

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG203 – The New Covenant Is for Israel – Part 2

Hello, welcome, and thank you for joining me in this podcast. This podcast is titled *The New Covenant Is for Israel – Part 2*. I am following up on the first half of what is to be a chapter in a book I am completing on anti-Semitism. I wanted to also take the opportunity to make a podcast for this chapter, because it deals with supersessionism and replacement theology, which I feel are so foundational in the problem of anti-Semitism within the Church. Hopefully, we are going to delve into it in a way that will help people have an understanding of what the Scriptures are really saying, and to eliminate this tragedy of anti-Semitism that exists in the Church. I pray that this problem be eliminated, because it is time for there to be a oneness between Christian and Jewish believers. We want to see that happen as soon as we can, especially with what is happening in the world around us today where anti-Semitism is just rampant. We have to remember that this is a very dangerous belief system to have. We have seen already, through the Holocaust, what it can lead to; and we agree with the cry of Yad Vashem and the Holocaust museums that this never happen again. So, to that aim, we want to give ourselves to the study of those issues which help promote a process of anti-Semitism within the Church, and without the Church.

This podcast is going to deal with supersessionism and replacement theology. As I have said, this is Part 2 of the teaching. If you have not heard Part 1, I would encourage you to go back to your podcast provider and listen to that first. However, this should stand alone, and you can continue on listening. In the beginning, we are dealing with the idea of a new covenant – which, of course, is stated in Hebrews the seventh and eighth chapters from Paul, talking about this idea of a priesthood and the sacrifice; the new covenant that is to come; and why the new covenant is needed, because of the weakness of the first covenant. That first covenant was a bilateral covenant, which means that it was agreed upon by the children of Israel as well as God Himself. He said, “I want you to do this, this, and this,” and they said, through Moses, “Yes, we will do that.” Then they were unable in their human nature to follow through with that, so God, being the wonderful Father that He is, brings the answer, which is a new covenant. The new covenant, as we stated, does not replace the Law, does not replace the heart of what that original Sinai covenant was about. It merely gives an answer to what it states the problem of the covenant was, which is the humans involved, the flesh of humanity involved in a covenant, such as that with God.

We see that this new covenant – which is first stated in Jeremiah chapter 31, starting at verse 31 – is brought forward to the New Testament into its fulfillment. Paul, in his teaching in Hebrews 7 and 8, is talking about the fact that Christ was the great High Priest who instituted and ratified this new covenant. That was done during the Last Supper; and on the Cross, His blood was shed, ratifying that covenant. So when we read about the covenant in Jeremiah, we realize that it actually takes place in the New Testament times, at the time of Christ, by what He accomplished on the Cross; Paul is trying to teach us that this is when all of it transpired. So if we relate the New Testament covenant of Christ, which He states is the new covenant, and we recognize that He implemented it during those days of the Passover, then looking again at the New Testament and what it stands for becomes very important for us.

I will read some of Jeremiah 31 again, starting with verses 31-33.

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

Now this little verse here is extremely important when we are addressing replacement theology, because we can see that in the new covenant, God is neither replacing the Law, nor is He replacing the people. This covenant is with Israel, with Judah, and He is putting the Law in their heart. So, what is really transpiring here is that this is going from an agreed-upon covenant between Israel, the children of Israel, and God, into a unilateral covenant, where God is saying, “I will put my Law within their hearts.” In other words, it is not dependent upon Israel to be able to walk faithfully in the Law; God is going to put it in their heart so that they can walk in it. God is going to write it on their heart. He is going to be their God, they are going to be His people. He is doing all of this.

We are talking about a unilateral covenant, that is really what we are dealing with. That is the covenant with Abraham. God said to Abraham, “I am going to make you this, I am going to fulfill this,” and it was not dependent upon something that Abraham had to do in order for the promises to be accomplished. Therein lies a huge difference. And again, I want us to recognize that when we are talking about a new covenant, we are not talking about something that replaces the covenant of Abraham, or other covenants – we are talking strictly about the covenant of Sinai. And again, we are not replacing the Law, we are not replacing the people; we are only replacing the methodology, the covenant itself and how it was formed, taking it from a bilateral style covenant into a unilateral covenant where God is the actor here, not the people.

God continues, and as He gets to the end of this, He further confirms how solid His relationship is with Israel and the Jewish people. He is talking here in verse 34, saying, ““They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

God Himself is saying, “I am not going to remember their sin. I am going to forgive their iniquity.” God is doing this unilaterally with the children of Israel, and it is something He does with them. Now this is an important verse, because the very heart of replacement theology is that God not only remembers, but He never forgets the downfalling of Israel; and because of that, He then rejects them completely, forever, and replaces them with the Gentile Christian Church. But these verses could not be more clear than they are; to emphasize them, however, we go down to verses 35-37.

Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the Lord of hosts is His name: “If this fixed order departs from before Me,” declares the Lord, “then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever.”

Thus says the Lord, “If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done,” declares the Lord.

Following this great covenant, this new covenant which we talk about so freely in Christianity – and I think we do not really understand, what is the new covenant? where does it come from? what does it say? and what was Christ instituting during that Passover at the Last Supper? – God is simply saying, in verses 36 and 37, “I want to reemphasize to you that it is impossible for Me to reject Israel as being My people, who will walk in these promises and fulfill this new covenant that is being given, because I will be the one fulfilling it within them.” So the new covenant, instituted by Christ at the Last Supper, was an unbreakable, unilateral covenant between God and Israel. It was sealed by the blood of Christ on the Cross.

Yeshua was the fulfillment of the seed of Abraham, through which Abraham was promised to bless the whole world. So we can see from this that the new covenant was not canceling out the covenant with Abraham; in fact, it was being fulfilled by Christ, who was promised to Abraham in that unilateral covenant. The Gentile world has full access to share in this covenant by having the faith of Abraham. There is no need, and no possibility, in truth, to eliminate the Jewish people from this new covenant. And yet, replacement theology and supersessionism is all about the fact that what Christ did when He came, with creating a new covenant, really eliminated the Jewish people, eliminated the previous covenants, and turned it all over to the Gentile Christian Church. This is absolutely impossible to prove out scripturally; it just cannot be done.

The promise to Abraham was to his seed, the Jewish people. We will get into this issue, because some people twist this issue, coming out of Galatians 3, about the seed. But it is talking about the seed. He is saying that this is “a promise to Abraham and his seed.” His seed are the Jewish people. It is not to Ishmael or his lineage. It is through all the generations of the Jewish lineage that Yeshua is derived. And just as Judaism has always looked for the coming of Messiah to be the total fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, that is in fact what Yeshua as Messiah is – coming forth from the seed of Abraham, from the lineage of the Jewish people, as the one who would bring about the institution of this new covenant and the fulfillment of the promises that were given to Abraham, that through him, all the nations of the world would be blessed. There is no greater blessing we have than the salvation that comes through the Cross of Christ. And we also know that in that same spirit, the Jewish people down through the generations have been a blessing to every nation – being those who agreed to the teaching, to the Law and what it stands for, what it means, bringing a moral code into existence to humanity and culture. So, there are multiple layers of fulfillment of all of these things.

Let’s look at Galatians the third chapter a little bit, and see if we can clear up some of the confusion that arises in people’s minds from these verses. I will begin with verses 16-17.

Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds” [plural], as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ. What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.

In other words, it is talking about the promise to Abraham. But what some people do with this singular and plural of the word *seed* is say that the promise to Abraham truly was not about all of his lineage for generation after generation. They say it really was pointing to Christ, and it was about Christ, referring to Christ and only to Christ; and so, when Christ came, then you jump over the whole nation of Israel and you come to Christ. And then, what Christ did at the Last Supper was to institute this new covenant which eliminates the Jewish people, and eliminates the Law, and so forth. All of this can be part of the confusion in people’s minds, and it can be twisted in ways that makes it appear as something that it is

really not; even though we know that Christ was in fact a seed of Abraham, as are all of the Jewish people a seed of Abraham.

You could say, "Well, what was Paul referring to?" Possibly one aspect is that he was saying it is not to the *seeds* – Abraham had more than one son; he had Ishmael. And it is obvious that the promises and the new covenant and all that is being dealt with here and which is being referred to back as the promise to Abraham was not dealing with all of Abraham's seed, it was dealing with the lineage that was Judaism. And it is out of the lineage of Judaism that Christ came forth and therefore instituted this new covenant. So, there is that aspect of it, that sort of a natural, simple reading very much explains what is being said here. But let's go on, because there is more to it.

Verses 17-19,

What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

So, he is using this term *the law*; but remember, the Law is actually part of the new covenant – because He said, "I will write My law in their hearts." So, the Law is not what is being done away with. It is this faulty covenant, where it is dependent on human nature to be able to walk in it, knowing that it cannot.

But again, people can twist the terminology here and say, "Well, what we are doing again is bypassing the generations of Israel and we are jumping over to a mediator of the promise, who was Yeshua, who was the Messiah." Verses 20-21, "Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one. Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law." If they could have walked in the Law perfectly while in their human nature, then righteousness would have been derived from that. But the human nature will never produce righteousness. And the covenant was made the way it was made in order for mankind to see that something else had to come. And that something else was God's grace in the world.

Verse 22. "But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe." Now, who is shut up into sin? The Jews, and therefore they are rejected? No. Their inability to walk in that covenant, that bilateral covenant, is all of humanity's inability to walk in righteousness before God. Therefore, the Scripture has shut up everyone, all humanity, under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. You have to come back to faith, which means that righteousness is a gift imparted by grace, not worked up. Verse 23, "But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed."

These are very important concepts; and, again, each one of them flies in the face of this concept of having a replacement theology. Israel was the proof to the world that human flesh, in its fallen nature after Adam, cannot produce the righteousness of God. What God did in bringing about a covenant through Abraham was to say, "Abraham, you are not going to do this, I am going to do it." So it says that righteousness was imputed, or imparted, to Abraham because Abraham believed God. This is all what becomes twisted to try to get into replacement theology.

I am going to read out of the *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, by David H. Stern, because I want to clarify this. There will be those who take this issue about the seed being singular or plural and try to make it refer only to Christ, and only to what He did; and therefore, try to take the whole new covenant and package it into something under Christ that has nothing to do with Israel, but excludes them. Because remember, under supersessionism and replacement theology, Israel, the Jewish people, must be excluded. So here is the quote: "In the *Tanakh* [or the Old Testament Scriptures] the term '**seed**' (Hebrew *zera'*), like English 'posterity,' is used in the singular as a collective noun to refer to all of a person's descendants. Thus the *p'shat*...." Now we are dealing with the idea in Judaism that when you are interpreting Scripture, you have what is called the *p'shat* – that means that the simplest definition or explanation of the Scripture you can give is what is the true meaning of the Scripture. So, if you use the singular as a collective noun, referring to all of the descendants of Abraham, that would be the *p'shat*; that is the most reasonable explanation of this text – "... '*seed*' referring to Avraham's descendants [all of his descendants]. But Sha'ul [or Paul] is not expounding the *p'shat*; rather, his emphasis on the singular form of the word allows the **seed** to sprout into a richly layered *midrash*."¹

In Judaism, the other type of teaching of Scripture is the *midrash*, which means you are kind of interpreting into, you are reading into layers of meaning that may exist, or may not necessarily exist, within the Scripture. What Stern is trying to differentiate here is that if you take the singular word in Hebrew, *seed*, then it really is a collective noun, meaning the plural – so it is all of Abraham's descendants. Then he is asking, "Why did Paul do this?" Well, he did this because he is a Pharisee of Pharisees, and he is talking to Pharisees, and he is talking to Jews who are going to understand the *midrash*, or who are reaching in for a deeper meaning of what could be discerned here; saying that this *seed* is really a singular use rather than a plural. Therefore, he is pointing down through the ages to Christ in the verse. So, that is a Jewish take on the interpretation of this.

I am now going to read out of the *New Testament Commentary* by William Hendriksen, so that we can get sort of an English Christian take on this, which is going to confirm what was being said by the Jewish commentary.

Does not Paul know that even in Hebrew the word *seed* is a collective noun, so that no plural is needed to indicate more than one? ... [then he gives about ten Scriptures to back that up]. And as to the Greek word for *seed*, namely, *sperma*, does the apostle not realize that this word also is a collective noun... [and he gives more Scripture to back that up], so that *spermata* (seeds) [plural in Greek] would have been unnecessary in any case? Shall we say then that in arguing against rabbinical adversaries Paul was using rabbinical methods that belonged to the exegesis of that happily bygone day and age? How can Paul say that the singular *seed* indicates one person, namely, Christ, when in Gal. 3:29 he himself uses that very word *in the singular* as a collective noun which refers to all believers? Besides, did he not realize that the seed promised to Abraham would be "as the stars in multitude"....?"² [And he is going back and referring to Genesis 15:5 and 22:17].

So here again, the author is saying, "Look, Paul is doing something here that he even knows differently, as far as just a strict interpretation of the words and the tenses being used in those words." These are singular words, but they are collective in their usage; and that is a very normal usage. As he states, in Galatians 3:29 Paul himself does this, so let's read that.

¹ Stern, David H., *Jewish New Testament Commentary* 1992, p 549. Print.

² Hendriksen, William, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Galatians* 1979, pp 134-135. Print.

Galatians 3:26-29,

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

This is the point: Paul is using this as a collective noun here, whereas before he was trying to say, "No, it is not a collective noun." So again, he knows better; he uses it himself differently. This is such a great Scripture to confirm what we are talking about, that it is because we are baptized into Christ by this faith that we are now descendants of Abraham. And if we are descendants of Abraham, we are heirs according to the promise.

See, there is no need for replacement theology, because by virtue of interpreting these Scriptures correctly, we are in fact heirs of the promises. So why try to exclude the Jews and Israel? You do not need to. We are heirs along with them, because the promise of righteousness was imparted to Abraham through faith, and that is what Christ represents. And so, we "...are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." See, we are baptized. What is baptism? It is the expression of your faith. So we are saying we have faith in this, and that faith is where Abraham's righteousness came from. The promise, then, is imparted by faith, and that is why Christ was necessary – because it had to be instituted as a covenant that was unilateral, God doing it for us. And when you read Jeremiah 31:31, it is so obviously a unilateral covenant. God is doing it all for us, and we simply believe. The faith of Abraham, our faith in Yeshua; we do not have to displace the Jews or Israel in order to be partakers of the promise.

Let's look at Romans 4:1-3,

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

See, this is how a unilateral covenant works. It was given to him – because God gave it to him, imparted it to him, not because he worked for it.

Verses 4-7,

Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered."

Isn't this wonderful? Going down to verses 9-11,

Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? [not *if-or; also*]. For we say, "Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness." How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them....

So, we are baptized, showing our faith. That baptism proves our faith. Therefore, we have righteousness imparted to us, and we are part and partakers of the promises.

In verse 12, it goes on, "...and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised." So, who is a part of this? Everybody. Circumcised, not circumcised – that is not the issue. The issue is the faith that opens the door for the impartation.

I am going down to verse 16: "For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to **all** the descendants [see, now this descendant thing becomes important; it is **all** the descendants], not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham..." Notice this and how it is worded: "...so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law..." He starts out with the Jews, and he says the guarantee of this promise is not just to the Jews, "...but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." We all meet together at this point of faith. And that is what this is all about.

Verses 17-18,

...(as it is written, "A father of many nations have I made you") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "So shall your descendants be."

What a beautiful picture! God deliver us from the deception of this replacement theology, because the truth of the oneness between Christians and Jews meeting at this unilateral covenant with Abraham that was expressed through Christ and ratified by Him on the Cross brings us to a point of oneness in our faith in God, in our faith in His Word.

Romans 11:30 goes on to say, "For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience..." See, don't forget, if you say they are eliminated because of disobedience, I tell you, Christianity through the ages does not have a history of obedience, does not have a history of love, does not have a history of moving in a faithfulness to what God has required of us as believers: love one another, be one with one another. Verses 31-32, "So these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they may also now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all." Who is going to receive mercy in this new covenant? Jew and Gentile alike. Verse 33, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements and unfathomable His ways!" What an awesome God! It is so beautiful.

Okay, a couple more short Scriptures. Romans 11:1, "I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!" Okay, there you have it – God has not rejected His people, and Paul is saying, "May it never be!" It will never happen. And that is proven out when we read Jeremiah 31 in the new covenant that has been instituted by Christ.

Romans 11:13, "But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles..." He is talking about how he might use all of this to make jealous people of Jewish descent, to bring them into faith in Christ. But he goes on in verse 16 to say, "If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too." Who is the first lump of dough? It is Israel.

Israel is God's firstborn son, he is the first lump of dough. And, the first piece of dough is holy, and so is the whole lump, as we are added in: "the root is holy, and the branches are too."

Verses 17-18,

But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partakers with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.

That is all you can say about supersessionism and replacement theology, is that it is the arrogance of Gentile Christian doctrine that has somehow been brought into the Church to believe in that which really will be destructive to us in our faith, and in the body of Christ as we move forward; because we do not support the root, the root supports us. And we are warned against our arrogance against the Jewish people.

Verses 19-22,

You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

He goes down in verse 25 and talks about, "I do not want you to be uninformed of this mystery." And it is a mystery. It is a mystery that many people have missed, and I pray that it come to light in this age and be brought to people's awareness. I pray that people take this and study it, study these Scriptures carefully, until they are delivered from every root of anti-Semitism, every root of supersessionism, every root of replacement theology.

I just want to end with verses 26 and 27. "And so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'The Deliver will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.' 'This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.'" What is Paul quoting from there, "This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins"? Oh, he is circling back around to Jeremiah 31, to the covenant, that God will take away their sin. He is circling back around to Hebrews 8, verse 10, that he is bringing the new covenant of Jeremiah 31 into the New Testament, and saying that Christ is the one who instituted and ratified it.

And what is that covenant? It is a covenant to Israel, to Jacob, and it will be fulfilled in Him. And as it is fulfilled, we know that we, as Gentiles, and the whole world, have an open door as believers to be grafted in to all the promises and provisions, to all the prophecies; and that God, in His faithfulness, through this unilateral new covenant, will put His Word in our hearts by faith, and He will make us a people to walk with Him in love and grace.

I bless this to each one of you. I pray that it helps open your eyes to see what God is doing through this tremendous new covenant by His grace that we are all able to walk in, Jew and Gentile alike.

Amen.