***The Age of the Jews, No. 6

DS5B***

The dispensation of the Jews began with a period of promise. This was under the rule of the patriarchs. This extended from Abraham to Moses. The second period of the dispensation of the Jews was the period of the law. This was a way of life which God provided for born again Jews only. It extends from Moses to the Second Advent of Christ. The law system was in contrast to the totally separate and different grace system under which you and I live today in the dispensation of the church. It is wrong to try to mix these two systems. As a matter of fact, anytime that anybody mixes law and grace, the thing that you produce is religion. Therefore, we know that Satan, who is the proponent of religion, is behind every movement and every effort to mix law and grace.

The Palestinian Covenant that we looked at in some detail is an amplification of the promise which was made to Abraham, that he and his descendants would have a land. The Davidic Covenant, which we looked at in part last week, amplified the promise of a seed to be given to Abraham and his people. Both of these covenants are unconditional which means that they are dependent only upon who and what God is for their fulfillment. David was told, in this Davidic Covenant, that he would have a house--that is, that he would have a dynasty descended from him forever; that he would have a kingdom--that is, a nation forever to rule; and, he would have a throne--a seat of government. All of this is found in 2 Samuel 7:12-16. The Lord Jesus Christ came to fulfill this covenant and the promises made to the nation. He came as the Messiah, or in the Greek rendering, the Christ.

This is an earthly promise given to David. It is still in effect, and it will be realized at the return of Jesus Christ because when He did come to fulfill the Davidic Covenant, His people rejected Him. So this covenant is yet in the future. Please remember that we are dealing with the way that God has arranged His household, and the order of things on the earth relative to the various ages. The age of the Jews and the promises made to them never fades off into a spiritual fulfillment. What has been promised to the Jews will be fulfilled in a literal way.

So Luke 1:26-37 declares that years after the house of David was fallen in decay, Jesus Christ was finally born of the physical seed of David to sit on David's throne and to reign forever over David's nation. This is the promise which Isaiah 11:1 also makes: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Someone born in the line of David would come to fulfill these promises. That was the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The promises that are declared here in this Luke passage were very clearly understood as being literal and being earthly in their meaning. There is no other normal interpretation that you may place upon this passage. This passage commemorates the birth of the administrator for all eternity over Israel under the Davidic covenant. He is Jesus Christ the Messiah--the Christ.

Another passage in Matthew 23:37 gives us further insight on this covenant. "The Lord Jesus Christ is now coming near the end of His ministry. It is obvious that the Jewish people are not going to receive Him as their King. So He views the city, and with some remorse, He declares: "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone them who are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, 'You shall not see Me henceforth, till you shall say, 'Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.''"

Upon this occasion, the Lord Jesus Christ was declaring that he was going to leave Jerusalem in the near future, and he would never again return. After his crucifixion, He never again returned publicly to Jerusalem. The next time He returns to Jerusalem will be another triumphal procession as on the first occasion when He entered the week before His crucifixion. On this triumphal procession, He will be welcomed as the Messiah King who was rejected the first time. So the Lord Jesus came fully qualified to fulfill all the promises. He was born in the right lineage--His father and mother both in the line of David. Mary, His only parent, was fully in the line of David. Joseph, His legal father, was also fully in the line of David. So He was qualified to be the King. He was the next King, but his subjects crucified Him instead.

So Jesus weeps here over Jerusalem and says, "Your house is going to be left desolate unto you." In Hosea 3:4, Hosea says, "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." That is describing the condition of Israel today. Israel, as far as God is concerned, is out from under her blessing. No Jew today is under the blessing of God except as he enters that blessing as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and then he ceases to be a Jew, and he becomes a Christian.

So the Jew, because of his disobedience, has been left in a desolate condition today. He is suffering the consequences of that rejection. Matthew 23:39 declares to us: "You shall not see me henceforth till you shall say, 'Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.'" The thing that is important to notice there is that the Lord does indicate that they are going to see Him again. The amillennialists, who are confused on dispensations, are telling us that all that was promised to the Jewish people has been taken away from them and it has been given to you and me--the Christians; and, that all of the promises made to the Jews are now being fulfilled to the church. That is wrong. If you do that, you are mixing Christianity and the law, and you come out with religion.

Another passage we want to look at briefly is Zachariah 14:4, speaking of the Second Advent of Christ: "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives (which is before Jerusalem on the east). And the Mount of Olives shall cleave in its midst toward the east and toward the west. And there shall be a very great valley. And half of the mountain shall be removed toward the north and half of it toward the south. And you shall flee to the valley of the mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal. Yea, you shall flee, as you fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with you. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark. But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night. But it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be that in that day, that living water shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea, in summer and winter it shall be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one."

Verse 4 begins with the return of the Lord. He will return to the place from whence he left. There will be fantastic geographic changes as a result of His return. The very Mount of Olives shall be split into. A valley shall be gouged out toward the Mediterranean Sea. All of this shall mark the return of Jesus Christ, and His return as the King over all the earth. "And there shall be one Lord, and His name one." The meaning here is that all over the world at the time of the Second Coming, the Jews will have their New Year's day. He will then be King over all the earth. Obviously, that is not true now. The amillennialist says to you, "Oh, yes, He is. He is king over all the earth." However, if you will read Luke 3:5-7, you will discover that Satan is the king over all the earth. Satan has it in his power to give the kingdoms of this world to whomsoever he chooses. Now he is operating under the sovereignty of God, but God has permitted Satan to have his day. So consequently, the Lord is obviously not now directing the nations of this world. Rather, Satan is.

So the promise of a house, a kingdom, and a throne has to be fulfilled sometime yet in the future. In Ezekiel 37:22, the prophet says, "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 anymore." The Jews which split into the northern and southern kingdom are going to be brought together. Israel and Judah will again be one, and they will be one nation under the Lord Jesus Christ. That still has not taken place. You may note the context here of Ezekiel 37:15-28.

Another passage in the Old Testament (all of these dealing with this Davidic Covenant) is in Amos 9:11 which says, "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that has fallen, and close up the breaches of it. And I will raise up his ruins and I will bind it as in the days of old." This passage describes the condition of the Jew today. This describes the condition of his house, his throne, and his kingdom. It is in a state of having been knocked down. It has fallen down. The promise is that the Lord is going to return and raise the whole thing back up. You may add to this Jeremiah 23:5-6 where we read, "'Behold, the days come,' said the Lord, 'that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the earth. 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.'" Here again, we have the declaration that the Davidic throne is to be re-established in the future. Then it will continue forever. That's not true today.

**Conclusions from the Davidic Covenant**

So here are certain conclusions from all of these passages as we put them together that we may draw on the basis of the Davidic covenant.

1. **A Nation**

Israel must be preserved as a nation on earth. That is still true. This is one of the most amazing things about the Jews--that they had been preserved as a racial entity. A Jew today is still a Jew just as much as he was in the time of Abraham.

1. **The Second Coming**

Secondly, Israel will be brought into the land of Palestine at the future Second Coming of Christ. Indeed, Israel is returning now to the land. But she is returning in unbelief and in rejection of Christ. There will come a time when every Jew in the United States, in Russia, and in every nation on the earth will be brought together into the land of Palestine. He will enter that land as one who is fully trusting in faith in Jesus Christ.

1. **Christ as King**

David's son Jesus Christ will return bodily, literally to reign over the future Davidic kingdom on earth. Christ is going to return. His Second Advent is for the purpose of fulfilling what they would not allow Him to do at His First Advent, namely to fulfill the Davidic covenant.

1. **An Earthly Kingdom**

Jesus Christ will reign over a literal earthly kingdom--not a heavenly kingdom. All of these promises that you read in the Old Testament concerning this kingdom promised to David have to do with the planet earth. It does not have to do with anything out there in space in the third heaven.

1. **An Eternal Kingdom**

This kingdom will be an eternal kingdom on earth under the Lord our righteousness; that is, under Jesus Christ.

Now getting back to the law in the dispensation of the Jews. The law, when it was first given, was obeyed. A Jew who obeyed the law was under the blessing of God. However, no Jew could obey the law and thus achieve salvation. Even if you obeyed all 613 rules, that did not mean that you were a sinless person. Romans 5:12 indicate to us that a person is born with an old sin nature. Consequently, a man is a sinner by nature. So even if you obeyed everything that the law told you to do, you are still a sinner, and you are still under the judgment of God.

Romans 6:23 tells us that the penalty for sin is spiritual death. So no amount of law keeping could bring you into salvation. No amount of law keeping could bring you into the favor of God. This is declared in the New Testament in Titus 3:5 when it says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done (which is what the keeping of the law was--it was works of righteousness), but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." So even if you obeyed the law, that did not mean that you would go to heaven.

Moses made it very clear, however, to the people that they were to obey the law. He directed them to look to the time when Jesus Christ would come providing salvation for the people. It was for the blessing of the nation that the rules of the law were given, and it was to their blessing to obey those rules. So in Deuteronomy 18:15 and 19, Moses says to the people, "And the Lord your God will raise up a prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren like unto me, and unto him you shall hearken." He's referring here to the Messiah. "According to all that you desire of the Lord your 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 anymore, that I die not.' And the Lord said unto me, 'They have well-spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren (Jesus Christ) like unto you, and will put My words in His mouth and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass that whoever will not hearken into My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him.'"

Then in Acts 7:37 in the New Testament: "And this is what Moses said unto the children of Israel, 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto me of your brethren like me. Him shall you hear.'" Here, the reference of Moses is directly attached to Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." So even though you obeyed the law, even Moses who brought the Mosaic Law said, "Look, don't expect salvation just because you keep the law. Salvation is going to be the result of your faith in a prophet that God is going to raise up who will be our Messiah Savior. Through Him you will have salvation. But as we go over the centuries toward that prophet, you must obey the law for our national blessing and for your personal well-being."

So they were to keep the law for maximum blessing during the centuries. Moses warned them that they were not to forsake these law regulations (Deuteronomy 31:29). He stressed, in fact, the importance of doctrine and the need for them to teach the Word of God constantly. It was when Israel and its leaders failed to teach the people the Word of God that the people began to get into trouble. Deuteronomy 32:45-47: "And Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel, and he said unto them. 'Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day which you shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you because it is your life. And through this thing, you shall prolong your days in the land to which you go over the Jordan to possess it.'" In other words, Moses was saying, "Your life blood is Bible doctrine."

The Jews were in the same position that we are. Unless they learned the Word of God, they could not enter into the blessings of God. Then in Deuteronomy 33:9, Moses says again, "Who said unto his father and to his mother, 'I have not seen him. Neither did he acknowledge his brethren or knew his own children, for they have observed Your Word and kept Your covenant.'" Blessing was upon those who were obedient to the Word of God.

So the generation that followed Moses and which was represented under the leadership of Joshua responded to these warnings. They entered the phase of the law of their dispensation on a positive note. However, it was not long till this generation passed off the scene, and the generations which followed gradually neglected this law system. The later generations fell into a cycle of disobeying the law; falling away from God; coming under divine judgment; coming under an oppressor; and, then turning back to the Lord. In Judges 2:7, we read, "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel." Then verse 10 says, "And also, all that generation were gathered unto their fathers, and there arose another generation after them who knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel."

Someplace along the line something had gone wrong. Either these parents had not taught their children, or else, in the process of teaching their children, they went negative to the Word of God. However, finally the generations came along which did not know the Lord; did not take him seriously; and, consequently, did not take the law to heart as Moses had warned them to do. So the Jewish people as a whole went negative to the law and to the Word of God; they built callouses on their souls; they became dominated by emotions; and, they went apostate. So it took a series of shocks, of invasions of their land by foreign powers, to finally bring them back to God. They would cycle through a series of stages of discipline which you have recorded for you in Leviticus 26.

In Judges 2:14, what they finally brought themselves is declared in the words, "And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers who spoiled him. And He sold him into the hands of their enemies roundabout so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies." They were a foolish people. Periodically, they returned to the Lord. Under the era of their kings, they had the same routines of spiritual greatness, and then gradual falling away. Their prosperity, nationally and personally, was always attached to their spiritual prosperity. Their material prosperity, on a personal basis and on a national basis, always went hand in hand with their spiritual prosperity. They rose to a peak of fame under Solomon, and then gradually, from that time on, they went downhill. After Solomon, the nation fell apart. The prophets tried to warn them and call them back to the Word of God. Many of them were killed, and most of them were ignored.

In Isaiah 5:1-7, we have the record of where God compares his Jewish nation to a vineyard. He tells what He had done to plant this vineyard, and how carefully He nurtured it. Then He sadly describes how the whole thing went bad. As He looked at this vineyard, the Lord finally turned His back upon it, and He left it for destruction. The Jews had failed in their duty in their dispensation. They had failed to disseminate the Word of God. So finally, the fifth stage of the cycle of discipline came upon the northern kingdom in 721 B.C. They were taken off into captivity by Assyria out of their land. The same thing happened in 586 B.C. to the southern kingdom of Judah when it went into the Babylonian captivity for 70 years.

It would have temporary times of revival like it did under Josiah in 622 B.C. that you may read about in 2 Chronicles 34:8, 14, 16, and 33, but by and large, even under their kings, they gradually drifted more and more away from the Word of God. So the southern kingdom came back from its captivity. The northern tribes never did return. They were scattered and dissipated among the nations where they had been taken. However, the southern kingdom returned from Babylonian captivity, and these were the people which were in the land of Palestine when the Lord Jesus was born. He came from heaven. He assumed a human body in the fullness of time. When He came on the scene, the Jewish nation was under Roman rule.

The temple had been rebuilt, but the law system by this time had been burdened with many man-made regulations. The Pharisees, because they were legalists, were so concerned that they should not break any of these 613 regulations; and, they were so concerned that the law would be kept to the letter, that what they did was invent a bunch of rules that they called putting hedges around the law. They would say, "Here's the rule. Now in order not to break this rule, what we will do is make several rules that will lead up to this law. In other words, we'll try to make several other rules so that we won't ever break this rule. If we do not break these subsidiary secondary rules, we'll never get to the main one to break it." They were trying to hedge in the law. So by the time Jesus Christ came on the scene, this law system was a monstrous millstone around the necks of the people. You can read this in books. This was recorded. It is really ridiculous--the regulations and the stipulations that they made in order to preserve themselves from breaking any one point of the law.

Now the problem was that the scribes and the Pharisees were teaching the people these human man-made traditions. Yet, they themselves, the Lord pointed out, were not keeping these very things that they had invented. So when the Lord Jesus Christ came along, He scratched all that. He threw all the man-made traditions out, and this is what raised the ire of the Pharisees against Him because He was exposing them for the frauds that they were. The Lord Himself, Matthew 5:17 tells us, came to fulfill the law, and that's exactly what He did. He fulfilled it in all three areas. He demonstrated, therefore, his own personal righteousness. There had not been a man alive until the time of Jesus Christ who was able to keep all 613 rules all of the time absolutely perfectly. Yet, Christ did. Therefore He fulfilled the law, and thereby showed that He was qualified as a sinless person to die for the sins of the world.

He who came to bring in the Davidic kingdom was rejected. Just a few people received Him, but most of them rejected Him. John 1:11-12 tells us how, "He came onto his own, but they did not receive Him." Most of the Jews were looking for some kind of a messiah who would liberate them from Rome--not from sin and death. So the Jews had been offered their Messiah, but they had refused Him (Matthew 21:42-44), so they crucified Him. This set the stage for the dispensation of the church then which followed. Upon the nation of Israel came the judgment that the Lord wept over--that He knew was coming. It fell in 70 A.D. It was torn apart stone from stone. The city was destroyed. The temple was destroyed. Something like a million Jews died in that siege--maybe more. They were just slaughtered by the Roman armies. What Jews were left were taken into slavery and captivity and scattered all over the world. The fifth stage of the cycle of discipline had again been imposed upon the Jewish people. That's where they are today.

This followed their rejection of the Messiah. The Old Testament said, "A King is coming. He will be King of the Jews. He will be the Christ--the appointed one, the chosen one. He will be our Savior Messiah. He will come born of a virgin. He will be born in a place called Bethlehem. He will be God man. He will come on the scene to fulfill the elements of the Davidic Covenant. In the fullness of time, sure enough, a virgin woman bears a child, and the God man is born. He grows to maturity and He has three years of ministry. Then He is finally and totally rejected by his people. He is crucified and they destroy Him. Now He turns and leaves the Jewish people scattered all over the face of the world. The amillennialist says that's goodbye time for the Jewish people. They say that there is nothing more. It's all over. There is no future. This is not so.

**The New Covenant**

God has said, "I am going to bring you together. But before I can bring the Jews together, a third covenant must be fulfilled. This third covenant which will fulfill the third factor in the Abrahamic covenant, which was blessing. Abraham was promised a posterity--seed. Secondly, he was promised a land. And thirdly, he was promised blessing. This blessing was expanded and explained in the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31. Just in summary, the New Covenant has to do with the Jews being brought to salvation. That is the blessing that God had promised them. And through them, the blessing to all the nations of the world. Jeremiah 31:31-34 is the New Covenant to Israel. And I want to stress from the beginning that this was made by God with the Jewish people. This was not made by God with the church.

Here is where the amillennialist comes into conflict with us again because the amillennialist reads this passage in Jeremiah and says, "Oh, yes, God made a New Covenant with the Jew, but the Jew rejected the Savior, so now this New Covenant applies to the church." There is not one sentence of Scripture that justifies such a transfer. So I want you to be aware as we read the New Covenant that it was made with the Jewish people. At the Lord's Supper the night before Christ was killed, He said, "This is my blood in the New Covenant." What was he talking about? Jeremiah 31:31-34. That's what He was referring to.

You and I as Christians come under the blessings that stem from this New Covenant because Abraham, in Genesis 12:3, was promised that not only he would be blessed, but all the peoples of the world would be blessed through Abraham. This is how we enter into the blessing of Abraham--through the New Covenant. However, the New Covenant is not fulfilled with Christians. It is not fulfilled through us though we had the benefit of salvation that comes from this covenant. The Lord never made this with us. God made this only with the Jewish people. This covenant has not been fulfilled.

Do I have to explain that to you? Do you know a Jew who is an unbeliever? You can hardly find a Jew who is a believer. What this covenant is saying is that when this is fulfilled, every Jew you meet you will be able to call "brother" in the Lord, if you want to call him "brother." He will be your brother in the Lord. Every Jew will be born again. That's what this covenant is saying. You know that that's not true today. You know that that has not been fulfilled. It will not come to pass until the Second Coming of Christ. At that point, every Jewish eye will look upon Jesus Christ. They'll see that He is indeed the one whom they crucified, and they'll say, "The Lord our righteousness," and they will welcome him in a second triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

So Jeremiah 31:31-34 says, "'Behold, the days come,' said the Lord, 'that I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel and with the house of Judah.'" That's very clear. This is with the northern and southern kingdoms. Verse 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 broke although I was an husband unto them,' said the Lord." What this verse is saying is that this New Covenant is going to be different from the old covenant. That means the Mosaic Covenant, the one that God made with them when he took them out of Egypt, because that covenant they could break. God is saying, "I'm going to make a New Covenant, and they won't be able to break it. Under the old covenant, they treated Me like a woman who rejects her own husband and is unfaithful to him and casts him off. That is the relationship," God says, "that Israel had to Me. But I'm going to establish a new relationship where that will not be possible. They will never be unfaithful to Me, and they will never reject Me.

Verse 33: "'But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days,' said the Lord, 'I will put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts (on their minds) and will be their God and they shall be my people.'" Now the problem with the Mosaic Covenant was that it was external. It was rules that by human energy you had to try to live up to. However, the New Covenant is going to be written inwardly. It will be in the mind. It will be written upon the heart. Consequently, its fulfillment will be automatic. It will come from within the Jew, and therefore he will obey it, as in contrast to the Mosaic Law which came from outside, he did not obey.

Verse 34: "'And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, 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,' said the Lord. 'For I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more.'" The fantastic effects of the New Covenant upon the Jewish people will be salvation. They will be born again. God will remove their sin and He will remember it no more, which is His way of saying they will be saved. So all of them are going to know the Lord. All are going to be born again. All their sins will be forgiven and remembered no more.

Now the problem with the Mosaic Law was that while Roman 7:12 tells us that it was in itself a good and a holy thing and a true expression of God's righteousness, it could never cleanse the Jew from his sins. Consequently, he could never receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He could never experience the filling of the spirit. Consequently, he had no way of entering into salvation. He was hopelessly at a loss when all he had was the law of Moses. So by His very standard that God expressed in the Mosaic Law, the Jew was rejected.

The New Covenant says it's all going to be different. God is going to put a new nature within the Jew, and consequently, this new nature is going to reach out from within, and the Jew is going to want to obey God. So the law which was placed outside of a Jew could not produce salvation. The law which God is going to place within the Jew in the New Covenant will cause him to be born again. In other words, the point of the New Covenant is the new birth. This is important for us to remember. The point of the New Covenant is that God is going to internalize what he had externalized under the Mosaic Law.

In Joel 2:28-32, we have a declaration made that reflects the fact that the Jews are going to have an experience which they could only have if they were born again. Joel 2:28 says, "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams; your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My spirit." Now the word "pour out" here means that God is going to put something within the Jews. He is going to pour out His Spirit; that is, God the Holy Spirit will come to indwell the Jew. This is going to take place, Ezekiel 11:19 says, because God is going to put a new spirit within the Jew. So God is going to pour His life, in other words, into the Jewish people, just as a human father pours himself into his children. God says, "The time is coming when I am going to pour my life into the Jewish people." Joel predicts that there is going to come a future time when God will control the Jew from within.

You will recognize that this is the passage that Peter referred to on the day of Pentecost when he was trying to explain to people that the men who were speaking in tongues were not drunk, but that they were doing what Joel says is going to happen at the beginning of the millennium when Christ returns to set up His kingdom. Remember that Peter was not saying that the tongues experience on Pentecost was a fulfillment of Joel. He says it is *like* this. It is an example. It is what is comparable to what is going to happen here at the end of time. So Joel's prophecy applies to when Jesus Christ is King on the earth when He has come to rule over the earth. When the day of Pentecost took place, Jesus Christ was not on the earth. On Pentecost, He was in heaven. This applies to the time when the Jews are a converted people. If there was anything true on the day of Pentecost, they were not a converted people.

Joel 2:28-29 tells us what will happen when Christ returns to fulfill this event. And, by the way, this is an ecstatic event. This is ecstatics here. They will probably speak in tongues. This will be quite in order in the millennium. People will have ecstatics as an expression of spirituality in the millennium because there'll be no religion. Satan will be bound. Therefore, there'll be nothing to distort it as there is today. On the day of Pentecost, they did have ecstatics, and they had it periodically until 70 A.D. when the nation fell. Then that came to an end. But what the Christians experienced under the dispensation of the church was just a preview of what Joel is saying is going to occur on a broad scale for the Jewish people when Christ returns to set up the millennium. So you have to get the difference here between what Peter says is an illustration, and that which is an interpretation. Peter did not say that he was interpreting the Joel passage by the event on Pentecost. This is a universal blessing, and it is to come in the future.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the agent of this New Covenant. Throughout the book of Hebrews, we have the reference to the New Covenant as being better than the old covenant. Those people to whom Hebrews was written were trying to go back to the Mosaic Law. The writer of Hebrews was trying to tell these people, "Look. We know that the Mosaic Law was temporary. We know that because Jeremiah has told us how God is going to bring us a New Covenant, and in this New Covenant there will be an internal change within us. Therefore, we know that what the Mosaic Law tried to do and failed to do is being put aside, and that there is a New Covenant in order. Here you people are trying to go back to the legal system."

So in the book of Hebrews, we have the statement that the New Covenant is a better covenant based on better promises (Hebrews 8:6-12). We are told that the blood of Christ is the basis of forgiveness under the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:14-15). In Hebrews 10:16-20, we have declared the New Covenant to Israel. Verses 17 and 18 tell us that God is going to cleanse them from all sin. Then verse 19 says that they will have a new boldness. Then verse 20 says that as a result of that, they will have a new access into the presence of God on the basis of the sacrifice of Christ.

Again, I remind you this was not made to us as the church. This was made to the Jewish people. However, the point of the book of Hebrews is that while this New Covenant was made to the Jews and is to be fulfilled by the Jews at the beginning of the millennium, the consequences of this New Covenant flow to us as believers and flow to us as Christians, and we come under the blessings that were made possible by the death of Christ. The communion service, the Lord's Supper, that we remember is a ritual which commemorates what? It commemorates the shedding of blood by Jesus Christ that made the New Covenant possible for Israel. You and I as Christians enjoy again the benefits of new birth and the benefits of fellowship with the Lord.

So in 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, we have the communion service described. We are told that the bread represents the body of Christ. That speaks of the person of Christ--the unique God man who had no old sin nature and, therefore, could die for our sins. The wine represents His blood--unfermented wine, by the way. This was not booze at the Lord's Supper. It was not alcoholic wine because fermentation represents evil. Fermentation is a type of leaven. There was no leaven permitted in the Passover memorial. Therefore the wine that they had on the table was unfermented wine. If it had been fermented, it would have had the action of leaven, and therefore, would have been disqualified just as a piece of bread that had yeast in it would have been disqualified as commemorating the body of Christ.

So the wine speaks of Christ in His sacrifice which was effective, of course, because of the unique person that He was. So 1 Corinthians 11:25 speaks about a new testament in His blood. What does that mean? He is speaking about the Jeremiah 31 New Covenant which has been established in His blood. It replaced the Old Testament with its old covenant in the Mosaic Law. That was replaced by this New Covenant. So this is what makes the Lord's Supper important and meaningful--that we are participating in something which the Jews are yet going to participate in in fullness, when the New Covenant that we remember in the Lord's Supper is fully established for the people to whom it was given.

So the blessings of the New Covenant are blessings that we enjoy, but we are not those to whom the covenant is fulfilled. Galatians 3:13-14 says, "For Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. For it is written, 'Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.' That the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith." You remember that one of the points of the Abrahamic covenant was blessing. Here in Galatians 3:13-14, you have Paul declaring that the blessing portion of the Abrahamic covenant, which was to include all nations, has come to us as the result of the death of Christ, and the death of Christ was brought about for the purpose of fulfilling the New Covenant established with Israel. So the Christians share this blessing from Abraham through the New Covenant.

The ultimate fulfillment of the New Covenant, in reference to the Jews, awaits the Second Advent of Christ. This is taught to us in Acts 2:15-21 and Romans 11:26-27. Let's just read that one. Paul says, "And so all Israel shall be saved as it is written, 'There shall come out of Zion the Deliver, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins.'" What covenant? The New Covenant. That's the one that takes away Israel's sins. Also see Ezekiel 34:25-31. We thank God for this New Covenant whose blessings we enjoy though its fulfillment will yet come in the future with the Jewish people.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971

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