

The Promises of God

Promise of the New Covenant

“Indeed, a time is coming,” says the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. It will not be like the old covenant that I made with their ancestors when I delivered them from Egypt. For they violated that covenant, even though I was like a faithful husband to them,” says the LORD. “But I will make a new covenant with the whole nation of Israel after I plant them back in the land,” says the LORD. “I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts and minds. I will be their God and they will be my people. “People will no longer need to teach their neighbors and relatives to know me. For all of them, from the least important to the most important, will know me,” says the LORD. “For I will forgive their sin and will no longer call to mind the wrong they have done.”
(Jeremiah 31:31-34)

<http://tinyurl.com/GodOfPromises>

Promise of the New Covenant

Key Verses: Jeremiah 31:31–34; Luke 22:20 God promises forgiveness of sins and new hearts

Core Theme

God promises forgiveness of sins and new hearts by His Spirit.

God's Character in Scripture

Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:24–28. God reveals His grace and power to transform hearts.

God's Character in History

Israel's failure under the old covenant highlighted the need for a new one (Hebrews 8:7–13).

God's Character Revealed in Jesus

Luke 22:20; Matthew 26:28. Jesus inaugurates the New Covenant in His blood.

God's Invitation to Know Him

John 3:5–8; 2 Corinthians 3:6. God invites us to walk in the Spirit and know Him personally.

Discussion Questions

How does the New Covenant differ from the old?

What does it mean to have God's law on our hearts? How does the Spirit help us live in this covenant?

Luk 22:14-23 Now when the hour came, Jesus took his place at the table and the apostles joined him. (15) And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. (16) For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” (17) Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves. (18) For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” (19) Then he took bread, and after giving 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 in the same way he took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.** (21) “But look, the hand of the one who betrays me is with me on the table. (22) For the Son of Man is to go just as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” (23) So they began to question one another as to which of them it could possibly be who would do this.

Apostolic Theology

As taught about the Old Covenant

Aspect	Old Covenant	New Covenant
Mediator	Moses	Jesus Christ
Basis	Law (works)	Grace (faith)
Location of Law	Written on stone	Written on hearts
Sacrifice	Repeated animals	Once-for-all by Christ
Access to God	Through priests	Direct through Christ

Key Apostolic passages:

- Romans 3–8
- Galatians 3–4
- 2 Corinthians 3
- Hebrews 8–10

These writings show the apostles understood the Old Covenant as a shadow pointing to Christ, and the New Covenant as its fulfillment; *where God's promise of forgiveness and renewal is fully realized in Jesus.*

Old Covenant

Given through Moses: The Law was established at Sinai (Exodus 19–24). It defined Israel's relationship with God through commandments, sacrifices, and rituals.

Written on stone: It was external, requiring obedience to written laws (2 Corinthians 3:7).

Conditional: Blessings depended on Israel's faithfulness and obedience; curses came for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28).

Temporary: The Law served as a guardian or tutor until Christ came (Galatians 3:24–25).

Revealed sin: The Law exposed the sinfulness of humanity but could not remove sin (Romans 3:20; Hebrews 10:1–4).

Priestly mediation: Access to God came through priests and animal sacrifices, repeated continually.

New Covenant

Established by Christ: Instituted through His death and resurrection (Luke 22:20; Hebrews 9:15).

Written on hearts: God's Spirit writes His law within believers, bringing inner transformation (Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 3:3).

Unconditional grace: Salvation and righteousness come by faith, not by works of the Law (Romans 3:21–22; Ephesians 2:8–9).

Eternal and complete: Christ's sacrifice is once for all, providing full forgiveness and direct access to God (Hebrews 10:10–14).

Priesthood of all believers: No longer through Levitical priests, but through Christ our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14–16; 1 Peter 2:9).

Union with Christ: The Spirit indwells believers, producing obedience and holiness from within (Romans 8:1–4).

The New Covenant fulfills the deep longings planted in the Old:

Forgiveness replaces guilt.

Spirit replaces stone.

Relationship replaces ritual.

Peace replaces striving.

The eternal kingdom replaces all passing systems.

Jesus didn't abolish the Law or the Prophets; He completed their meaning (Matthew 5:17).

Everything the Law anticipated; forgiveness, renewal, communion with God; finds its reality in Him.

The Old Covenant as a Shadow of Christ

<u>Patriarch</u>	<u>Shadow</u>	<u>Fulfillment in Christ</u>
Adam	Humanity's head who brought death	The new head who brings life
Noah	Salvation through the ark	Salvation through Christ
Abraham	Faith and covenant promise	Faith and righteousness fulfilled
Isaac	The beloved son offered	The Son of God sacrificed
Jacob	The struggler made new	The true Israel who overcomes

Apostolic Understanding

The apostles saw Christ in every page of the Old Testament. Jesus Himself taught this on the road to Emmaus: *“Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them the things written about Himself in all the Scriptures.”* **Luke 24:27**

In apostolic theology:

- The **Old Covenant was preparatory**, showing the need for redemption.
- The **patriarchs, sacrifices, and covenants were prophetic signs**.
- The **New Covenant is the realization** of all those shadows; Christ Himself is the substance.

The Old Covenant as a Shadow of Christ

The apostles taught that everything in the Old Covenant; the Law, the priesthood, the temple, the sacrifices, even the people themselves; pointed forward to Christ. It was a **shadow of the good things to come**, not the reality itself (Hebrews 10:1). The shadow revealed God's plan, while Christ fulfilled it. "These are a shadow of the things to come, but the reality belongs to Christ." — Colossians 2:17 (NET) The Old Covenant was like a sketch that anticipated the finished picture. It prepared the world to understand who Jesus is and what He would do.

Types of Christ in the Patriarchs

Below are some key patriarchs and how their lives served as **types (shadows)** of the coming Messiah. These patterns helped the early believers recognize Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises.

Adam – The First Man

Type: The representative head of humanity.
Shadow: Through Adam came sin and death. Through Christ (the "last Adam") comes righteousness and life.
Fulfillment: Jesus restores what Adam lost; fellowship with God.
 Romans 5:14, 19; 1 Corinthians 15:45

Noah – The Righteous Deliverer

Type: A preacher of righteousness who built the ark for salvation.
Shadow: The ark saved a few through water; in Christ, baptism now saves (1 Peter 3:20–21).
Fulfillment: Jesus is the true ark; safety from judgment is found in Him.

Abraham – The Father of Faith

Type: The man who believed God and was counted righteous.
Shadow: His willingness to offer Isaac pictured the Father offering His Son.
Fulfillment: Through Abraham's seed (Christ), all nations are blessed (Galatians 3:16).

Isaac – The Promised Son

Type: The beloved son offered on the altar.
Shadow: Carried the wood for his own sacrifice; willingly submitted to his father.
Fulfillment: Jesus, the true Son, carried the cross and gave His life by the Father's will.

Jacob – The Chosen but Broken Vessel

Type: The one who wrestled with God and received a new name (Israel).
Shadow: His struggle and transformation symbolize redemption through divine grace.
Fulfillment: Jesus embodies the true "Israel"; the one who prevails with God on behalf of His people.

Joseph – The Suffering and Exalted Savior

Type: Rejected by his brothers, sold for silver, yet later became their savior.
Shadow: What men meant for evil, God meant for good (Genesis 50:20).
Fulfillment: Jesus was betrayed, suffered unjustly, and was exalted to save the world.

Moses – The Mediator of the Covenant

Type: Delivered Israel from bondage, gave the Law, and interceded for the people.
Shadow: A prophet like Moses was promised (Deuteronomy 18:15).
Fulfillment: Jesus is the greater Mediator who brings not tablets of stone, but the Spirit of life (Hebrews 3:1–6; 2 Corinthians 3:6).

Joshua – The Captain Who Brings Rest

Type: Led God's people into the promised land.
Shadow: His name (Yehoshua) is the same as Jesus in Hebrew.
Fulfillment: Jesus brings His people into the true rest; salvation and eternal life (Hebrews 4:8–10).

David – The Anointed King

Type: The shepherd-king chosen by God, a man after His own heart.
Shadow: His rule, his suffering, and his songs foreshadowed the reign of the Messiah.
Fulfillment: Jesus is the Son of David whose kingdom has no end (Luke 1:32–33).

The Law as a Shadow of Christ

Theme	Old Covenant (Law)	New Covenant (Christ)
Nature	Shadow and copy	Reality and fulfillment
Priesthood	Levitical, mortal	Melchizedek, eternal
Sacrifice	Repeated, animal	Once-for-all, Christ
Covenant	Temporary	Eternal
Access to God	Limited, through priests	Direct, through Christ

The book of Hebrews teaches that:

- The **Law was a teacher and shadow**, preparing people for Christ.
- It **exposed sin but couldn't remove it**.
- It **pointed to a better priest, better sacrifice, and better covenant**.
- Jesus Christ is that fulfillment; the reality behind every shadow.

1. The Law Was a Shadow, Not the Substance

Key idea: The Law was never the final reality; it pointed forward to Christ.

Text: *"The law is only a shadow of the good things to come, not the reality itself."* (Hebrews 10:1 NET)

The rituals, sacrifices, and priesthood were symbols; earthly representations of heavenly truths.

These shadows helped Israel understand sin, holiness, and the need for atonement, but they could not make anyone perfect.

2. The Law Revealed the Need for a Better Priesthood

The Levitical priesthood was central under the Law, but it was weak and temporary.

Proof-point:

"If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood... why was there still need for another priest to come?" (Hebrews 7:11)

The Law appointed mortal priests who had to offer sacrifices repeatedly for their own sins and for others.

Jesus, from the order of **Melchizedek**, is the eternal High Priest; holy, sinless, and permanent (Hebrews 7:23–28).

3. The Law's Covenant Was Temporary and Fading

The first covenant was good for its purpose but not permanent.

Proof-point:

"If that first covenant had been faultless, no place would have been sought for a second." (Hebrews 8:7)

The Law could not change hearts.

The New Covenant replaces it with an internal work of the Spirit; laws written on the heart (Hebrews 8:10, quoting Jeremiah 31:33).

4. The Law's Sacrifices Could Not Remove Sin

Animal sacrifices were continual reminders of guilt, not real cleansing.

Proof-points:

"It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." (Hebrews 10:4)

"Every priest stands daily... offering the same sacrifices again and again; which can never take away sins." (Hebrews 10:11)

These repeated rituals prepared the way for the one perfect sacrifice of Christ.

5. The Law's Tabernacle Foreshadowed the True Sanctuary

The earthly tabernacle was patterned after the heavenly one.

Proof-point:

"They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary." (Hebrews 8:5)

The high priest entered the Most Holy Place once a year with animal blood; Christ entered the heavenly Holy Place once for all with His own blood (Hebrews 9:11–12, 24).

6. The Law Prepared the Way for the Perfect Sacrifice

Christ fulfills what the Law only symbolized: a perfect, willing, once-for-all offering.

Proof-points:

"He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Hebrews 9:26)

"By one offering He has perfected for all time those who are made holy." (Hebrews 10:14)

7. The Law Pointed to a Better Covenant; Based on Better Promises

The New Covenant rests not on human effort but on God's mercy and grace.

Proof-point:

"Jesus has obtained a superior ministry... since the covenant He mediates is also better and is enacted on better promises." (Hebrews 8:6)

These promises include full forgiveness, new hearts, and direct access to God.

Core Promises of the New Covenant

<u>Core Promise</u>	<u>Old Covenant Anticipation</u>	<u>Fulfillment in Christ</u>
Forgiveness of sins	Jeremiah 31:34	Luke 22:20; Hebrews 9:22
New heart & Spirit	Ezekiel 36:26–27	John 3:5; John 14:16–17
Direct knowledge of God	Jeremiah 31:34	John 14:6; Hebrews 10:19
Everlasting peace	Ezekiel 37:26	John 14:27; Ephesians 2:14
Eternal kingdom	Daniel 2:44	Mark 1:15; Hebrews 12:28

The New Covenant fulfills the deep longings planted in the Old:

- **Forgiveness replaces guilt.**
- **Spirit replaces stone.**
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- **Peace replaces striving.**
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Jesus didn't abolish the Law or the Prophets; He completed their meaning (**Matthew 5:17**). Everything the Law anticipated - forgiveness, renewal, communion with God - finds its reality in Him.

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish these things but to fulfill them.

(Mat 5:17)

Promises of the New Covenant

Forgiveness of Sins

Old Covenant Anticipation

- Israel's sacrifices brought ritual cleansing but not true forgiveness.
- God promised a future time when sins would be completely forgiven and remembered no more.
- *"I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will no longer call to mind."* **Jeremiah 31:34**

New Covenant Fulfillment

- Jesus declared that His blood was the means of this forgiveness.
- *"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."* **Luke 22:20**
- His sacrifice once for all fulfilled what the old offerings only pictured.
- *"Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."* **Hebrews 9:22**

Jesus' Teaching

He linked forgiveness directly to His person and mission:

- *"The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."* **Mark 2:10**
- He taught His followers to extend that forgiveness to others as a mark of belonging to the kingdom (**Matthew 6:14–15**).

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A New Heart and Spirit

Old Covenant Anticipation

- The Law was written on stone, but hearts remained hard.
- God promised to change that; to give His people new hearts and His Spirit.
- *"I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you."* **Ezekiel 36:26–27**
- *"I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts."* **Jeremiah 31:33**

New Covenant Fulfillment

- Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit; the inner power to obey and love God.
- *"The Advocate, the Holy Spirit... will be with you forever."* **John 14:16–17**
- At Pentecost, this was fulfilled (Acts 2). The Spirit now dwells within every believer.

Jesus' Teaching

- He described this inner transformation as being "born again."
- *"Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."* **John 3:5**
- The Spirit gives life from within; not external law, but inward renewal.

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Direct and Personal Relationship with God

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- God promised a time when all His people would know Him personally.
- *"They will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest."* **Jeremiah 31:34**

New Covenant Fulfillment

- Through Christ, the veil is torn, and direct access is opened.
- *"We have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus."* **Hebrews 10:19–20**
- Every believer is now part of a royal priesthood (**1 Peter 2:9**).

Jesus' Teaching

- He invited personal fellowship with the Father through Himself.
- *"No one comes to the Father except through Me."* **John 14:6**
- He prayed that His followers would share His own relationship with the Father:
- *"That they may be one, just as You, Father, are in Me and I in You."* **John 17:21**
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An Everlasting Covenant of Peace

Old Covenant Anticipation

- God promised a lasting covenant of peace; not dependent on Israel's faithfulness but on His own mercy.
- *"I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant."* **Ezekiel 37:26**
- The prophets foresaw a restored kingdom where righteousness and peace reign.

New Covenant Fulfillment

- Jesus is called the "Prince of Peace" (**Isaiah 9:6**). Through Him, God reconciles the world to Himself.
- *"He Himself is our peace."* **Ephesians 2:14**
- His death removes enmity between God and man, creating one new people united in peace.

Jesus' Teaching

- He offered His peace as a gift to His disciples:
- *"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you."* **John 14:27**
- This peace is not the absence of trouble but the presence of reconciliation with God.

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A Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken

Old Covenant Anticipation

- The prophets foresaw a future kingdom established by God Himself; one that would never end.
- *"In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed."* **Daniel 2:44**

New Covenant Fulfillment

- Jesus announced that kingdom had arrived:
- *"The kingdom of God is at hand."* **Mark 1:15**
- His resurrection confirmed that this kingdom is eternal.
- *"We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken."* **Hebrews 12:28**

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