

The New Covenant

There are a number of topics in the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke that we Church Age believers wrongly apply to us. Quite frankly, I believe **nothing** in those three books applies **doctrinally** to us.

Before I give you a couple examples, I want to just briefly tell you why that's my understanding. The New Testament begins where the Old Testament left off, just a few hundred years later. It's still centered entirely on the Jews: their laws, their promised kingdom and its King, their land, their prophecies, etc. Jesus does not talk about the Church Age. Period. Paul is the one to whom the mystery of the Church Age was revealed and he does just that throughout his epistles of Romans to Philemon.

Now for those examples, if you're still with me! Though I won't go into depth on these in this article, I'm sure you'd be blessed to research them on your own.

- The Beatitudes. If you read Matthew chapters 5 and 6 (and on), you'll not see the gospel as explained by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 in these chapters at all. Why? Because it's talking about the Jewish Kingdom, the Millennium. Entrance into that kingdom is **not** the same as salvation in our age. Yes, the Church will be there, but not via the same route nor in the same capacity.
- Matthew 24 and 25. Absolutely nothing to do with the Church or the Church Age. Matthew 24:3 is the key. The disciples are asking Jesus about 1) the event of the 'not one stone here will be left on another,' 2) the sign of His coming, and 3) the end of the age. No. 1 was answered concerning 70 AD; Nos. 2 and 3 are about the future Daniel's 70th Week, the Great Tribulation, the Second Coming and the judgment that follows. That means no Church in the parables of the Ten Virgins nor in the Sheep and Goat Judgment. Shocking, I know.

The Last Supper in Matthew 26 would be another example, but with a caveat. Since we find mention of this in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, we know it applies in some way to us. I believe that Paul is looking back at the Last Supper and acknowledging the observance of it. Proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes is certainly not improper for the Church to do; I just think it's more **symbolic** for us whereas its direct application is for the Jew in Daniel's 70th week.

Why do I say that?

The answer lies in the title of this article. The New Covenant.

Matt. 26:28 & 29 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. (Also Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:16-20.)

Though, obviously – and thankfully -- Jesus' death/shed blood opened the door to salvation for us in the Church Age, it did so much more. Through it, He not only fulfilled the Jewish Law, but He instituted a New Covenant **with the Jews**. He closes out the above verses by connecting this event with the future Jewish Kingdom wherein He will again drink of the fruit of the vine with them.

Now, going back to the 'Jewishness' of the Synoptic Gospels, we see John the Baptist and Jesus both preaching repentance 'for the Kingdom is at hand.' Repentance of Israel nationally so their kingdom could come. Numerous OT prophecies stated this requirement of national repentance (Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Zechariah and others).

Repent and be baptized – speaking to the Jews!

At the Last Supper, you'll remember Jesus was testifying that he was offering the New Covenant through his blood to Israel. If this NC was for the Church, you'd think we'd see it mentioned time and again throughout the New Testament. (NASB has it in 2 Corinthians 3:6 whereas KJV has new testament. The reference seems to be about the Church's role through the Spirit and not the Law.) Yet 'New Covenant' isn't found anywhere else in the NT except for in the book of Hebrews. And 'covenant' is found only rarely in the NT epistles: Acts 3:25 mentioned above; Acts 7:8 referring to Abraham; Romans 11:27 an OT quote about Israel; Galatians 3:15-17 OT again with Abraham.

But guess which NT book has 'covenant' referenced **14** times -- Hebrews! Not a Pauline epistle to us, but the book of Hebrews. *Hebrews*.

In the following Hebrews excerpts, I'm focusing on three main ideas.

- 1) The unmistakable Jewishness of this book. Some of these will be *italicized* as examples.
- 2) How Jesus is the guarantor of the Jewish New Covenant (NC).
- 3) Maintaining/persevering. All underlined portions are noted to show you that this is a non-Church Age timeframe. These people must maintain/persevere to the end. No eternal security promised to them, like we have.

All three ideas go hand in glove when you understand the way the Bible is divided, which I discuss in my book and the other articles on this site.

Hebrews 1 the author is comparing/contrasting OT revelation/instruction through the prophets via the Law vs.

‘in these last days’ revelation/instruction through the New Covenant offered by Jesus’ shed blood. (Remember Matthew 26:28.) He’s also noting Jesus’ superiority to the angels.

Chapter 2 he’s exhorting the Hebrews to not drift from that which they’ve heard. Also Jesus came in the flesh “in order that he might become a merciful and faithful *high priest* in service to God, and that he might *make atonement* for the sins of the people.” Obviously a Jewish theme.

Chapter 3 “Fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest” in verse 1. And, “...if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory” in verse 6. Verses 7-11 confirming he’s speaking to the Jewish people by referencing the rebellion in the hearts of *their ancestors* while in the wilderness. Verses 12 and 14 back on the subject of remaining faithful: “¹² See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.”

Chapter 4 continues on with the need for faith and obedience. Among others is verse 14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

Chapter 6 is beautiful when you realize it’s not about Church Age believers losing salvation, which cannot happen. It’s post-Church Age doctrine to the Jews who, indeed, can lose their salvation if they don’t maintain. Remember, different rules for God’s Chosen People and God’s Church. (See Daniel’s Chart tab.)

Here’s verses 4-6, 9-12. ⁴ It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age ⁶ and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance... ⁹ Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation. ¹⁰ God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have

helped his people and continue to help them.¹¹ We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. ¹²We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Most, if not all, of your commentaries will go on and on 'clarifying' what these verses 'really mean' when that's not necessary. They do **not** apply to us! They mean what they say!!

Chapter 7 focusing back on Jesus as the guarantor of a better covenant. Verse 22 Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant.

In Chapter 8 we see the author again reaching out to the Jews to get them to understand why they should accept Jesus and the New Covenant He's offered.

Verse 6 But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.

Chapter 8:7-13 contain the key to this whole idea that the NC is with the Jews, superseding their prior covenant and not with the Church in the Church Age:

⁷ For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. ⁸ But God found fault with the people and said:

"The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

⁹ It will not be like the *covenant I made with their ancestors* when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

¹⁰ *This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.*

I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

¹¹ No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,'

because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

¹² *For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.*"

(Jeremiah 31:31-34)

¹³ By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.

This is entirely about the Jews being established in their future kingdom. The NC through Jesus' shed blood is all about God fulfilling the OT promises He made to them.

Chapter 9:15 should need no explanation.

¹⁵ For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

And when does He set them free? Verse 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Some repetition of Chapter 9 in Chapter 10. Then more talk about perseverance.

²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful... ²⁶ If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷ but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

Verse 36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Now I'm going to step out there and offer you a slightly different take on Hebrews 11. I think you need to go back to 10:36 to get the correct context. We saw just above how that verse is looking forward to what Tribulation Jews need to do to receive what God has promised. How that's clarified is in verses 10:37 through all of 11. Though we Church Age believers like to say chapter 11 is all about OT believers who 'looked forward to the cross' and 'had faith in Jesus' death, burial and resurrection,' I believe that

is wrong. Verses 37 through chapter 11 are using prior examples of faithfulness defined by those who **didn't shrink back**; who believed God, had faith in what He said and **acted accordingly**.

Verse 39 of chapter 11 looks back to verse 39 of chapter 10 Those who have faith and are saved. They have not yet received what's been promised because they're made to wait for their brethren in the Tribulation to join with them and receive the promises together (Millennium and beyond).

And you can forget all the confusion on Chapter 12:1-3:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

It's the final tying together of this section. The cloud of witnesses is the prior faithful Jews. The soon-to-be Tribulation Jews are to look back at the just-listed prior faithful Jews and with that encouragement, 'throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles,' etc, so they don't lose heart and give up!

(Do you need more assurance that those in the Tribulation must endure/maintain? Read James. It'll floor you if read as written: to the Tribulation Jews! I personally believe 1 Peter through Jude are also for that time period.)

So for the Jews, it goes from the Last Supper in Matthew, Mark and Luke discussing the New Covenant straight to the book of Hebrews, clarifying for THEM why Jesus qualifies as the guarantor of the NC – of **their** New Covenant.

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