



bb-TBC-13 An Old Covenant

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The Better Covenant: Chapter 3 - An Old Covenant

Intro

The Sinai was once a 'New Covenant' but it was 'made old'. Why did the Sinai Covenant, that was once sparkling new-ness, be redesignated as the 'Old' covenant?

A Summary of Israel's History

God 'moved into' his Holy Place

▼ Exodus 40:33-35 ASV

And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished the work.

¶ Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle.

And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. (Exodus 40:33–35 ASV)

A summary of 1000 years of the Sinai Covenant and its people

▼ Malachi 1:1–2 ASV

¶ The burden of the word of Jehovah to Israel by Malachi.

¶ I have loved you, saith Jehovah. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? (Malachi 1:1–2 ASV)

▼ A great but tragic summary of the Old Testament record;

I have loved you... but you...

God's covenant faithful (chesed) is contrasted with the nation's obstinate betrayal.

1. Moses/Joshua
2. Spirit empowered leadership - Judges
3. leadership through monarchy - Saul-David
4. Two separate nation-states - Rehoboam & Jeroboam...

You are not my people - you are my people?

Hosea c785-725 BC - to the Northern nation-state of Israel

Old Testament scriptures are in genre 'blocks' so not 'chronological'

A tragedy that 'ends' in a divorce. "No Mercy -No People"

▼ Hosea 1:6–7 ASV

Call her name Lo-ruhamah; for **I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel**, that I should in any wise pardon them.

But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by Jehovah their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen. (Hosea 1:6–7 ASV)

▼ Hosea 1:8–9 ASV

Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.

And Jehovah said, Call his name Lo-ammi; for **ye are not my people, and I will not be your God**. (Hosea 1:8–9 ASV)

That's it then. It's 'all over' for the **Northern nation-state of Israel** (the house of Israel)...

but wait... what is Hosea's next message?

▼ Hosea 1:10–11 ASV

¶ **Yet** the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that, **in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God**.

And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel. (Hosea 1:10–11 ASV)

▼ Hosea 2:1 ASV

¶ Say ye unto your brethren, **Ammi**; and to your sisters, **Ruhamah**. (Hosea 2:1 ASV)

Say to your brethren, “**My people**,” And to your sisters, ‘**Mercy** is shown.’ (Hosea 2:1 NKJV)

A problem from Deuteronomy?

▼ Deuteronomy 24:3–4 ASV

And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, who took her to be his wife;
her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before Jehovah: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. (Deuteronomy 24:3–4 ASV)

How will Jehovah take back his 'divorced wife'?

Mountain peak perspectives can be misleading: illustration

The nation-state of Israel was 'finished' but God still had plans for the people of that nation-state. The old destiny was gone but a new destiny appears.

▼ Hosea 1:11 ASV

And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel. (Hosea 1:11 ASV)

▼ The Better Covenant: Chapter 3 - An Old Covenant.

"When we find references to 'Israel' and 'Judah' like this we need to give some thought to whom we are referring. We have two nation-states in view, the northern nation-state of 'Israel' and the southern nation-state of 'Judah'. The way that God was going to fulfil his plan would be to re-integrate two nations into one nation under one head. He would gather them together and there will be one head over the re-constituted nation. The shame of the past would be lost in the new entity that God would bring into existence. There would no longer be two nations and two kings but one nation one king.

This promise is going to be a vital link to the words of later prophets who will take up this theme and develop it in their own unique ways."

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BC 722 - Disaster Strikes

In BC 722 the armies of the super-power of Assyria destroyed the city of Samaria the capital of the northern nation-state of 'Israel'. Its family tribes, the ten and half tribes that God had given to Rehoboam some 250 years earlier (1Kings 11) were taken into captivity and dispersed through the empire of Assyria.

Israel was 'finished' or as Amos describes is so dramatically...

▼ Amos 5:2-3 ASV

The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is cast down upon her land; there is none to raise her up. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: The city that went forth a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which went

forth a hundred shall have ten left, to the house of Israel.
(Amos 5:2–3 ASV)

Judah, the southern nation-state limped on for another 130 years or so but finally Jehovah's judgment came on her covenant betrayal too. Jerusalem and Solomon's magnificent Temple were engulfed in flames the people of Judah (a few from other tribes) were exile into the empire of Babylon.

This time another prophet had predicted it:

▼ Isaiah 24:3–5 ASV

The earth shall be utterly emptied, and utterly laid waste; for Jehovah hath spoken this word.

The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the lofty people of the earth do languish.

The earth also is polluted under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.
(Isaiah 24:3–5 ASV)

The glorious destiny of the covenant people was in utter ruin. Surely this must be the end?

A New Exodus, a New Thing and a New Covenant

Even before the exiling of the two nations had taken place, Jehovah, who knows the end from the beginning, had begun to speak about a 'return' and had used the language of the people's history.

▼ Hosea 2:14–15 ASV

¶ Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.

And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall make

answer there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. (Hosea 2:14–15 ASV)

Notice the phrase 'as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt'

and compare with Jeremiah's prophecy to the nation-state of Judah over a 150 years later

▼ Jeremiah 2:1–3 ASV

¶ And the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals; how thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto Jehovah, the first-fruits of his increase: all that devour him shall be held guilty; evil shall come upon them, saith Jehovah. (Jeremiah 2:1–3 ASV)

Jehovah is describing his intention to restore his people to their land and is using the language of the Exodus from Egypt that took place some 600 years earlier when the fugitive slaves from Egypt became God's own nation.

This would not be a repeat of the original Exodus but something even more amazing.

▼ Isaiah 43:14–21 ASV

¶ Thus saith Jehovah, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and I will bring down all of them as fugitives, even the Chaldeans, in the ships of their rejoicing.

I am Jehovah, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.

Thus saith Jehovah, who maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters;

who bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the mighty man (they lie down together, they shall not rise; they are extinct, they are quenched as a wick):

Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

Behold, I will do a new thing; now shall it spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

The beasts of the field shall honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen,

the people which I formed for myself, that they might set forth my praise. (Isaiah 43:14–21 ASV)

This is a new beginning, modelled on the Exodus, but not to be compared with it for its effects. This will be another part of that repeating refrain, 'a new thing'.

In some ways Jeremiah is even bolder. He also has a 'new beginning' in mind but he does not use the language of a 'new exodus' but of a 'New Covenant'. Not just a new deliverance but a new relationship with Jehovah.

▼ Jeremiah 31:31–33 ASV

¶ Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:
not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith

Jehovah.

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jeremiah 31:31–33 ASV)

▼ some familiar themes

- 'the house of Israel' (which had ceased to exist 120 years earlier) and 'the house of Judah' (which was about to undergo a 70 exile)
- then 'the house of Judah' fades from the scene and a promise is made with 'the reconstituted' 'house of Israel'
- reminders of the Sinai Covenant but with the strong assertion that this New Covenant will NOT be like the Sinai Covenant.
- Not a repaired Sinai Covenant nor a Sinai Covenant with a few modifications, but a New Covenant
- It will be a new Exodus, a New Thing, a New Covenant

The Promise of a Remnant

▼ and there is another strand that is taken up by the exile prophets

Hos 2:14–15;

Isa 1:9; 10:20–22; 11:11, 16; 14:22, 30; 15:9; 16:14; 17:3; 28:5; 37:4, 31–32; 46:3

Jer 23:3; 31:7; Ezek 6:8

▼ Isaiah 10:20–22 ASV

¶ And it shall come to pass in that day, that **the remnant** of Israel, and they that are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again lean upon him that smote them, but shall lean upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

A remnant shall return, even **the remnant** of Jacob,

unto the mighty God.

For though thy people, Israel, be as the sand of the sea, only a **remnant** of them shall return: a destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness. (Isaiah 10:20–22 ASV)

▼ Jeremiah 23:3–4 ASV

And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and multiply.

And I will set up shepherds over them, who shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be lacking, saith Jehovah. (Jeremiah 23:3–4 ASV)

▼ Ezekiel 34:22–24 ASV

therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. And **I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.**

And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David prince among them; I, Jehovah, have spoken it. (Ezekiel 34:22–24 ASV)

Ezekiel writing somewhere around the 3rd deportation of Judah in c587, over 400 years after David's death.

Ezekiel prophesies the restoration of the David dynasty that found its fulfillment in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David and the Son of Abraham.

Christ clearly identified his mission with the essence of Ezekiel's prophecy.

▼ John 10:11–16 NKJV

¶ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.

The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. (John 10:11–16 NKJV)

▼ The Better Covenant - Chapter 3 - Conclusion

"As we promised, we shall need to retrace our steps for a while because there is yet another covenant that we need to examine and this is even 'older' than the Sinai covenant. In fact it will stretch back all the way to Abraham and then, moving forwards, will find its fulfilment in the person who is the real subject of both these covenants, Jesus Christ himself; the Son of David and the Son of Abraham. These two, key, old Testament

characters appear side-by-side as the new Testament begins its own story

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1)

In this chapter we traced the history of the nation-states of Israel and Judah and saw how comprehensively God brought his judgement upon them. We traced the separated states and saw that we need to distinguish the different ways that the word 'Israel' is used. Sometimes it refers to the separate northern-nation state of Israel but when that nation becomes "no longer a people" the name of Israel becomes the label for God's reintegration of remnants from both 'the house of Israel' and the 'house of Judah' into a reconstituted 'Israel'. We also saw that it was promised to this reconstituted 'Israel' that David would reign over them and that Christ clearly saw himself as the fulfilment of this prophecy." -

The Better Covenant - Chapter 3 - Conclusion