

CHRIST AND THE COVENANT

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What hath the Covenant to do with Christ? Here I paraphrase Tertullian who asked, “What hath Athens to do with Jerusalem?”¹ Accordingly this would mean not much—except that Jesus did away with the covenant and inaugurated a new and more liberal one.

But if we are *unitarians*² do we still think this? Do we also believe that Christ inaugurated a new covenant and rendered the “old” obsolete? This, of course, is the classic interpretation of Hebrews 8:13, “In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.”

How can you argue with that?

Well, this verse seems to be saying that God’s covenant with Israel is defunct, but in context it actually says quite the opposite. It follows the longest quote from the Tanakh in the New Testament (Hebrews 8):

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8 For finding fault with them, he saith [Jeremiah 31:31-34],

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: 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.

The fault was not with God or his covenant but with the people, and the promise is a restoration of both houses of Israel in a new covenant. God will remember their iniquities no more. When the author of Hebrews penned this book, the old regime in Jerusalem was coming to an end. The house of Israel had been divorced from the covenant (Jeremiah 3:8) and the house of Judah was facing exile—an exile that came and has continued for nearly two millennia. As the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* puts it,³ “The expression ‘near evanescence’ [ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ in

¹ *Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? quid academiae et ecclesiae? quid haereticis et christianis?* What hath Athens to do with Jerusalem? Or the Academy with the Church? Or heretics with Christians? (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum* vii. 9).

² By *unitarian* (with small letter *u*) I refer to people of various persuasions who reject the Trinitarian and Binitarian view that Jesus was God and (unlike most Unitarians today) see the Scriptures as authoritative.

³ <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/hebrews/8.htm>

Heb 8:13] again shows that the Epistle was written before the Fall of Jerusalem, when the decree of dissolution which had been passed upon the Old Covenant was carried into effect.”

There is no controversy here in Judaism, nor was there among Jesus’ disciples (Acts 1:6-8):

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Jesus did not deny that the ultimate restoration of the kingdom to Israel was what it was all about. The Gentile church, however, spiritualized Israel away, turning her into the Universal Church, and believed it had witnessed the kingdom restored under Constantine. Israel had been cast away for good. When the Jews didn’t convert centuries of anti-Semitism ensued. The history is not flattering, but it was prophesied already in the Torah (Leviticus 26):

33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. ... 40 If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; 41 And *that* I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: 42 Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. ... 43 And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I *am* the LORD their God. 45 But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I *am* the LORD.

Διαθήκη = בְּרִית
‘covenant’

The term “New Testament” is from the Latin, *Novum Testamentum*. In Greek the term is Ἡ Καινὴ Διαθήκη. The Latin *testamentum* is used for ‘covenant’ throughout the NT. It means a ‘will’ or ‘testament’ and is a poor translation. The Greek διαθήκη can mean ‘testament’, but all 33 occurrences in the NT are best rendered ‘covenant’ as reflecting the Hebrew בְּרִית.

The most controversial occurrence is in Hebrews 9:16. Here the New American Standard Bible (NASB) gets it right: “For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.”

In the ancient world a covenant was ‘cut’, i.e., an animal was killed (“the blood of the covenant”). It was death by proxy of the parties to the covenant (as in the Christian marriage ceremony: “unto death do us part”).

But lest with the regnant Left we unconditionally condemn the Church, it is important to consider that in spite of it all the Church did preserve the Jews and it was the secular Left that actually sought their extermination.⁴ By the Left I mean the dark side of the Enlightenment of which Hitler and Stalin were its most prominent children. As Dennis Prager put it in a column (Nov 3, 2012), “For at least the last hundred years, the world’s most dynamic religion has been neither Christianity nor Islam. It is leftism.” Many in Christendom experienced guilt after the Holocaust, and in the Second Vatican Council of 1965 the Roman Catholic Church repudiated its doctrine that the covenant was rescinded.⁵ In Britain and America prior to this there were

⁴ For some historic perspective, see Frederiksen (2008), also the blog by McDonald (2012). David Klinghoffer (Klinghoffer 2005), who rejects the New Testament, nevertheless describes well the necessary and positive influence of Christianity within the last two millennia. For Hitler’s virulent and deadly racism, see Weikart (2006).

⁵ http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html

movements that repudiated supersession and anti-Semitism—see Brog (2006) and Himmelfarb (2011).

Husband, Wife, and Mediator

God’s covenant with Israel is pictured as a marriage—“for I am married to you” (Jeremiah 3:14). Its making (or “cutting”) is described in Exodus 19 where God makes a proposal that Israel accepts. There is a story flow in Exodus 1 through 19, and chapter 18 provides an interesting context for chapter 19. The whole of 18 is taken up with Moses’ father-in-law visiting and advising on a system of government from the people up to Moses. There is thus no stacking of the court when God makes his proposal via Moses in the next chapter:

7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

Moses is thus the mediator between God and Israel, and Israel as a legitimate wife—not a concubine or slave—accepts God’s proposal without coercion. Yes, of course, after all the people had been through one can imagine that they feared not to accept. But the picture is there and Israel was asked and she did accept.

THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

<p>Exodus 24:8 תִּקַּח מִדַּם הַבְּרִית וְשִׁפְרָהּ And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled <i>it</i> on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.</p> <p>Matthew 26:27 τὸ αἶμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ αἶμά μου, τὸ τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave <i>it</i> to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood [of the new testament], which is shed for many for the remission of sins.</p> <p>Mark 14:23 τὸ αἶμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ αἶμά μου τὸ τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave <i>it</i> to them: and they all drank of it. 24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the [new] testament, which is shed for many.</p> <p>Luke 22:20 ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματι μου Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup <i>is</i> the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.</p> <p>1Corinthians 11:25 ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ... ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι After the same manner also <i>he took</i> the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink <i>it</i>, in remembrance of me.</p>	<p>At the last supper Jesus offered his disciples wine and likened it to his blood of the new covenant. He may have entered Jerusalem expecting to eat the Passover sacrifice that year, but now realized his role via the events he saw unfolding—he would be the Passover sacrifice. And he would become in essence a Nazirite (Mat 26:29): “But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” And if his blood would be the blood of the new covenant, his death also typified the Passover sacrifice (1Cor 5:7), “For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us”. And in 40 years the Temple was destroyed and the Passover sacrifice ceased—it has not been made since. During all this time Jesus like Joseph (Gen 49:26) has remained “separate from his brethren” (נָזִיר נְזִיר <i>nāzîr ’ehā’w</i>). Joseph likely drank wine, yet the word is the same as the nazirite (נָזִיר <i>nāzîr</i>) in Numbers 6.</p> <p>But if Christ’s blood stands in as the blood of the new covenant, signaling the covenant’s life and death seriousness, what is Christ’s role otherwise? Like Moses at Sinai, Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant (Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24), or as put by Paul (1Tim 2:5), “For <i>there is</i> one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...”</p>
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In any literal reading of the new covenant chapter—Jeremiah 31—the new covenant has not yet been made. Let me suggest interpreting Matthew 16:18 in this light of Christ as mediator.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The ‘rock’ (πέτρα) upon which Jesus will build his assembly (ἐκκλησία) suggests not Peter but rather God (2Sam 22:2), perhaps also the rock that is Jerusalem (Rom 9:33). The word here may recall the rock where God stood (Ex 17:6), “Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock [ἐπὶ τῆς πέτρας] in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock [τὴν πέτραν], and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.” In the Greek the masculine πέτρος suggests a small stone—the word occurs in Aquila’s translation at Exodus 4:25, “Then Zipporah took a sharp stone [πέτρον]...” The rock at Horeb that poured forth the water symbolized, in the ultimate sense, God. And in a subordinate sense the Messiah to come (1Cor 10:4), “And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”

בְּיוֹם הַקָּהָל

τῆ ἡμέρα τῆς ἐκκλησίας
‘in the day of the assembly’

Deuteronomy 4:10 *Specially* the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and *that* they may teach their children. (LXX has ἐν Χωρηβ τῆ ἡμέρα τῆς ἐκκλησίας “in Horeb in the day of the assembly”.)

Deuteronomy 10:4 And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me.

Deuteronomy 18:16 According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

The contrast is between Peter (his name) and ‘this rock’ which has to be God. It is called “this rock” when Moses failed to glorify God (Num 20:10), “And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock [ἐκ τῆς πέτρας ταύτης]?” Peter is promised authority and the keys of the kingdom (Mat 16:19), but he is not the foundation of the assembly the Messiah will build.

But does Jesus build his bride? In Genesis it is God who builds Eve (Gen 2:22), and in Rev 19:7 it is prophesied that she “hath made herself ready.” Our verse is not talking about Jesus building his own bride. The contrast, let me suggest, is between Moses at Sinai and Jesus in the future. Moses convoked an assembly at Sinai—it is called the day of the assembly (ἐκκλησία as in Mat 16:8) in Deuteronomy. And except for Joshua and Caleb the gates of hell⁶ did prevail

against all in that assembly (Numbers 14:1-12; Deuteronomy 1:22-40).

If Jesus in the future convokes an assembly in Jerusalem this will not be the case. So perhaps Matthew 16:18 is not talking about the Christian church at all, but a future assembly of all Israel

Matthew 16:18

The play on words

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter [Πέτρος], and upon this rock [πέτρον] I will build my church [ἐκκλησίαν]; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Jesus, of course, would not have been speaking Greek to Peter, and thus the play on words in the original discourse must have been in Aramaic or Hebrew.

In the Peshitta both words are the same, כִּפְתָא *ki'pā*, as in John 1:42, “...thou shalt be called Cephas [Κηφᾶς], which is by interpretation, A stone [πέτρος].” Greek wants masculine names to end in *s*—therefore the name comes into Greek as Κηφᾶς.

In the Shem Tob Matthew the play on words is between אֶבֶן ‘a stone’ and בִּנְיָן ‘I will build’. The first occurrence of this verb is in Genesis 2:22, “And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he [וַיִּבְנֶן ‘and he built’] a woman...” Next is in reference to Cain (Gen 4:17), “and he builded [וַיְבַנֵּה] a city...” God says to David (2Sam 7:27), “I will build [וַיִּבְנֶנִּי] thee an house...”

⁶ πύλαι ᾗδου ‘gates of hell’—same as in Isaiah 38:10 (לִינְשֵׁי בְּשַׁעַר / ἐν πύλαις ᾗδου).

that Jesus will convoke on the true Rock that is God and on this mountain that is Jerusalem. He has already shed the blood of the covenant that he will mediate at that time.

Paul's Allegory

What are we to make of Paul's odd allegory in Galatians 4? To modern ears it sounds like Paul is comparing the covenant to Ishmael and arguing that it has been abolished along with its laws.

21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? 22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise. 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written [Isaiah 54:1],

Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now. 30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.⁷ 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

First what does Paul mean by “under law” (ὕπὸ νόμου)? Paul's argument in Galatians is that the Gentiles do not have to convert and enter the covenant in order to have a place in the World to Come. This is not out of line with Jewish thinking and is likely the meaning here. Paul discourages Gentiles from entering the covenant.

Israel is viewed from at least two perspectives in the Torah. First Israel is a son of God (Exodus 4:22), “And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel *is* my son, *even* my firstborn...” Again God says (Hosea 11:1), “When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” Israel became a nation in Egypt and as such Egypt can be seen as Israel's mother. Thus here for Paul Israel is likened to Ishmael, Abraham's son by the Egyptian slave Hagar. Israel stood at Sinai as God's son—but God's son born of slavery in Egypt.

From the other perspective Israel is a woman who became God's wife via the covenant at Sinai. And here Paul quotes the first verse in Isaiah 54.

1 Sing, O barren, thou *that* didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou *that* didst not travail with child: for more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. 2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them

ὕπὸ νόμου ‘under law’

10 (or 11) occurrences

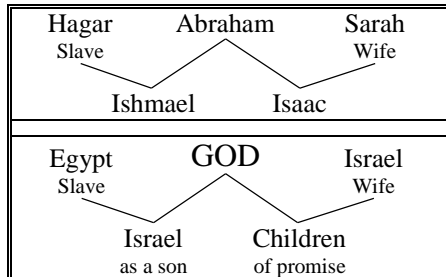
Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not **under the law**, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not **under the law**, but under grace? God forbid.
1 Corinthians 9:20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are **under the law**, as **under the law**, that I might gain them that are **under the law**; 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.
Galatians 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept **under the law**, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.
Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made **under the law**, 5 To redeem them that were **under the law**, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
Galatians 4:21 Tell me, ye that desire to be **under the law**, do ye not hear the law?
Galatians 5:18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not **under the law**.

⁷ Genesis 21:10, “Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, *even* with Isaac.”

stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; 3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. 4 Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. 5 For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

The imagery is from Isaiah—it is not Paul’s invention. Paul merely connects the typology of the patriarchs. The Jerusalem down here is conquered, desolate as in Lamentations 1:13, “From

PATRIARCHAL TYPOLOGY



above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate *and* faint all the day.” But there is a celestial or idealized Jerusalem which is God’s legitimate wife.

The making of the covenant is described in Exodus 19, chapters 20-23 constitute the book of the covenant, and then chapter 24 provides a parallel account of the making of the covenant. Here the blood of the covenant—unmentioned in chapter 19—is detailed in verses 5-8, and also unmentioned in chapter 19 is the wedding supper as if in heaven (Ex 24):

9 Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: 10 And they saw the God of Israel: and *there was* under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in *his* clearness. 11 And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

One need not enter the covenant to be a child of the covenant, and those who are in the covenant are not necessarily children of the covenant spiritually—that is, in agreement with the covenant. Some people in the covenant might even persecute those who are loyal to the covenant—even as there were Israelites who wanted to stone Moses (Exodus 17:4).⁸

But what does Paul mean by “the two covenants” (Gal 4:24)? Israel as God’s son assembled at Sinai would be “the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.” For this let us defer to the next section below. The other covenant is made with “Jerusalem which is above ... the mother of us all.” That is the idealized covenant—the one celebrated at the wedding supper in Exodus 24 and which is to be renewed when Jesus builds his assembly in Jerusalem—hopefully in the not too distant future.

Two Covenants

What are we to make of the following (Jeremiah 7)?

21 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. 22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: 23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

⁸ See Wisse (1992), also the editorials by Engelhard (2015) and by Sharpe (2015).

Wasn't the covenant all about sacrifices? No, not when you read the book of the covenant in Exodus 20-23. When the covenant was made the people agreed to the words of the covenant—called also the book or scroll of the covenant (Exodus 24:7), “And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.” This book begins with the Ten Commandments which are introduced with (Exodus 20:1), “And God spake all these words, saying,” and concludes at the end of chapter 23. Chapter 24, as we have seen, describes the making of the covenant and parallels chapter 19. In chapters 20 through 23—the book or words of the covenant—there are many practical laws as well as the command to keep the Sabbath, observe the three holy day seasons, and in regard to sacrifices there is but this (Exodus 20):

24 An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. 25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. 26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

What does it mean, then, where it says (Hebrews 7:12), “If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people received the law”? When Moses came down from the mountain with the tablets and book of the law, there was no Levitical priesthood.

Here the book of Hebrews has to be referring to a different law.

After the making of the covenant (Exodus 19, 24), seven chapters (25 through 31:11) detail the construction of the tabernacle. These appear to be out of context. Chapter 24 concludes with (verses 12-18), “And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them. ... And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.” The narrative picks up again with the Sabbath covenant (Exodus 31:12-17), and then (verse 18), “And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.” Meanwhile in Exodus 32:

1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go

סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית

τὸ βιβλίον τῆς διαθήκης
The Scroll of the Covenant

Exodus 24:7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.

Exodus 24:12 And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.

Exodus 31:18 And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Exodus 34:28 And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

Deuteronomy 31:26 Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.

2Kings 22:11 And it came to pass, when the king [Josiah] had heard the words of the book of the law [Torah], that he rent his clothes. ... 23:3 And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant. ... 21 And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as *it is* written in the book of this covenant.

Jeremiah 11:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 Hear ye the words of this covenant, and speak unto the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem...

before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me. 3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* unto Aaron. 4 And he received *them* at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 5 And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow *is* a feast to the LORD. 6 And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

The law given under the Levitical priesthood (Hebrews 7:12) would be the law of the tabernacle as laid out in Exodus 25-31. Israel broke the covenant in the sin of the golden calf, and God said to Moses (Ex 32:10), “Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.”

THE TWO COVENANTS

<i>First Covenant</i>	<i>Second Covenant</i>
Israel readily agreed to the terms of the covenant – Ex 19:8; 24:3	Israel broke the covenant and Moses interceded for Israel – Ex 32:11-14; 30-35
God carved out the tablets and God wrote the words – Ex 32:16	Moses carved out the tablets and God wrote the words – Ex 34:1; Dt 10:1-2
Moses smashed the tablets in anger – Ex 32:19	Moses face shined when he returned – Ex 34:29-35
The priests were the firstborn – Ex 24:5	The Levites were the priests – Num 3:45
Moses was on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights – Deut 9:9	Moses was on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights – Ex 34:28

“Over my dead body,” Moses in essence said, and as mediator and advocate he pleaded for Israel. At this time God made another covenant (Exodus 34:10, 27-28), “And he said, Behold, I make a covenant... And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.”

This new covenant contained the same ten commandments, and it also contained the laws of the Levitical priesthood and tabernacle.

When God spared the firstborn in Egypt he sanctified them (Num 8:17), “For all the firstborn of the children of Israel *are* mine, *both* man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.” After the sin of the golden calf God gave the priesthood to Levi (Num 3:44-45), “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: *I am* the LORD.” That Levitical priesthood is now forever. This is recognized in the book of Hebrews when it conceives of Jesus as a heavenly priest (Heb 8:4), “For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law...”

Moses was the mediator of the first covenant (Ex 19:9), “And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, **and believe thee for ever**. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.” Moses recalls that first covenant when he lays out once again the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5):

1 And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. 2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even us*, who *are* all of us here alive this day. 4 The LORD talked with you face to

face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, 5 (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying, 6 I *am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

The new covenant (Jeremiah 31) will not be the first new covenant—as it says (Deut 29:1): “These *are* the words of the covenant, which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.”

The New Covenant is with Israel in the Flesh

If the new covenant is not made with the Church but rather with Israel—is it made with the saved saints of Israel? Has God forsaken his nation in order to covenant with a collective of resurrected immortals? No, not in any literal reading of the new covenant chapter. Rather if God’s wife is the restored Jerusalem and nation, her redemption and renewal will be in the flesh—just as in Isaiah 65:⁹

17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. 19 And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

20 There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner *being* an hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 And they shall build houses, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. 22 They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree *are* the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

הַשָּׁמַיִם הַחֲדָשִׁים וְהָאָרֶץ הַחֲדָשָׁה
ὁ οὐρανὸς καινὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ καινὴ
'the new heavens and the new earth'

Isaiah 65:17 For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18 But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. Isaiah 66:22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. 2Peter 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Ephesians 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: Revelation 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

In Jeremiah also the restoration overshadows the beginning—Jeremiah 23:

7 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; 8 But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

Isaiah speaks of the redemption in a broader, universal sense as a new heavens and a new earth; in Jeremiah it is more narrowly a new covenant (Jer 31:31), and in the verses leading up to verse 31 the people with whom the covenant is made are flesh and blood—for example:

⁹ *Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers* on verse 20: “There shall be no more thence . . .—The prophet sees in the restored city not so much an eternal and a deathless life as the return of the traditional longevity of the prediluvian and patriarchal age (Genesis 5, 11), Life will not be prematurely cut off, as it had been, by pestilence and war. (Comp. Zechariah 8:4.) He who dies at the age of a hundred will be thought of as dying young; even the sinner, dying before his time as the penalty of his guilt, shall live out the measure of a century. The noticeable fact is that sin is thought of as not altogether extinct—as still appearing, though under altered conditions, even in the restored Jerusalem.”

וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים
וְהָפָה יְהוָה לִי לְעָם

'I will be their God,
and they shall be my people'

Genesis 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Exodus 6:7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Leviticus 26:12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

Jeremiah 7:23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

Jeremiah 11:4 Which I commanded your fathers in the day *that* I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God:

Jeremiah 24:7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I *am* the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

Jeremiah 30:22 And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Jeremiah 31:1 At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 31:33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Ezekiel 36:28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Ezekiel 37:27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

7 For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. 8 Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, *and* with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. 9 They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim *is* my firstborn.

Then we come to the actual description of the new covenant:

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: 32 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 an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law [Torah] in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Has this happened yet? Has there been anything that compares to the reunion of the house of Israel with the house of Judah? If not, then the covenant the Messiah mediates is yet future. Now as to the above let us note that the one that needs the Torah in its inward parts is the house of Israel, the house which today generally

equates “Know the LORD!” with something other than Torah —yet here is a New Testament definition of the same (1John 2:3-4): “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

**BOTH HOUSES OF ISRAEL
TO BE REUNITED**

Isaiah 11:12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. 13 The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

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...

Ezekiel 37:19 Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, *even* with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

Hosea 1:11 Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for *great shall be* the day of Jezreel.

God marries his wife anew. For how long? Continuing in Jeremiah 31:

35 Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, *and* the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts *is* his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, *then* the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

Israelite Exceptionalism

But why must God’s wife—the heavenly Jerusalem—the Jerusalem above which is free—be a physical nation? Well, it makes sense. The world needs rulers behind the scenes, resurrected saints not subject to the vagaries of politics and the vicissitudes of aging and death, rulers that are trustworthy and permanent. But the world also needs real flesh and blood humans as examples, real people working to solve everyday problems, real people raising a family, real people in proper religious observance. The nations need the example of real people properly engaged in agriculture, business, education, and entertainment, real people applying wealth and technology in a proper way.

In his sermon on the mount, Jesus did not speak of some broad universalism—rather he said (Matthew 5),

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

John Winthrop, while yet aboard the *Arbella* in 1630, penned his famous sermon, “A Model of Christian Charity”.¹⁰ Winthrop admonished the people “to followe the counsell of Micah, *to doe justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God.*” In so doing, he predicted,

The Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us, as his oune people, and will command a blessing upon us in all our wayes. Soe that wee shall see much more of his wisdome, power, goodness and truthe, than formerly wee haue been acquainted with. Wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when hee shall make us a prayse and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, “the Lord make it likely that of *New England.*” For wee must consider that wee shall be as a citty upon a hill. The eies of all people are upon us. Soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our God in this worke wee haue undertaken, and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a by-word through the world. Wee shall open the mouthes of enemies to speake evill of the wayes of God, and all professors for God’s sake. Wee shall shame the faces of many of God’s worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till wee be consumed out of the good land whither wee are a goeing.

Alexis de Tocqueville, in his *la démocratie en Amérique* (1835-40), called the United States “exceptional”.¹¹ “The position of the Americans is therefore quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no other democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one.” And so we speak of American exceptionalism.¹² America, like no other nation, has provided an example to the world. Yes, at this moment in history that example is indeed in many ways evil. Nevertheless

¹⁰ John Winthrop, *A Modell of Christian Charity*, 1630, <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html>.

¹¹ *Democracy in America*, Volume 2 (1840), page 36.

¹² See also Lipset (1997), Prager (2012a), and Podhoretz (2007).

the world has followed the United States and continues to follow. In the world tomorrow the exceptional nation will be Israel restored in a new covenant in their own land—thus Isaiah 2:

2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

The center will be Jerusalem and “the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger” will be no more, for as it says in the new covenant chapter (Jeremiah 31:6), “For there shall be a day, *that* the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.”

- ✓ Isaiah 66:23 And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.
- ✓ Zechariah 14:16 And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

The Divorce

Why is the house of Judah at this time still in the covenant, visible to the whole world, and thus endlessly subject to anti-Semitism? And why is the house of Israel hidden from the world—even from itself?

The house of Judah was never cut from the covenant, neither from the sign of its people (Gen 17:11) nor from the sign of the Sabbath (Ex 31:12-17). As the old adage goes, “More than Jews have kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept the Jews”¹³ It is also true that God divorced the house of Israel but not the house of Judah—Jeremiah 3:

1 They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD. ... 8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

God promises to take back the house of Israel in a new covenant—Jeremiah 31. But is not this contrary to God's own law? Read it in Deuteronomy 24:

1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife*. 3 And *if* the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth *it* in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her *to be* his wife; 4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that *is* abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

¹³ See <http://www.jewfaq.org/shabbat.htm>.

God is going to violate this law—but is it really God’s law? No, no mention in Deuteronomy 24 that this was from God, no “the LORD spake unto me, saying...” God left poor Moses to contend with the hard hearts of the people. Moses had to be, in a sense, a legislator. Jesus noted this fact in Matthew 19:

8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

God’s wife divides into the two nations pictured as two wives in Ezekiel 23:4—“And the names of them *were* Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus *were* their names; Samaria *is* Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah.” Interestingly, the name Aholah with feminine suffix (אֲהוֹלָה *’āhōlā^h*) can be repointed with 3rd person feminine possessor ‘her’ (אֲהוֹלָהָ *’āhōlāh*) meaning ‘her tabernacle’—in other words she has her own tabernacle. The name Aholibah (אֲהוֹלִיבָהָ *’āhōlibā^h*) might similarly be pointed אֲהוֹלִיבָהָ *’āhōlibā^h* meaning, on the other hand, ‘my tabernacle is in her’. God retained his tabernacle in Judah, as he says (Hosea 11:12), “Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.”

The woman at the well in Samaria—even if Gentile—still represents the house of Israel, even as it says (Hosea 7:8), “Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people...” Jesus tells the woman (John 4:22), “Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.”

Elijah was the prophet to the house of Israel, and when Jesus proclaimed “the acceptable year of the LORD” thus inaugurating his work he said (Luke 4):

25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

If the house of Israel is mingled with the Gentiles, then God will call them out from among the Gentiles. Jesus instructed his disciples (Mat 10:5-6), “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Similarly when Jesus was confronted by a woman in the region where Elijah was fed by the widow he said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15):

21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. 23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. 24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. 26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast *it* to dogs. 27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table. 28 Then Jesus answered and said unto

her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

הַטְּאוֹת יִרְבֵּעַם בְּיָדֵי נָבָט

‘the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat’

1Kings 15:26 And he [Nadab] did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.
1Kings 15:34 And he [Baasha] did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.
1Kings 16:19 For his sins which he [Zimri] sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin.
1Kings 16:26 For he [Omri] walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.
1Kings 16:31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he [Ahab] took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.
1Kings 22:52 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: 53 For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.
2Kings 3:3 Nevertheless he [Jehoram] cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.
2Kings 10:29 Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan.
2Kings 13:2 And he [Jehoahaz] did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.
2Kings 13:11 And he [Jehoash] did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: but he walked therein.
2Kings 14:24 And he [Jeroboam II] did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.
2Kings 15:9 And he [Zechariah] did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.
2Kings 15:18 And he [Menahem] did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.
2Kings 15:24 And he [Pekahiah] did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.
2Kings 15:28 And he [Pekah] did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.
2Kings 17:2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.
2Kings 17:21 For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin. 22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; 23 Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

The house of Israel was cast out because it rejected the sacred sovereignty of Jerusalem and syncretized the service with two golden calves and a fall festival in the eighth month (1Kings 12):

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: 27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. 28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin: the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. 31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. 32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. 33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

That sin has not been repented of to this day, but repentance is coming, even as it is written in the new covenant chapter (Jer 31:6): “For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon

the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.”

Ironically the word here for “watchmen”, נֹצְרִים *nōṣarîm*, is the word which since the first century has been applied to Christians. These “watchmen” appear as adversaries earlier in the book (Jer

4:15), “Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, *that* watchers [נִצְרִיִּים *nōṣarîm*] come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah.” But in the new covenant chapter they undo the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

Though there is much good we can ascribe to the Christian ministry, the Scripture is also critical—Jeremiah 23:

1 Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.
2 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. 3 And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4 And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD. 5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. 7 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; 8 But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

And there is criticism that might be brought against the rabbinical sages, but if the woman in Revelation 12 represents Jerusalem or Zion—the remnant of the covenant which was not divorced—then there is this which is good (Rev 12:6): “And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.” Whatever else this might mean, let us note that 1260 years separate the Siege of Jerusalem¹⁴ which initiated Muslim rule in the city and the First Zionist Congress¹⁵ which began the political struggle to make real the age old cry, “Next Year in Jerusalem!”

Aspects of the covenant—circumcision, Sabbath and Holy Days, the Hebrew Scriptures—they were preserved in the exiled house of Judah which—in spite of all her sins—had remained in the covenant. When Messiah and the resurrected saints (Hebrews 11 et al) appear on the scene, the character and culture of the covenant people will have already been restored in the land, as it says (Zechariah 12):

6 In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, *even* in Jerusalem. 7 The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify *themselves* against Judah. 8 In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David *shall be* as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

¹⁴ See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_\(637\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(637)).

¹⁵ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Zionist_Congress.

The tents of Judah would be saved first! Now Judah indeed has been restored in the land—that is the great fulfillment of end-time prophecy witnessed in the 20th century. And Jerusalem has become a focal point, a stumbling stone and cup of trembling. Judah has already experienced her “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer 30:7)—otherwise known of as the Holocaust or *sho’ah*.

The new covenant prophesies a restoration to the covenant of the lost house. The house of Israel is to be rejoined to the house of Judah. The bones in the valley of dry bones are the bones of the lost house (Ezek 37:11), “Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.” There is also the imagery of the two sticks (or trees):

15 The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, 16 Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel his companions: 17 And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. 18 And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou *meanest* by these? 19 Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, *even* with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. 20 And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. 21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: 22 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: 23 Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

Read that carefully! The stick of Judah is already in God’s hand, and when the stick of Ephraim is joined to it then both sticks are in the hand of God—both houses in the covenant once again

The new covenant is about restoring the lost house of Israel to the covenant. Thus Jesus said (Mat 15:24), “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” The call is not to everyone, as he said (John 6:44), “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” And thus in the new covenant chapter God declares in the prophetic past (Jer 31),

1 At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. 2 Thus saith the LORD, The people *which were* left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; *even* Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. 3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

Jesus said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him...” And in the new covenant future God will say, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

The Children of the Covenant are Children of the Resurrection

How far might we take this imagery of God's marriage? Well, if we don't stretch it for all it's worth, how shall we ever know? Thus—if we are sons of God, are we sons by a legitimate marriage? And if so, does the Bible mention a marriage? Yes, of course it does. That marriage is the covenant that God made at Sinai.

The wife is the collective—God is never pictured as married to individuals. God is no individual person's husband—rather as individuals we are sons and daughters of God (2Cor 6:18).

Individuals enter the covenant via circumcision—they are then citizens of the nation. But God married the idealized Jerusalem—not individuals separately. From the perspective of the marriage, the individuals are children, and children do not enter the marriage covenant of their parents.

Thus God becomes our father and Jerusalem our mother. How is it that Jerusalem can be our mother? God begets (Psalm 2:7) and Jerusalem brings to birth (Isaiah 66:7).

Jerusalem is the mother of us all (Galatians 4:26). She is a spiritual city of patriarchs and prophets and apostles that nurtures us. The trials and tribulations we face are called birth pains (Mat 24:8 - NIV): "All these are the beginning of birth pains." This word for 'birth pangs' also occurs in Acts 2:24, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Here, as Charles Ellicott notes,¹⁶ "If we take the Greek word in its full meaning, the Resurrection is thought of as a new birth as from the womb of the grave." The womb is Jerusalem's and in this figurative sense parturition is via a resurrection from the dead.

God's wife is pictured as pregnant in Revelation 12:

1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

GOD IS MARRIED TO ISRAEL

Isaiah 54:1 Sing, O barren, thou *that* didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou *that* didst not travail with child: for more *are* the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. ... 5 For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. 6 For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. 7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

Isaiah 62:4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

Isaiah 66:7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.

Jeremiah 2:2 Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land *that was* not sown.

Jeremiah 3:4 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

Jeremiah 4:31 For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, *and* the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, *that* bewaileth herself, *that* spreadeth her hands, *saying*, Woe *is* me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers.

Ezekiel 23:4 And the names of them *were* Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus *were* their names; Samaria *is* Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah.

¹⁶ Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers – <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/acts/2-24.htm>

This woman is pregnant and obviously married. She brings forth a son to rule all nations with a rod of iron—this is God’s son (Psalm 2:7-9), and therefore this woman is God’s wife. She is

בְּרִית עוֹלָם

An Everlasting Covenant

Genesis 9:16 And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth.
Genesis 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. ... 13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. ... 19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him.
Exodus 31:16 Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, *for* a perpetual covenant.
Numbers 25:13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, *even* the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.
2Samuel 23:5 Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant...
Isaiah 24:5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.
Isaiah 55:3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David.
Isaiah 61:8 For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Jeremiah 32:40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.
Jeremiah 50:4 In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God. 5 They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, *saying*, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant *that* shall not be forgotten.
Ezekiel 16:60 Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.
Ezekiel 37:26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.
Psalm 105:8 He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations. 9 *Which covenant* he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; 10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, *and* to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant: 11 *Saying*, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance: 12 When they were *but* a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.
1Chronicles 16:17 And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, *and* to Israel *for* an everlasting covenant, 18 *Saying*, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; 19 When ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it.

surrounded with the symbolism of the 4th day in Genesis, and indeed Messiah is born toward the end of the fourth millennium. The passion of Christ is here couched in terms of the birth pangs of the woman, and the son ascends lest the dragon get to him.

One is begotten of God now (1John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18), parturition does not occur until the resurrection (Rev 12:5), “And she brought forth a man child...” Jesus is called the firstborn from the dead (Col 1:18; Rev 1:5), and the firstborn among many brethren (Rom 8:29).

Though not yet birthed, we are indeed sons now (1John 3:2), “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” But being a son of God means being a son of the resurrection (Luke 20:36): “Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

He who is an Israelite or Jew is nevertheless mortal just like anyone else. Being a child of Abraham and within the covenant does not guarantee eternal life. For that one must become a son of God spiritually. Those who make up the covenant people—which is God’s wife—are Israelites in the flesh. A child of the covenant might be anyone of any nation including of course Judah and Israel, as it says (Micah 4:2), “And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the

LORD from Jerusalem.” Paul gives eloquent testimony to this most profound truth—that sonship is open to all—the passage is in Romans 8:

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.

ΓΕΝΝΑΪΟ vs. ΤΙΚΤΩ

‘beget’ vs. ‘give birth’

Psalm 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee [תָּרַךְ / γεγέννηκά σε].

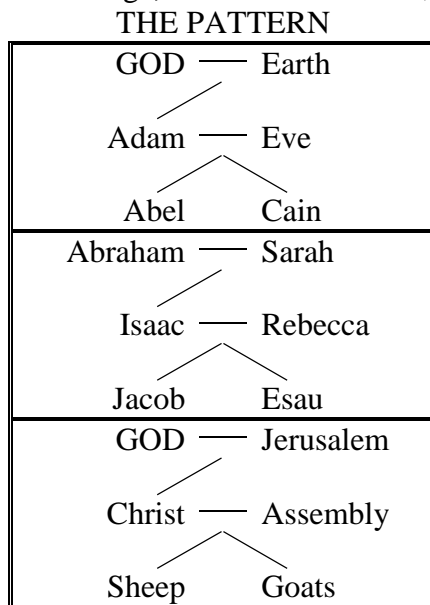
John 1:12-13 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: Which were born [ἐγεννήθησαν], not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Isaiah 66:7 Before she travailed, she brought forth [הָרָה / τέκεῖν] before her pain came, she was delivered [הִשְׁלִימָהּ / ἔτεκεν] of a man child.

Revelation 12:5 And she brought forth [ἔτεκεν] a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and *to his throne*.

The Marriage of the Lamb is not the New Covenant

In Genesis the apex of the creation is man. When God says (Genesis 1:26), “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness....,” he is speaking to his heavenly court—or, in light of Genesis 2:7 (“And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground...”), perhaps he is speaking to the land, as it says (Isaiah 62:2), “...for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.” From a millennial perspective God is speaking to his wife the celestial Jerusalem.



Does the image of God include being created male and female? It would seem so in Genesis 1:17, “So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” In like manner, if God is male and the celestial Jerusalem female, then God’s image should have a female counterpart. Thus Eve, in New Testament typology, pictures the church (Ephesians 5):

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall

be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

The reference is to Genesis 2:23-24, “And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

Jesus, as we have seen, is not the husband of the new covenant but rather its mediator. If the assembly that Jesus builds (Matthew 16:18) is God’s wife, that assembly cannot also be Jesus’ wife.

The church or assembly (ἐκκλησία) is pictured as the body of Christ—also symbolized by the bread of the last supper (Mat 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1Cor 11:24). Even as Eve was yet part of the body of Adam before God built her from one of Adam’s ribs, so also is the bride of Christ part of the body of Christ before God presents her to Christ. Thus Jesus builds his assembly for the new covenant; whereas the assembly that will be his bride makes herself ready (Rev 19):

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

There is in the book of Revelation the imagery of three women: the “great whore” (Rev 17), the mother of Messiah (Rev 12), and the new Jerusalem (Rev 21). Of the latter it says (Rev 21:2), “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” This is the wife of Messiah (verse 9-10): “And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God...”

Of the Father’s wife it says (Rev 12:5), “And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron...” This was at the end of the fourth millennium. If, at least from one perspective, the seven assemblies in the book of Revelation are millennial, then there is accord with the reward of the fourth assembly (Rev 2:26-28),

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star.

Jesus says (Rev 22:16), “I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star.” The Messiah returns at the end of the sixth millennium when his wife has made herself ready, and the description of the city in Revelation 21 meshes with the reward of the sixth millennium (Rev 3:12):

Σῶμα Χριστοῦ

‘body of Christ’

Romans 7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Romans 8:10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

Romans 12:5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

1Corinthians 6:15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid. ... 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

1Corinthians 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we *being* many are one bread, *and* one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

1Corinthians 12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ.

1Corinthians 12:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ... 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence.

Colossians 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is new* Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.

The new covenant, as we have seen, is made with Israel in the flesh. The marriage of the lamb will be made with resurrected saints—from a rib, so to speak, in the body of Christ. We should, however, note that God’s wife is also a spiritual entity—a spiritual structure that encompasses the physical seed of Abraham.

The woman in biblical symbolism signifies a city. The king covenants not with individual citizens but with the collective—the city—the bureaucracy through which he governs. Jesus said (John 14:2), “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.” Here the house is the government and the mansions (μοναὶ ‘abodes’) are individual offices of authority. According to Podles (1999), the feminization of western Christendom resulted from the mistaken notion that Jesus marries the individual.

Romans 7

Paul’s marriage analogy in Romans 7 is difficult to understand. We simply are not privy to images and metaphors current in first century Judaism. Is Paul talking about the covenants of God? Is he saying that the Sinai covenant is abrogated along with its ethics, its laws and its rituals? Is he saying that even as the covenant was a marriage between the Trinity and Israel, so also that marriage was absolved by the death of the second member of that Trinity? Or, as the Binitarian might put it, is he saying that even as the preexistent Christ married Israel at Sinai, so also Christ in his death was released from that marriage and therefore free to marry another—namely the Church?

Thusly has Romans 7 been interpreted! Here, however, are the relevant verses:

1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. 3 So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

Paul is addressing Jews—“for I speak to them that know the law”—which assumes that the imagery would have been accessible to them. The marriage analogy pertains not to the individual but to the group—to the body of Christ (1Cor 12:27), “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” The imagery further recalls Eve, who was built from the body of Adam (Eph 5:32): “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

Now if the plurality (ὁμεῖς ‘ye’ – v. 4) that is to wed the risen Messiah must become dead to the law (v. 4) and be delivered from it (v. 6), what law would that be? It is,

metaphorically speaking, like the law that binds a woman to her husband (vv. 1-3). But if this refers to God’s marriage to Israel (Jer 3:14), how then would Israel be released from that covenant through the body of Christ? The death that absolves a marriage is the death

יָצָר הָרַע *yēšer hārāʿ*

‘the inclination of evil’

Genesis 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination [יָצָר *yēšer*] of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil [רַע *ra*] continually.

Genesis 8:21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination [יָצָר *yēšer*] of man’s heart *is* evil [רַע *ra*] from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

of one of the parties, and the covenant at Sinai was between God and Israel. Messiah was a child of the covenant—a son of God (Rom 1:4) and of God’s wife (Gal 4:26; Rev 12:5) as linked via that covenant (Isaiah 54:5; Jer 3:14).

To what, then, is the body of Christ bound—by analogy—as in a marriage covenant? It is bound to the human nature in each of its members—figuratively as by “a covenant with death” (Isaiah 28:15, 18), bound to an ‘evil inclination’ (called a *yetzer ra* ‘ by the Jewish

sages). In our passage Paul calls it a law that “did work in our members” (v. 5). He further clarifies in v. 23: “But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” The law of Paul’s mind would be the law of God—the law that entered his mind via the Torah—this via human language and not from physical urges and emotions. The law in his members Paul calls “...the law of sin and death.” (Rom 8:2) Thus the body of Christ is wedded to sin which we are expected to overcome (Rom 6):

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.
 13 Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

How, then, might we “become dead to the law by the body of Christ”? The body or collective of which we are members is one that overcomes, even as Christ overcame and now advocates for us (Heb 4:15), “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin.” It’s not that Christ died in our stead—rather as part of the body we all face persecution (John 15:20): “Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.”

Paul says (Rom 6:23), “For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The death that sin earns, however, is not the death common to man (Heb 9:27): “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”. As Jesus said (Mat 10:28), “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” The wages of sin are paid in the judgment—that death is called “the second death” (Rev 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8).

Eternal life is a gift—earned neither by Christ nor by us his brethren. It is imparted through the mercy or grace of God. But that mercy will not be there if I do not wrestle against the evil inclination, “the law of sin which is in my members.” To absolve us from our covenant with sin

we must kill the sin (Rom 8:13), “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

When the body of Christ is finally freed from the evil inclination, then, as it says (v. 4), “ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead”. Then it will come to pass, as it written (Rev 19:7), “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”

The Good News of the Kingdom of God

Here we might ask, What hath the covenant to do with the gospel? If the Messiah is the mediator of a new covenant between God and Israel, then how does this relate to the gospel of the kingdom of God that Jesus preached? And just what is “the kingdom of God”? How does it differ from the kingdom of Israel?

With the death of apostles, the gospel of the kingdom of God was forgotten, and in its place a gospel about the person of Christ was preached.¹⁷ But Jesus came with a specific message about the future—a message that rooted in the Law and the Prophets.

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ

Daniel prophesied of the kingdom (Dan 2:44): “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” This kingdom is for “the latter days” (verse 28)—it is not a kingdom of this world (Mat 4:8; John 18:36), rather it replaces the kingdoms of this world. But its personnel are being trained now, and then later, as it says (Dan 7:18), “But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.”

The book of Hebrews begins by comparing the Messiah to the angels—verses 4-5: “Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time [Psalm 2:7], Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again [2Samuel 7:14], I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?” More fully the latter is (2Samuel 7:14), “I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men...” The reference is obviously to the king in Jerusalem. And that the king is the heir of Adam is clear in Hebrews 2:

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
Matthew 13:10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.
Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.
Mark 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.
Mark 4:11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables: 12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.
Luke 4:43 And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.
Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. 6 But one in a certain place testified, saying [Psalm 8:4-6],

¹⁷ See Buzzard (1988).

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? 7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.

For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

That the Psalm refers to Genesis is evident in verses 7-8 where “all things” are enumerated: “All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, **INHERIT THE KINGDOM** *and whatsoever* passeth through the paths of the seas.”

<p>Matthew 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...</p> <p>James 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?</p> <p>1Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? ...</p> <p>1Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.</p> <p>Galatians 5:19-20 Now the works of the flesh are manifest ... they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.</p>

The replacement theology of Scripture has a régime of angels replaced by the heirs of Adam. Yes, of course, we are emissaries of the kingdom here in this world at this time (Mat 12:28; Luke 11:20; 17:21). The kingdom advances on two fronts. Even now, as Nebuchadnezzar was to learn, “...the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will...” (Dan 4:17, 25 32; 5:21). This rule also comes via a covenant—the covenant of the rainbow wherein Noah and his children are given dominion similar to that which Adam is given at the end of the sixth day thus signifying the sixth millennium.

Genesis 9

1 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. 2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth *upon* the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

Genesis 1

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

A special word—*mabbûl* (מַבּוּל)—names the flood of Noah. The word occurs in the flood account in Genesis and then in Psalm 29:10, “The LORD sitteth upon the flood [לְמַבּוּל]; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.” God rules in the kingdom of men via the children of Noah. Even though the Adversary is the god of this world (2Cor 4:4), God is the highest king of the kingdom of God (Psalm 95:3), “For the LORD *is* a great God, and a great King above all gods.” God presides over three branches of government and he is the primary savior (Isaiah 33:22), “For the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our lawgiver, the LORD *is* our king; he will save us.”

The kingdom of God is like a great family.

God is the king and Jerusalem is the queen and together they bring forth children to eternal life—children who will replace the angels which now hold sway and lead man astray. God and Israel (Jerusalem) are linked by a covenant of marriage, and God will not set his hand to save the world until he has saved Israel his wife. Together they will reign over the nations with their son the Messiah and his queen.

The family in Genesis pictures the kingdom of God—God as father and Adam as son and heir. The son is given dominion at the end of the sixth day, thus becoming lord even of the Sabbath (Mat 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5). The devil is bound and the Messiah and the saints reign during the millennial Sabbath (Revelation 20:4):

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

God works six days fashioning his kingdom and readying the world. Noah's children migrated out from Babylon after the flood and established nations and empires. They alone were literate and it is they who have carried civilization to the ends of the earth. At the same time God has been calling a few who will staff his government and educational system in the world tomorrow.

Adam is heir to the kingdom and the heirs of Adam are Israel and Israel's Messiah (Luke 3:31-38), "...which was *the son* of David ... which was *the son* of Abraham ... which was *the son* of Adam, which was *the son* of God." Daniel also prophesied of the son (Daniel 7):

13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

The kingdom of God is not some ethereal realm with no basis in our reality. It is not an unorganized entity, a feel-good amalgamation of peoples. Rather the kingdom of God is knit together via a series of covenants—the exact number being somewhat controversial. The covenant of the rainbow, as we have seen, established God's highest throne. The covenants with Abraham established a land and a people, and the Sinai covenant God's marriage to that people and land. Other covenants made permanent the priesthood of Aaron and the throne of David in that land—Jeremiah 33:

14 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. 15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. 16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness. 17 For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; 18 Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.

19 And the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying, 20 Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; 21 *Then* may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. 22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.

23 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 24 Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the LORD hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. 25 Thus saith the LORD; If my covenant *be* not with day and night, *and if* I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; 26 Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, *so* that I will not take *any* of his seed *to be* rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

COVENANTS OF GOD

	Verses	Purpose	Sign
Covenant with Noah	Gen 6:18; 9:9, 11, 13, 15, 16	Established the highest throne	Rainbow
Covenant with Abraham 1	Gen 15:18	Promised the land	
Covenant with Abraham 2	Gen 17—mentioned 13 times	Established a people	Circumcision
Covenant of Sabbath	Ex 16; 31:12-18 (בְּרִית עֹלָם); Lev 24:8	Established the Sabbath	Sabbath
Covenant with Israel	Ex 19:5; 24:7-8	God's marriage	
Covenant with Moses	Ex 34:10, 12, 15, 27, 28	Levitical priesthood & tabernacle	
Covenant in plains of Moab	Dt 29:1		
Covenant with Phinehas	Num 25:13	Established priesthood forever	
Covenant with David	2Sam 7:12-16	Established Adam's throne	
A new Covenant	Jer 31	Restores the house of Israel	

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