

THE BIBLICAL COVENANTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

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“The significance of covenant for the New Testament cannot be gauged simply by the frequency with which the word “covenant” appears on its pages, namely 33 times, mostly in Paul (9 times) and Hebrews (17 times)...the theme of covenant is explicitly touched on by Paul only in Romans 11, 1 Corinthians 11, 2 Corinthians 3, and Galatians 4, but it can be said to underlie his teachings as a significant subtext.”

- Andreas J. Kostenberger and Gregory Goswell, *Biblical Theology: A Canonical, Thematic & Ethical Approach*, 695.

Covenant Concepts: Messiah/Christ; Kingdom; Atonement

Kingdom:

Lk. 1:32-33; 11:2; 19:11; Matt. 19:28; 25:31; Acts 1:6; 2 Thess. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 2:5; 12:28; 2 Pet. 1:11; Rev. 11:15

To speak of the coming Kingdom is to speak of the Davidic Covenant

Atonement:

Christ was made a sacrifice (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 10:12). His sacrifice was a New covenant sacrifice (Heb. 9:11-15).

“In the cross, the being who is love and the enactment of that love are united in one atoning sacrifice, the infinite wellspring of life-giving covenantal grace and mercy.”

- James P. Ware, *Paul's Theology in Context*, 117.

The Covenant Christ

The NT clearly relates the term “Christ” to the covenants with Abraham, David and the New Covenant (e.g., Matt. 1:16-17; 22:42; Lk. 22:20; Jn. 7:42; 8:56; Acts 3:25-26; Rom. 1:3; Heb. 13:20-21).

The title (or honorific) “Christ” is a covenant title:

“Indeed, the title [*Christos*]...has by no means lost its messianic connotations...Wherever in Paul’s letters we read the name “Christ,” the suggestion that he is the royal Son, Israel’s expected King, is not far in the background.”

– Richard B. Hays, *Reading with the Grain of Scripture*, 153-154.

Galatians 3, Christ, and the Abrahamic Covenant

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed...”

Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ...

And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

- Galatians 3:8, 15-16, 29 cf. Rom. 4:16.

“AND NOW I STAND AND AM JUDGED FOR THE HOPE OF THE PROMISE MADE BY GOD TO OUR FATHERS. TO THIS *PROMISE* OUR TWELVE TRIBES, EARNESTLY SERVING *GOD* NIGHT AND DAY, HOPE TO ATTAIN.” - ACTS 26:6-7.

Christ and the Davidic Covenant in the Gospels

“The Gospels must be read against the backdrop of a strong expectation that God would soon act to reestablish the Davidic Dynasty.”

- Larry Helyer, *Exploring Jewish Literature of the Second Temple Period*, 59.

An Example:

“Son of David” in Matthew – 9:27-30; 12:22-23; 15:22-28; 20:30-34.

Matthew connects “Son of David” with Christ’s healings.

N.B. Matthew 19:28: “in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory...”

“WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE CHRIST? WHOSE SON IS HE?” THEY [THE PHARISEES] SAID TO HIM, ‘THE SON OF DAVID.’”

– MATTHEW 22:42.

The Davidic Covenant in Paul

“Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh...”

- Romans 1:1-3.

“that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords...”

- – 1 Timothy 6:14-15.

“Paul did not view the Davidic covenant as being fulfilled in the present...Paul’s lack of discussion on the Davidic covenant may coincide with the picture presented in other scripture passages in which Jesus will assume the Davidic throne in connection with His Second coming to earth (Matt. 19:28; 25:31; Rev. 3:21).”

- Michael J. Vlach, “The Eschatology of the Pauline Epistles,” in *The Return of Christ: A Premillennial Perspective*, eds. David L. Allen & Steve W. Lemke, 244.

Quotations of Isaiah 42 & 49 in the NT

**“I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people,
as a light to the Gentiles” – Isaiah 42:6**

**“It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob...I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles.”
– Isaiah 49:6**

- Matthew 12:15-21

- Luke 2:32

- Acts 13:46-47

- Acts 26:16-18

- 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

**“The personification of the covenant
by the Servant is...remarkable”**

– Larry D. Pettegrew, “The New Covenant,” MSJ
10 (Fall 1999), 262.

**These uses of two prominent
Messianic New covenant passages in
the NT strongly suggest that the
Gentiles/Church are a party to the
New Covenant in Christ.**

Paul and the New Covenant

“[C]learly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh [Ezek. 36:26], that is, of the heart [Jer. 31:33]. And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant [Jer. 31:31], not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

– 2 Corinthians 3:3-6. (My emphasis).

Nearly every NT scholar says Paul cites Jeremiah 31 & Ezekiel 36.

Paul and the New Covenant

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you...In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’” – 1 Corinthians 11:23a, 25.

“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?” – 1 Corinthians 10:16.

This is going to be enlarged upon by the writer of Hebrews

Covenant in Hebrews

Mosaic Covenant

3:2-5 – “House” Servant

7:14 - Priesthood

8:5; 9:1-10 – Earthly Tabernacle

8:7 - Faulty

9:19 – Repeated Offerings

12:18-21 – Mt. Sinai

New Covenant

3:6 – “House” Lord

8:1, 6 – High Priesthood

9:11-12 – Heavenly Tabernacle

9:11 – Perfect

10:12, 18 – One Offering

12:22-24 – Mt. Zion

It's All About Jesus Christ

Christ is High Priest of the New Covenant – Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:15; 6:20

Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant – Heb. 9:15; 12:24

Christ is the New Covenant Sacrifice – Heb. 9:26

Christ is the Covenant-Making “Animal” – Heb. 9:16-17, 25-26

Covenant in Revelation

“A bedrock of the Apocalypse is that Jesus is the Davidic Messiah” –
Joshua W. Jipp, *The Messianic Theology of the New Testament*, 286.

“And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.’”

- Revelation 21:3.