theological context, the word really means “covenant” or “dispensation.” The basic idea is that the same God who once entered into a covenant with the people of Israel (the “old covenant”) has now entered into a “new covenant” with all of humanity, leading to the emergence of the Christian church ...

– Alister McGrath, Professor of Science and Religion, University of Oxford

The New Covenant Introduction



The basic points being made here are:

- 1. The same God who called the people of Israel also called the Christian church. Both are “chosen peoples,” to use the biblical language.*
- 2. That a new phase in God's dealings with humanity came about in Jesus Christ ...*
 - Alister McGrath, Professor of Science and Religion, University of Oxford*

The New Covenant Introduction



This is usually referred to as a “new covenant” or “new dispensation.” This has important implications for the way in which Christians read the Old Testament. For Christians, the Old Testament anticipates the coming of Christ.

– Alister McGrath, Professor of Science and Religion, University of Oxford

The New Covenant Introduction

Luke 22:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

The New Covenant Introduction

Four Big Things:

- The New Covenant is based upon the death of Christ.
- The New Covenant allows us to come to God through Christ.
- The New Covenant is the basis for our ongoing friendship with God through Christ.
- The New Covenant is the ultimate cure for our rebellion.

The New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31-34

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- The New Covenant takes over from the Old Covenant.
- The problem with the Old Covenant is that the people of Israel broke it.
- Read Exodus 24:1-8.

The New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31-34

- The Old Covenant was based upon commandments that were imposed from the outside.
- The New Covenant includes the law written on our hearts – it is motivated from the inside.

The New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31-34



The law had thus been something external to the people. But now the Lord is saying that he himself will write this law on their hearts. So we move from an external system to an internal system.

– Issiaka Coulibaly, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament, FATEAC, Ivory Coast

The New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31-34

- Also, the New Covenant includes forgiveness of our sins.
- The Old Covenant included many rituals and sacrifices that were intended to illustrate the need for forgiveness.
- Those sacrifices were, however, completely ineffective in removing human guilt.

The New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31-34

Hebrews 10:1-4 (ESV)

¹ For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. ² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³ But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

The New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31-34

- Our sins are fully removed by the blood of Christ.

The New Covenant in Matthew

The New Covenant in Matthew

Matthew 26:26-28 (ESV)

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

The New Covenant in Mark

The New Covenant in Mark

Mark 14:22-24 (ESV)

²² And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.”

²³ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. ²⁴ And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”

The New Covenant in Luke

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Luke 22:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

The New Covenant in Luke

Four Big Things:

- The New Covenant is based upon the death of Christ.

The New Covenant in 2 Corinthians

The New Covenant in 2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 (ESV)

⁴ Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

The New Covenant in 2 Corinthians

- As ministers of the New Covenant, we have the confidence to come before God and invite others to do the same.

The New Covenant in 2 Corinthians

As recipients of the new covenant, we do not need to stay “outside the temple,” as all believers except the priests were required to do under the old covenant. Nor do we need to stay outside of the “Holy of Holies”, the inner room of the temple where God himself was enthroned above the ark of the covenant and where only the high priest could go, and he but once a year ...

*– Wayne Grudem,
General Editor, ESV Study Bible*



The New Covenant in 2 Corinthians

But now, since Christ has died as our mediational High Priest, he has gained for us boldness and access to the very presence of God. Therefore “we have confidence to enter into the holy places by the blood of Jesus”, that is, into the holy place and into the holy of holies, the very presence of God himself!

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The New Covenant in 2 Corinthians

Four Big Things:

- The New Covenant is based upon the death of Christ.
- The New Covenant allows us to come to God through Christ.

The New Covenant in 1 Corinthians

The New Covenant in 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (ESV)

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

The New Covenant in 1 Corinthians

- The New Covenant establishes a relationship with God for us that will last until Jesus comes.

The New Covenant in 1 Corinthians

Four Big Things:

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- The New Covenant is the basis for our ongoing friendship with God through Christ.

The New Covenant in Hebrews

Hebrews 9:13-15 (ESV)

The New Covenant in Hebrews

Hebrews 9:13-15 (ESV)

¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. ...

The New Covenant in Hebrews

Hebrews 9:13-15 (ESV)

¹⁵ Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

The New Covenant in Hebrews

Hebrews 10:11-17 (ESV)

The New Covenant in Hebrews

Hebrews 10:11-17 (ESV)

¹¹ And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. ...

The New Covenant in Hebrews

Hebrews 10:11-17 (ESV)

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

¹⁶ “This is the covenant that I will make with them
after those days, declares the Lord:

I will put my laws on their hearts,
and write them on their minds,”

¹⁷ then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

The New Covenant in Hebrews

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The New Covenant in Hebrews

Hebrews 12:22-24 (ESV)

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Hebrews 12:22-24 (ESV)

²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood ...

The New Covenant in Hebrews

The truth of the matter was that Jeremiah found no fault with the Sinaitic covenant. Both Jeremiah and the later writer of Hebrews were emphatic in their assessment of where the trouble with the covenant made in Moses' day was to be found ...

– Walter Kaiser, Old Testament Scholar



The New Covenant in Hebrews

The problem was with the people, not with the covenant-making God or with the moral law or promises reaffirmed from the patriarchs and included in that old covenant.

– Walter Kaiser, Old Testament Scholar



The New Covenant in Romans

The New Covenant in Romans

Romans 11:26-27 (ESV)

²⁵ Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written,

“The Deliverer will come from Zion,
he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;
²⁷ “and this will be my covenant with them
when I take away their sins.”

The New Covenant in Romans

- This is a potent reminder that God is not through with the people of Israel just yet.
- Jeremiah announced that the New Covenant would first and foremost be with them.
- Israel and Judah will be reunited with one another and reunited with God.

The New Covenant Conclusions

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2. Why the two-part division?

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The New Covenant Conclusions



The basic points being made here are:

- 1. The same God who called the people of Israel also called the Christian church. Both are “chosen peoples,” to use the biblical language.*
- 2. That a new phase in God's dealings with humanity came about in Jesus Christ ...*
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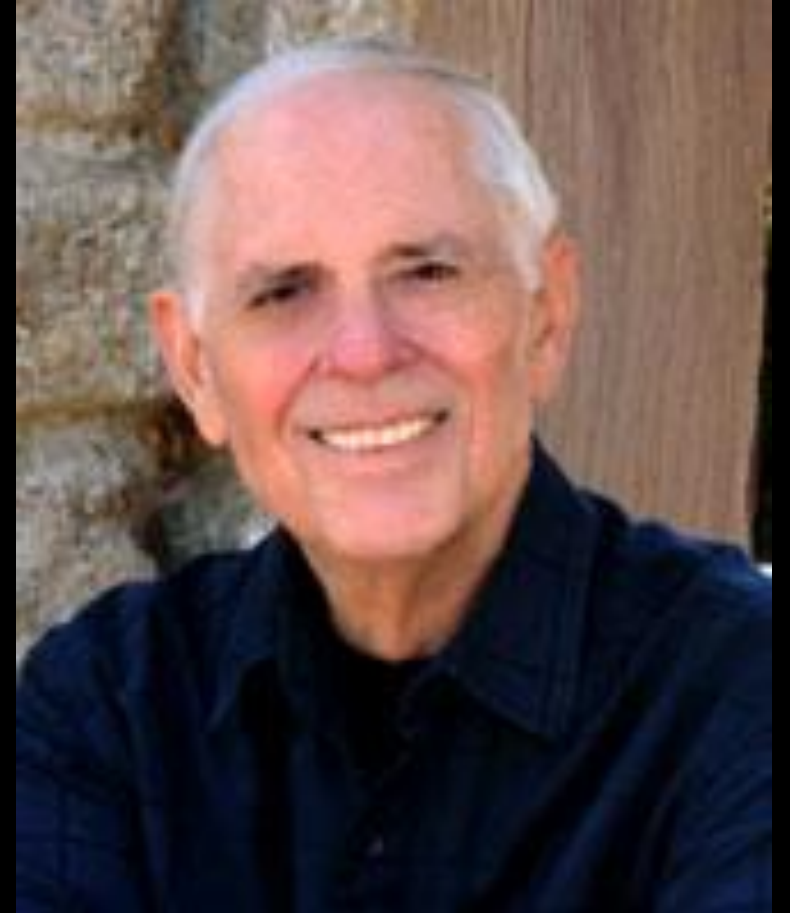
The New Covenant Conclusions

This “new phase” in God’s dealing with humanity includes at least Four Big Things:

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The New Covenant Conclusions

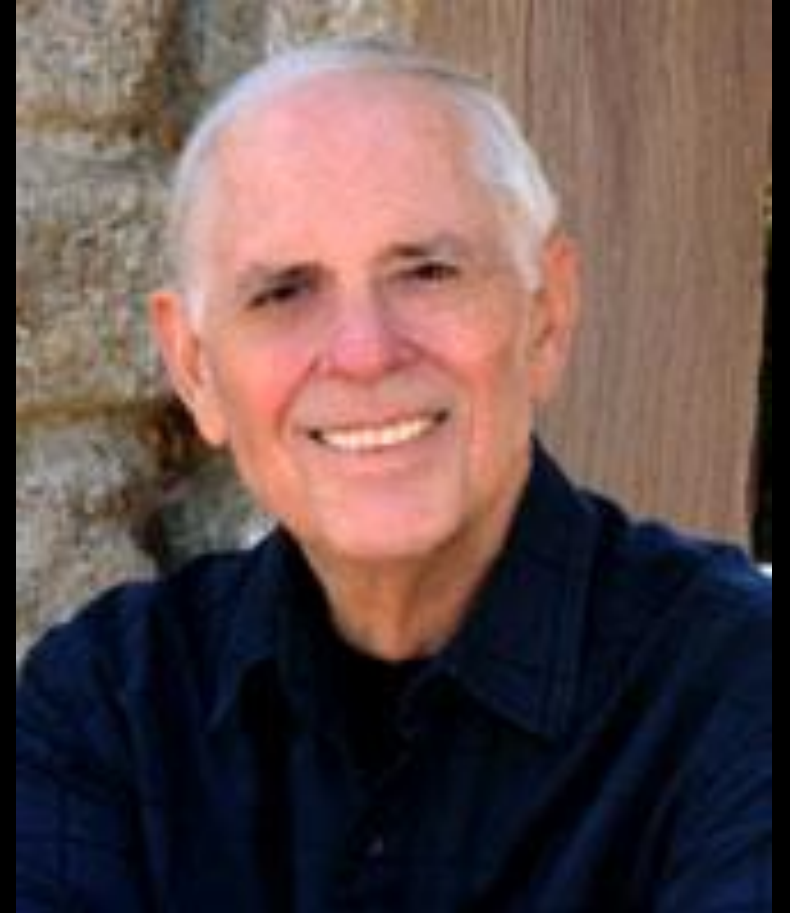
- Before we take communion together, let's hear from Thomas Oden who has some words to send us on our way.
 - *Thomas Oden, in Classic Christianity (Systematic Theology)*



The New Covenant Conclusions

Christ, having died for our sins, was buried, descended, raised, ascended to the right hand of the Father in heavenly intercession. The new covenant was ratified, the great commission given, and all this was immediately followed by...

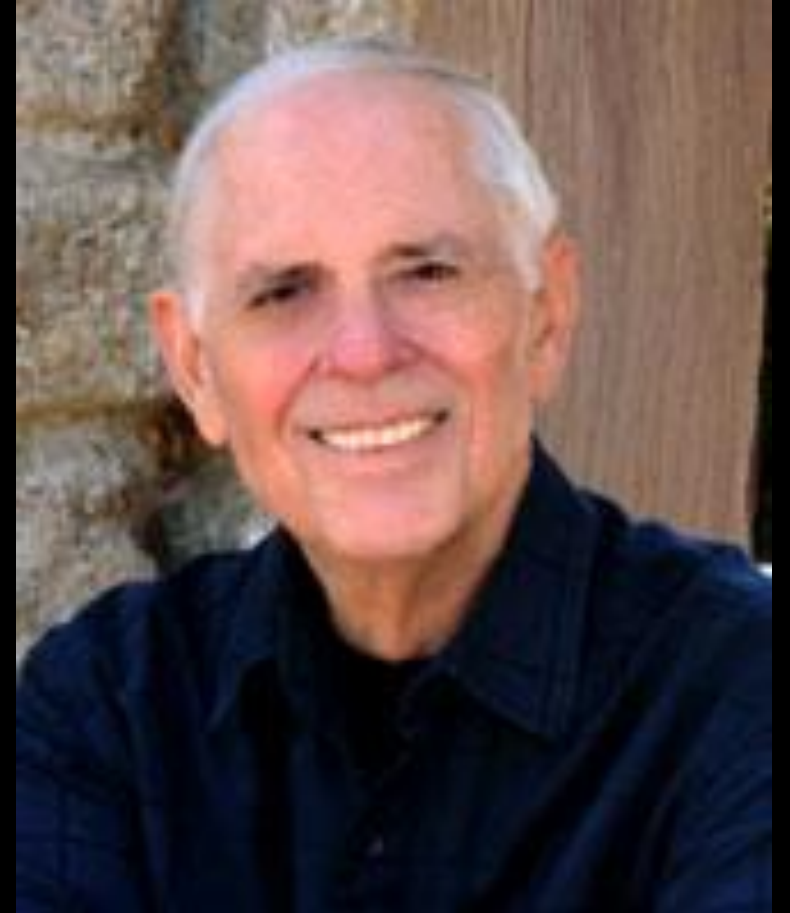
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(Systematic Theology)*



The New Covenant Conclusions

- *The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost*
- *The calling out of the new people of God*
- *The forming of the body of Christ*
- *The introduction of the new law of love*
- *The apostles were sent to preach the gospel to the whole world.*

– *Thomas Oden, in Classic Christianity
(Systematic Theology)*



The New Covenant Conclusions

- And this is how Jesus intends the church to be occupied until he comes again.
- We are his witnesses, regardless of where we fit within the church and within the world.