

THE LAW COVENANT

The History of Israel from Judges to Jesus

What is meant by the words “The Old Testament?” It has come to mean all the books of the Bible before the book of Matthew. But its essential meaning is much more specific. “The Old Testament” refers to a contract, or covenant, made between God and his people, the Israelites, centering on Moses and later reaffirmed with Joshua. It is stated in **Deuteronomy 26:16–19**

The LORD your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. You have declared this day that the LORD is your God and that you will walk in his ways, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws, and that you will obey him.

And the LORD has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised, and that you are to keep all his commands. He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honor high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he promised.

The agreement between God and Israel requires something on the part of each party. The Israelites must maintain faith in the “Laws, decrees and Commandments” of God. If so done, God will make sure that Israel realizes a blessed destiny as the central nation of the world. **Deuteronomy 28:1–7**

*If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above **all the nations on earth**. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God:*

You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. The fruit

of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.

Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed. You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out. The LORD will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven.

The status of this agreement is the core determinate in the course of the unfolding of events in Israel leading up to the coming of Christ. Read the entire 28th chapter of Deuteronomy. In it God outlines all the “Blessings” if Israel maintains faith. However, God also outlines all the curses “if” they break with faith in the Laws, decrees and Commandments of God.

“IF”

Christians are not comfortable when God uses a word like, “if.” In the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, God explains that “if” Israel has faith they will be blessed, but “if” they do not have faith, they will be cursed.

“IF?!” . . . wait a minute . . . you’re God! What’s with this “if” business? I mean, don’t you know what they are going to do? In fact, I thought it was up to you what was supposed to happen and what Israel is predestined to do.

Apparently not, in fact, only the Principle perspective can shed proper light on the nature of God’s relationship with Israel. God is giving the nation a portion of responsibility. They are going to play a central role in the outcome. It is the same parameters that enveloped the relationship of Adam and Eve with God. “If” they had kept the commandment, they would have had life.

God relates to the Chosen People in this manner because he has not changed his Principle. Thus, their faith in the laws, decrees, and commandments of God is the pathway to the fulfillment of God’s will. That Will must be for a Blessed Israel to be realized. An Israel that “is the head and never is the tail.”

Now we could perhaps launch into an elaborate explanation about how God’s will is for goodness only and so forth, but rather than doing so we can relate to God’s own declaration in **Deuteronomy 30:19**:

*This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. **Now choose life**, so that you and your children may live.*

Any questions about which choice God prefers for Israel? Let Deut. 30:19 dispel any notion that God is indifferent to which course Israel chooses.

The process of restoration places Israel in "the midway position" thus they need to set up a condition to stand on God's side. This is the meaning of the Laws, Decrees and Commandments. It is the condition necessary to come to God's side. However, if the Israelites break faith with God, they will have to set a secondary course of indemnity.

This two-fold potential centering on Israel's responsibility is what established a primary and secondary course in God's providence of restoration. God's primary Will for his people is that they receive his word and keep faith. God's secondary Will for his people is, "if" they fail, that they set up a course of indemnity to restore their previous position and status. (**1 Samuel 14:14**). God does not determine the outcome without man's participation, that is, the fulfillment or failure in his portion of responsibility.

The more we can see the manifestation of this primary and secondary dynamic in the history leading up to Jesus, the more we will be able to recognize Jesus' own ministry within that same matrix.

Thus, "if" Israel fulfills its responsibility and keeps faith, God will be able to lead the nation toward its destiny "to be the head" and not the tail. This is God's primary will. However, "if" Israel rejects the Laws, Decrees and Commandments of God and moves down the path toward curses, it would be at that time that God would send a prophet to implore the rebellious people to repent and return to the original path.

No prophet ever appeared when the people of Israel were headed properly to the destiny of "Blessing." The secondary (or consequential) path is always less preferred. In fact, it is not preferred at all. Look what God says about that course in **Ezekiel 33:11**

*Say to them, "As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take **no pleasure** in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! **Why will you die**, O house of Israel?"*

This shows that when Israel turned from their Primary destiny, God would intervene through a prophet's voice to encourage repentance and return. God "takes no pleasure" in having to invoke the tragic course of the secondary path of indemnity.

God also indicates that if ever the curse is invoked upon Israel, it will not be because of his "Will" but rather as a result of Israel failing in her role of responsibility. See **Deuteronomy 29:24-25**

All the nations will ask: "Why has the LORD done this to this land? Why this fierce, burning anger?" And the answer will be: "It is because this people abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, the covenant he made with them when he brought them out of Egypt."

In **Isaiah 5:1-4**, we can see this self-imposed line that God will not cross with regard to man's portion of responsibility:

I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.

*"Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. **What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?**"*

God did all that he could do and yet he did not get the result of his desire and Will. How could that be? Is God weak? Not at all.

Now you can understand why it is so vital to explain the Principle with regard to how God fulfills his Will and why God is so careful not to intervene in man's area of responsibility. Without it, they will have no way to understand history and no way to understand Jesus' mission.

How else can we assert that the "Secondary Course" is less preferred? Probably the most important reason is that the ultimate objective of the secondary course is merely to return to the original starting point. The conclusion of the secondary course is the recreation of the former circumstances faced by the predecessor. It is the path of Dispensational Time-Identity. It is characterized by delays and prolongation of the fulfillment of God's Will.

Let's exam the time of Jeremiah and the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity as an example of this phenomenon.

Jeremiah 25:4-7

*And though the LORD has sent all his servants the prophets to you again and again, you have **not listened** or paid any attention. They said, "Turn now, each of you, from your evil ways and your evil practices, and **you can stay in the land the LORD gave to you** and your fathers for ever and ever. Do not follow other gods to serve and worship them; do not provoke me to anger with what your hands have made. Then I will not harm you."*

*"But you did not listen to me," declares the LORD, "and you have provoked me with what your hands have made, and **you have brought harm to yourselves.**"*

God explains clearly that, first, he had been sending prophet after prophet to try to convince them to repent and return to the path of the destiny of Blessing. He tells them that if they had listened "they could have remained in the land." In other words, clearly the secondary course is undesirable to God. He wants it to be unnecessary. It was not God, then, who invoked his Will for the Babylonian exile and prolongation of 210 years. God said, "you have brought harm to yourselves."

God "takes no pleasure" in this course because it is a prolongation of the fulfillment of his original will. At the end of that prolongation, the Chosen People are placed in exactly the same position with the same responsibility. After 210 years of exile and return, in this case, they returned to the land, rebuilt the temple, reproved the faith, renewed the covenant. In other words, they were placed in exactly the same position as their disobedient unrepentant ancestors of 210 years before.

THE LAW COVENANT IS THE "OS" OF THE HISTORY LEADING TO JESUS

As we enter the period of Judges, we can see the direct evidence of this "operating system" between God and His people. God would lead them to their Blessed destiny as long as they kept faith in the Laws, Decrees and Commandments. They could defeat any army, rout any tribe and move steadfastly toward securing the land. When, on the other hand, they stood in violation of their creeds, they were hopeless and ineffective. Their hard drives crashed big time. They couldn't even boot up as a people. In fact, at one point, they began to fight among themselves, almost wiping out the entire Tribe of Benjamin. Over the course of the next 400 years, we see this vacil-

Comments:

Unbeknownst to the ministers at this point in the lecture series, they have just heard the foundation to assert that Jesus had a primary mission other than the way of the Cross. Can you see that yet? It is very subtle. It is like placing a series of dynamite charges in strategic locations in an old building that needs to be demolished. The building that must be demolished is the idea that God had a single destiny for Jesus to die. It is the idea that God *alone* caused the Curse in the law to be invoked requiring Jesus to die.

lation from faith to faithlessness. Each time we can see the outcome as prescribed by the Covenant.

The Philistine army was the most renowned nemesis of the Israelites during this period. In fact, it was the emerging threat of the Philistines that moved the Israelites to repentance centering on the Prophet Samuel. The Providence shifted from a tribal setting to the establishment of the Monarchy of Saul, David and Solomon.

With the establishment of the position of King, the status of the King's faith in the Laws, Decrees and Commandments of God will be the new determinate. In this requirement, we see that Saul is deemed unworthy in **1 Samuel 13:13**:

"You acted foolishly," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time."

There's that confounded word "if" again. Samuel tells Saul that had he kept faith, God would have established a kingdom over Israel "for all time." The implications are very great. It is a clear, emphatic statement that God wants to establish a strong central nation as the foundation for Christ. Again that is the primary objective "if" Israel (and now the King) maintains the condition of faith in the Laws, Decrees and Commandments of God.

Saul becomes unacceptable to God. Saul's Kingship is passed on the David. In **2 Samuel 7:12-16**, God makes a promise (or covenant) with King David:

*When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up **your offspring** to succeed you, who will come from **your own body**, and I will **establish his kingdom**. He is the one who will build a house*

*for my Name, and **I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.** I will be his **father**, and he will be my **son**. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; **your throne will be established forever.***

This promise, or covenant, is considered to be very significant. The "Davidic Covenant" is thought to be pertaining to the coming work of Jesus. Indeed, Jesus is the fulfillment of that vision. However, this covenant has an immediate relevance and potential fulfillment.

Consider what God says to David's son Solomon in **1 Kings 9:4-9**

*As for you, **IF** you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, **I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, "You shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel."***

This is important—did you catch what God just said here? First, he tells David that one of his offspring will establish a Kingdom that will never decline. Of course, all Christians are only thinking, "God is referring to the coming Jesus 1000 years after David." **BUT WAIT!**

God then tells Solomon that when he made that promise to his father David, He was referring to him, Solomon. "I will establish your royal throne over Israel, **AS I PROMISED DAVID YOUR FATHER WHEN I SAID, 'YOU SHALL NEVER FAIL TO HAVE A MAN ON THE THRONE OF ISRAEL.'**"

Solomon—not Jesus. SOLOMON?! Yes, Solomon.

WOW! What a bombshell!

Do you realize what that means? Think about it. Doesn't the Principle declare that the time of Solomon was an opportune time for Christ to come?

HELLO!

Think about the conditions and circumstances of his birth. Notice any patterns that seem familiar? Read Father's speech on "Change of Blood Lineage."

Well, let's not get off track. We are going to have enough work trying to convince Christians of modern realities, let alone some ancient overlooked ones.

Here's the relevant point for Christians: God is telling Solomon that "if" he maintains faith, God will establish Israel as the dominant empire in the world, Christ will be born on the foundation of an unbroken line of Kings to a nation that is supreme in the world. In other words, Jesus should have been born in the Palace in an era of global dominance of Israel. This was God's "Primary" plan for Christ "if" the condition of faith was maintained.

In fact, initially under Solomon, Israel achieved its "Golden Era." The time of Solomon is the absolute zenith of the history of the nation of Israel. We mostly regard Israel in terms of the last 2000 years of its history. During the time of Jesus, for example, it was a small land dominated by Rome. Prior to Rome it was conquered by the Greeks, before them, the Persians, and before the Persians it was the Babylonians. Our image of the nation of Israel is one of, certainly, spiritual greatness, but modest in terms of practical influence.

This was not the case under Solomon's rule. Under Solomon, Israel's army expanded its territorial control to the level of empire. Not only did Israel possess the strongest military, but was the dominant economic power of the era. It was the leading culture in terms of art, music, trade and scientific study.

God promised that Israel would be the "head" and never be the tail, as long as the nation maintained faith. Under Solomon, God was carrying out that primary vision. He promised that no empire would ever rise against Israel and take her down. That is unless:

"But IF you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name.

Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. And though this temple is now imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?' People will answer, 'Because they have forsaken the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why the LORD brought all this disaster on them.'

"1Kings 9:6-9

Did you notice that God repeats the wording of Deuteronomy 29:24? If Israel is destroyed, it will not be God's doing but rather, will be the result of the people (and now the King) forsaking God.

How does Solomon stack up? Not so good. Although, initially, he was doing very well, he certainly began to run afoul of some of the more important Laws, Decrees and Commandments. See **Deuteronomy 17:17**:

The King must not take many wives or his heart will be led astray.

Well, I guess if you're going to break the commandment, why stop at one or two?

1 Kings 11:1-4, 10

*King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. **He had SEVEN HUNDRED WIVES of royal birth and THREE HUNDRED CONCUBINES, and his wives led him astray.** As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.*

*Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, **Solomon did not keep the LORD's command.***

Thus Israel turns away from her primary objective and begins to move down the path of secondary, consequential necessity. The Kingdom of Solomon is retracted from world dominance and the nation becomes divided North and South. God begins to send prophet after prophet to Israel with the hope that Israel will repent and restore its orientation back towards its primary destiny: to be Blessed; to be the head and not the tail.

In the ensuing 600 years, we will see the emergence of the 4 major and 12 minor written prophets. Their writings will reflect the "genetic code" of God's providential relationship with Israel. They will also reflect a nation that has had a brush with greatness and has tasted its true potential. On the one hand, they will describe images of "Blessing", that is, a nation who is the head, a nation reflective of the Glory of Solomon's era. While on the other hand, they will also articulate the impending "Curse" promised if Israel

fails to repent. An unrepentant Israel is doomed to be the “tail” not the head and is scattered to the four corners of the earth.

Inherent in their two-fold message is the image of a new coming King whose own destiny will be determined by the nation’s choice. On the one hand a faithful Israel will welcome a new Solomon-like figure, the “Messiah” who will “restore the Kingdom to Israel.” On the other, a faithless Israel rejects her King who suffers and dies, bringing on the dark days of utter destruction. Which destiny will be realized? It is Israel’s choice.

Know this with absolute assurance. It is only the Divine Principle that conveys the enormity, the weighty implications inherent within the single word, “if.”

GLORY AND SUFFERING: DUAL PROPHECY

In a previous chapter we talked about oracles and prophecy and their tendency to bear meaning in an immediate as well as future context. Probably no greater element has been brought to bear on the Christian understanding of Jesus. Without understanding the meaning and effect of human responsibility, it becomes nearly impossible to understand the prophet’s voice with full clarity.

Many Jewish scholars see prophetic declarations of Israel’s destiny to be literal. A King must come, a new Solomon, The Messiah, as it were, to fulfill the vision of a “Blessed” Israel. For them, this was not Jesus of Nazareth.

Many Christian scholars see prophetic declarations of Israel’s destiny to be only foreshadowing a spiritual kingdom of Christ. For them, this was not the literal nation of Israel.

On the one hand, Jewish scholars must come to terms with the reality that Jesus was that hoped for Messiah. On the other hand, and equally important, is for Christians to understand that Jesus’ role, although certainly transcendent of Hebrew expectations was to fully incorporate the earthly, Solomon-like dimensions of those expectation. Only then will the 2000 year-old rift between Jews and Christians begin to be resolved.

In other words, God’s expressed desire for the nation of Israel to “be the head” and not be the tail was expressing God’s truest intent for that nation. Jesus’ mission is indelibly intertwined with that primary vision.

The issue is: who is responsible for that vision not coming about? Is it God who made Israel to fail, so we Christians could be blessed? Or is there another dynamic at work?

Christians believe that all prophecy must be fulfilled. If not, God is a liar, the Bible is untrue. Thus most Christians conclude that dual prophecy, that is, predictions of Christ glorified, predictions of Christ suffering, must all be fulfilled. In their view, the process by which prophecy is fulfilled is in this manner: All prophecy of a Christ who will suffer is, obviously, referring to Jesus of Nazareth of 2000 years ago. All prophecy of Christ received and establishing his Kingdom is prophecy pertaining to the returning Christ for whom Christians wait.

Therefore, in the Christian view, the phenomenon of dual prophecy is reflecting a predetermination of God that there will be two comings of Christ: the first to suffer, die and atone for sin, the second to set up his Kingdom.

The tragedy of this perspective is that it shuts us out from the experience of Jesus' "sorrow unto death" in the Garden of Gethsemane. In other words, we need to be made aware that when Jesus announced, in Matthew 16:21, his suffering to come, he was simultaneously closing the door to a primary, original purpose of even greater magnitude. This is the basis to understand his suffering circumstance and his grieving heart.

COMPARING PROPHECY

The 4 major and 12 minor prophetic books are grouped together in the Old Testament. They are the last 16 books of the Old Testament beginning with Isaiah and ending with Malachi. This 600-year time period of the Major and Minor Prophets begins with the fall of Solomon's kingdom; concludes with Malachi and the beginning of the 400-year inter-testament period. It is highly recommended that you read each book and see if you can see the dual nature of each prophet's voice.

With a partial sample, let's compare prophecy of glory with prophecy of suffering:

- **Glory:** Isaiah 2:4–11, Zechariah 8:1–23, Ezekiel 37:15–28, Jeremiah 31:31, Isaiah 60&61; Ezekiel 34.

- **Suffering:** Isaiah 53; Psalms 22 & 118:22; Zechariah 13:7; 11:7–14; Jeremiah 32:6–9

Out of this sample, let's select a specific example from Ezekiel and Zechariah.

Ezekiel 37:15–28

Chosen People receive King

Judah/Israel united

No exile ever again

Covenant established

Zechariah 11:7–14

Chosen People will reject their King

Judah/Israel divided

Exiled again (Zechariah 13:7)

Covenant broken

The phenomenon of dual prophecy is, of course, not an expression of God's predetermination that Christ will be rejected and die. It is, instead, another reflection of the actual process by which God is fulfilling his will. In other words, human responsibility will bear a direct impact on the expression of prophecy.. Let's exam how:

As we have seen, God expressed his primary and secondary Will in Deuteronomy 28. All prophecy related to God's primary Will is absolute and must be fulfilled. However, it is not determined who will fulfill it. The central person, or nation must fulfill its portion of responsibility for that prophecy to be fulfilled. "If" they do not do that responsibility, the fulfillment of that prophecy will be prolonged to a later time in history to be taken up by a new central person or nation.

Prophecy related to God's secondary (or consequential) Will is not absolute. It does not have to be fulfilled because it is not an expression of God original (or primary) will. Therefore if man repents, God does not have to carry out that secondary course, even if it has been announced.

That is why when Jeremiah announced the beginning of the Babylonian exile in **Jeremiah 25:4–7**, he stated that it would have been unnecessary had they just heeded the Prophets and repented. Consider what God says himself about prophecy (it is so much easier to just let God explain): **Jeremiah 18:7–10**

*If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and **IF** that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and **not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.***

And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be

built up and planted, and IF it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

This is the definitive word on prophecy, folks! And guess what? God agrees with the Divine Principle view! Amazing!

Prophecy doesn't negate human responsibility. Let's cite some examples in Biblical history:

- **2 Kings 20:1-6.** God instructs Isaiah to tell Hezekiah he will not recover from his sickness and will die. Hezekiah prays with tears, God relents and adds 15 years to his life.

- **Jonah.** God tells Jonah to tell the people of Nineveh that they will be destroyed in 40 days. The people repent and God does not destroy Nineveh. (Jonah gets miffed at God!)

- **Matthew 11:23.** Jesus affirms that Sodom would not have been destroyed "if" they had repented.

These three examples pertain to the first part of **Jeremiah 18:7-10**:

*If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and IF that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and **not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.***

That is, God relents in the secondary course because of repentance. How about an example in history of God relenting in his primary will, as per:

And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

Consider this important example with regard to Israel's primary destiny.

Isaiah 65:17-19

*Behold, I will create **new heavens and a new earth.** The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create **Jerusalem** to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.*

This vision for Israel did not come true, not because of God's predetermination but rather because of Israel's lack of faith in Jesus.

Matt 21:43

*Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be **taken away from you** and given to a people who will produce its fruit.*

Thus we see Revelation 21:1-2

*Then I saw a **new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the **NEW JERUSALEM**, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.*

Because Israel failed to recognize her King, they lost their mission. However, because God's primary Will was to bring "the New Heaven and New Earth," God will recreate a "New Jerusalem" to fulfill this absolute prophecy. A New Jerusalem returns to do the mission of the first Jerusalem. Likewise, a new Adam comes to do the primary mission of the second Adam.

Thus Jesus *had a primary mission* that pertained to the Kingdom of God and finding faith in Israel. Jesus' first two years of his ministry focused on the Kingdom and the hope for faith in Israel, because, that mission *was viable at that time*.

Christians believe that by the time Malachi, the final prophet, arrives, it is already determined that Christ will be rejected and crucified. A second coming is already in the works. Notice how the final words of Malachi so differ from that assertion:

Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.

The contingency of "if" is still in effect. Israel will decide which destiny, blessing or curse, will be invoked based upon the success or failure of the coming Elijah.

When Jesus begins his public ministry with the words, "Repent, now is the time for the Kingdom is at hand," he was indicating a contemporary objective. It was his primary destiny. With this understanding, we will open the door, for the first time, and enter in to the inner sanctum of Christ's deepest sorrows. When Jesus prays, sorrowing unto death "let this cup pass from me," only those enlightened with the truth of Principle will understand the substance of that pray and the pathway to liberate him from his sorrows.