

## The Old Testament and the New Testament

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • December 22, In the year of our Lord, 2013

Scripture Reader and Reading: Tim Braden – Jeremiah 31.31–34

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – Songs on the word of God

### Prelude:

#### **I. We often see the Old and New Testaments as antagonists of one another.**

A. However, they work together as one narrative,

B. bringing to us the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham,

1. found first in Genesis 12,

3c “And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”  
(Gen 12.3)

a) In fulfillment of that promise,

(1) God gave the world Israel

(2) that Israel might give the world that blessing.

2. That summarizes the biblical message.

a) Therefore, there is nothing wrong with the Old Testament.

b) God created Israel and gave them the Law of Moses

(1) to prepare the world

(2) to receive the promised blessing.

### Persuasion:

#### **I. How the New Testament Refers to the Old Testament**

A. There is a certain way the New Testament writers and speakers

1. referred to the Old Testament without calling it the Old Testament, but

2. although we read it all the time,

a) we have not adopted its terminology and so

b) we may not realize how often

(1) the New Testament refers to the Old Testament in this way.

B. Do you know how the New Testament refers to the first part of the Bible?

1. About forty times, the New Testament refers to “the promise,” or
  - a) sometimes it says “the promises.”
2. You have read the passages, but
  - a) have you thought about what the New Testament writers meant?
  - b) And why do we not speak that way?

C. Almost every part of the New Testament uses this terminology.

1. Saying “the promise” is the ultimate way of referring to the Old Testament.
2. Do you know how many times the New Testament says, “Old Testament”?
  - a) Once in the New King James Version in Second Corinthians 3.14, and
  - b) once does it use old covenant, but not in that order in Hebrews 8.13.

D. On the other hand,

1. as Paul spoke before King Agrippa and some other Roman politicians,
2. he spoke in this manner, typical of New Testament preachers,

6 “And now I stand and am judged for the hope of *the promise* made by God to our *fathers*. 7 To *this promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews” (Acts 26.6–7).

- a) What was that “promise” to which Paul alluded?
- b) Who were the “fathers” to whom he referenced?
  - (1) In the next verse, Paul spoke of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
  - (2) Therefore, preaching Jesus had something to do with
    - (a) the promise made to the fathers,
    - (b) which means the entire Old Testament
      - i) has something to do with Jesus and

ii) His connection to the promise.

(1) The Old and New Testaments are parts of one story.

(2) The first one leads to the second one, and

(a) the second one fulfills the first one.

E. This promise of which Paul spoke,

1. God delivered first to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and finally to David.

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath... (Heb 6.13–17).

2. Later, the Hebrew writer said,

9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the *heirs with him of the same promise*... (Heb 11.9).

39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us (Heb 11.39–40).

a) Abraham obtained the promise,

b) he received the word of promise.

(1) However, neither he nor his son, or grandson,

(2) did not receive the fulfillment of it.

F. In Romans 4, Paul declared,

13 For *the promise* that he would be the *heir of the world* was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith (Rom 4.13).

16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that *the promise* might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (Rom 4.16).

G. Sometimes the New Testament writers and speakers referred to the promises,

1. referring to the different parts of the promise,
2. such as the spiritual-seed promise, and the nation-land promise,
  - a) as well as other parts of those promises, but
  - b) it was all still part of the one promise first revealed in Genesis 12.3.

H. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., said it best,

“For the NT writers, this one promise of God epitomized all that God had begun to do and say in the OT and that He continued doing in their own new era” (*Toward an Old Testament Theology*, pp. 264–265).

I. Think on just a few of the passages from the New Testament,

Luke 1.69 “And has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
In the house of His servant David,  
70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,  
Who have been since the world began,  
71 That we should be saved from our enemies  
And from the hand of all who hate us,  
72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers  
And to remember His holy covenant,  
73 The oath which He swore to our father Abraham...

Acts 2.38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

Acts 3.25 “You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your

iniquities.”

Gal 3.8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”

Gal. 3.14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Gal. 3.29 And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Eph. 2.12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Eph. 3.6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel...

Heb. 9.15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Heb. 10.36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise...

J. According to Hebrews 6, God wants us to know

1. that just as He promised Abraham,
2. so He promises us,

17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly *to the heirs of promise* the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us (Heb 6.17–18).

- a) This shows that the New Testament writers used and adopted
- b) the terminology of the Old Testament.

- (1) Why not?
- (2) They spoke of the same plan of salvation.

## II. The Unity of the Old and New Testaments

A. Some people see the two testaments only in contrasts.

1. To them, the Old Testament was a waste or something useless.
2. I think some people forget that it was the God of heaven who gave it.

B. When the New Testament preachers delivered their message, they spoke of

1. the Seed,
2. the people of God,
3. the kingdom of God,
4. the blessing of God to all nations,
5. the day of the Lord, and so on.

- a) To them, the New Testament was merely a continuation of
- b) what God began in the Old Testament.

C. Jesus told His apostles repeatedly that He fulfilled what had been written, and

1. just before He ascended into heaven,
2. He helped them to understand what we call the Old Testament,

45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24.45–47).

- a) The rest of the New Testament shows them
- b) explaining what Jesus explained to them.

- (1) They had to make the connection between the Testaments,
- (2) using the same terminology, phraseology, argument, and so on.

## III. The Better Covenant

A. Why then did the Hebrew writer refer to the New as better than the Old?

6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises (Heb 8.6).

B. In the previous verse, the writer referred to the levitical sacrificial system,

1. that it was a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things.
2. That makes them good, but
  - a) not the actual items.
  - b) The actual item is always better than the copy.

C. Then in verse 7, he continued his argument,

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second (Heb 8.7).

1. However, that does not mean God has faults or
2. even that the Law of Moses had faults, but
  - a) the writer continued to argue,

8 Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—" (Heb 8:8).

- (1) The fault was with man, but
- (2) as the quotation from Jeremiah shows,
  - (a) the first covenant also had built into it,
  - (b) a temporary factor, leading to a replacement.

D. Therefore, the New Covenant superseded the Old Covenant

1. in durability, and
2. as the capstone of God's superstructure.

- a) The Old pointed to the New.
  - b) The New finished the Old.
    - (1) The Old prepared the world for the New.
    - (2) The New includes all people,
      - (a) which the Old had been saying would happen.
      - (b) Remember the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12.3,
        - i) was not merely for Israel, but
        - ii) for all the families of the Earth.
- E. Therefore, when we come to the New Testament in Romans 11,
1. Paul spoke of grafting a wild olive branch into the domesticated olive tree.
  2. Israel was the original olive tree and Gentiles are the wild olive branch,

24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? (Rom 11.24).

    - a) The Old prepared the world to enjoy what the Jew enjoyed.
    - b) The New then shows how that happens.
- F. To the Ephesian Church, Paul said that the mystery of Christ is,
- 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel (Eph 3.6).
1. To Paul, it was all one plan, one story, one scheme of redemption.
  2. He did not see the Old as something evil or a failure.
    - a) Therefore, see the entire Bible as one people of God, and
    - b) God bringing them together through one program.

16 "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and

one shepherd" (John 10.16).

G. Again, I like the way Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., said it,

Paul made the Gentile believers part of the "household of God" (Eph. 2:19) and part of "Abraham's seed" (Gal. 3:16–19). Furthermore, he called them "heirs" according to the promise (Gal. 3:19), which "inheritance" was part of "the hope of their calling" (Eph. 1:18) and part of the "eternal inheritance" given to Abraham (Heb. 9:15). Thus Gentiles, who were "aliens from the state of Israel" (Eph. 2:12) and "strangers and foreigners" (v. 19) to "the covenants of promise" (v. 12), have been made to share in part of the blessing of God to Israel (p. 269).