

# God, the Nation of Israel, the Messiah, and the Kingdom of God

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## Introduction

The Bible, both the Hebrew scriptures (the Old Testament) and the Greek scriptures (the New Testament), spell out in detail the four key elements of the reality which we human beings inhabit—

- 1) **God**, who transcends and constantly authors the creation and is both morally perfect and rational
- 2) The **nation of Israel**, the Jews, who are the unique and ethnic group of people chosen by God
- 3) The **Messiah**, who is a member of Israel and king, high priest, and prophet of all mankind
- 4) The **Kingdom of God**, which is eternal and comprised of both Jews and Gentiles

The first three verses of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament is a good place to start to understand these four elements of biblical theology—

**Hebrews 1:1** God, after He spoke to the fathers long ago through the prophets in many portions and in many ways, **1:2** in these the last days has spoken to us through the Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, in view of whom also He makes the ages (αἰῶνας), **1:3** who is the radiance of His glory and the likeness of His identity [my translation].

Because the author of Hebrews identifies God as the one who “makes the ages,” he is saying that the creation is a story, which God is telling and that features Jesus of Nazareth as the “Son” of God and Messiah of the Jews. At the end of v. 2, most English translations use the word “world” or “universe” to translate the Greek αἰῶνας (*aionas*), which literally means “ages.” But these words lead the Bible student to think that the author is referring to only the material stuff of creation. However, by using *aionas*, which I have translated “ages,” the author means both the material and the historical elements of the creation. In other words, the writer is saying that God is constantly bringing into existence a story, so that He creates absolutely everything in reality and nothing is out of His complete control—no galaxy, or speck of dust, or human being and the choices which human beings make during the course of history on this earth. Plus, the story which God is telling features His “Son,” whom the New Testament identifies as Jesus of Nazareth.

According to both the Hebrew scriptures and the Greek scriptures, there are two parallel plots within the story. The main plot is God’s gathering a people for Himself from all ethnic groups, both Jews and Gentiles, and granting them salvation from His justice that will include forgiveness of their sins along with eternal life and moral perfection in the Kingdom of God. This main plot is depicted on the **Diagram of Biblical Theology** by the thick black and red arrows on the right with the light purple rectangles and their labels. The thick black arrows represent the flow of human history starting with the Abrahamic Covenant around 2000 B.C. through the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant to the two stages of the Kingdom of God that are still future to us.

The red arrows with green boxes and labels on the diagram represent the effects of certain aspects of these four covenants on the main plot of God’s bringing about the eternal Kingdom of God. These aspects and their consequent effects are what the apostle Paul in Ephesians 3:4 calls “the mystery of the Messiah.” After Paul had first studied the Old Testament under the tutelage of the great Jewish teacher Gamaliel, he, like most Jews, was under the impression that Gentiles could obtain God’s blessing of the Kingdom of God only by becoming Jewish and obeying the Mosaic Covenant. But, in Acts 9, Jesus literally stopped Paul dead in his tracks on the road to Damascus. And he assigned him the responsibility of being the apostle to the Gentiles. This led to Paul’s restudying and rethinking the entire Hebrew scriptures as motivated by the inward work of the Spirit of God. His conclusion was that, all along, God intended His Messiah to suffer death on a cross as an offering to Himself, so that, after his resurrection, he could

intercede as a high priest for all sinners and provide salvation and eternal life for them, even for Gentiles by their faith and obedience to God *without their being obligated to obeying the Mosaic Covenant*.

These two important elements of biblical theology—

- 1) The Messiah's death and his resurrection
- 2) The Gentiles' obtaining eternal life *through only Jesus as the Messiah with no obligation to the Mosaic Covenant*

are what Paul means by “the mystery of the Messiah” in Ephesians 3. He says that this “mystery” was completely “made known” and “revealed” by Jesus' appearance to Israel as their Messiah with God's purpose and goal that this appearance *would end in his death and resurrection, and soon afterwards with his ascension from the earth for a lengthy period of time until he appears again*.

Thus, the thick red arrows with green boxes and labels refer to the explicit or implicit effects for both Jews and Gentiles of four covenants, which God makes *with the Jews* (or mainly with the Jews in the case of the first covenant) and are explained in the Old Testament—

- 1) The **Abrahamic Covenant** in Genesis 12-22
- 2) The **Mosaic Covenant** in Exodus through Deuteronomy
- 3) The **Davidic Covenant** in 2 Samuel 7; Psalm 2,8,89; etc.
- 4) The **New Covenant** in Jeremiah 31:31-34, etc.

The cumulative effects of these covenants are that the crucified Jewish Messiah unites believing Jews and believing Gentiles into one group who are reconciled to God through him and will live together in the eternal Kingdom of God.

Paul puts it this way in the New Testament in Ephesians 3:1-7—

**Ephesians 3:1** On account of this, I Paul, the prisoner of the Messiah Jesus **on behalf of you Gentiles...** **2** since, indeed, you have heard of the arrangement of the grace of God which was given to me and intended for you, **3** that, according to a revelation, the mystery was made known to me, just as I wrote above in brief. **4** In regard to this, as you read, you are able to understand my grasp of the **mystery of the Messiah**, **5** which, in other generations, was not made known to the sons of men as it now has been revealed to his set apart apostles and prophets by the Spirit, **6 to the effect that the Gentiles are co-heirs, co-body members, and co-possessors of the promise in the Messiah Jesus** by means of the good news, **7** of which I became a servant according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me in line with the operation of His power [my translation; emphasis mine].

We can see that the main point of these verses is that God, by using the “Messiah Jesus,” has brought together both Jews and Gentiles into one “body” metaphorically speaking, one group of God's people, who will obtain the fulfillment of the “promise” of God.

Paul also says succinctly in Ephesians 2:11-13—

**Ephesians 2:11** Therefore, remember that formerly you, **Gentiles** in the flesh, who are called “the uncircumcised” by anyone who calls himself “the hand-made in the flesh circumcised,” **12** that you, in that season, **were separated from the Messiah**, excluded from the citizenry of Israel, even **strangers to the covenants of promise**, while you had no hope and were atheists in the world. **13** But now **in the Messiah Jesus**, you, who formerly were far away, **have drawn near by means of the Messiah's blood** [my translation; emphasis mine].

Paul indicates that, by means of the Messiah's death, Gentiles, who spiritually reside outside the nation of Israel and Mosaic Covenant, draw near (so to speak) and, indeed, acquire the promises which God has made in the covenants of the Old Testament "by means of the Messiah's blood," i.e., by recognizing the significance of his death, that all sinful human beings deserve eternal death from God. Consequently, God's Messiah will rule over the Kingdom of God, having qualified to do so by dying on a cross almost two thousand years ago. His role in the kingdom includes that of king, high priest, and prophet of God's eternal people. The English New Testaments most often (almost 500 times) use the title of "Christ" to refer to Jesus. The important Hebrew word in the Old Testament is *mashiach* (מָשִׁיחַ), which means Anointed One, i.e., a person who has olive oil poured over his head to signify that God is setting him apart for a special role. There are three of these unique and special roles among the people of Israel—

- 1) **High Priest**—see Exodus 29:7
- 2) **King**—see 1 Kings 1:34 and Psalm 2:2
- 3) **Prophet**—see 1 Kings 19:16, Psalm 105:15, and Isaiah 61:1

We derive the English word Messiah from the Hebrew *mashiach*, and the Greek translation of the Hebrew word is *christos* (χριστός), from which we derive the English word Christ. The New Testament is therefore saying that Jesus is the final anointed priest, king, and prophet of Israel and, by extrapolation, of the rest of the world, i.e., of all those who authentically believe in God and in him. As a result, God's eternal, chosen people are all the sinners, both Jews and Gentiles throughout history, who choose to believe in God and obey Him in regard to His Messiah and Anointed One. This is the main plot of God's story.

The sub-plot of God's story features the Jewish Messiah as the final king of the nation of Israel, as well as their high priest and God's most important prophet. As with the main plot, the New Testament identifies the Messiah of Israel as Jesus of Nazareth, who, when he appears again, will rule over the Jews as they *finally* live safely and securely on the land of Israel for the "1,000 years" of Revelation 20, which is symbolic of a long time, the exact length of which only God knows. This sub-plot is depicted on the **Diagram of Biblical Theology** by the light aqua rectangles, their labels, and thin arrows on the left, culminating in "The Millennial Kingdom" at the bottom, when the Jews will be the most powerful nation in all human history. This will be the first stage of the Kingdom of God in that He will resurrect believers who died in previous history and, along with living believers at the time of Jesus' second appearance, transform them into immortal and morally perfect beings who will reign with the Messiah over not only the Jews, who will all have changed hearts by the Spirit of God, but also the rest of the world of Gentile nations, in which some of them will also be genuine believers with changed hearts.

In this way, the main plot of God's story unfolds with and depends upon the sub-plot, primarily because the people of Israel produce the Messiah of the eternal Kingdom of God, and he becomes the central figure within the creation. Then, the second stage of this kingdom will be the new earth of a completely new universe on which Jesus as the Messiah and all believers from the present realm will live eternally as morally perfect human beings. Thus, both plots require the Jewish Messiah to have lived, died, risen from the dead, and ascended from the earth, in order to return at a time still future to us to restore the Kingdom of Israel on the land of Israel and to initiate the Kingdom of God for the "1,000 years" of the Millennial Kingdom.

As already mentioned, both plots of God's story involve the four covenants which the Hebrew scriptures introduce—

- 1) **Abrahamic Covenant** as described in Genesis 12-22
- 2) **Mosaic Covenant** as described in Exodus-Deuteronomy
- 3) **Davidic Covenant** as described in 2 Samuel 7, Psalms 2 & 8, and other passages
- 4) **New Covenant** as described in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and other passages

These covenants are contracts or agreements which God makes with the Jews (or mainly with the Jews in the case of the Abrahamic Covenant), but the Gentiles enjoy their effects of the Messiah's living out his role as king, priest, and prophet and of God's forgiving them and granting them eternal life. For example, the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants are agreements between God and Abraham, David, and the Jewish nation respectively. However, God includes the Gentiles in the Abrahamic Covenant and promises him that "all the families of the earth" will be blessed with eternal life with him if they imitate his faith and obedience. Then, the final king of the Davidic Covenant and the eternal forgiveness of the New Covenant will also have a direct effect on the Gentiles, too, by virtue of the Messiah's carrying out his role within these two covenants.

The Mosaic Covenant is also between God and the Jews. However, the Messiah's effect through it on Gentiles is indirect. As the Gentiles watch the Jews engage in the moral, civil, and ritual commandments of the covenant, the Jews teach them about God's character, the vital importance of moral obedience to Him, and God's requiring a sacrifice in order to obtain His mercy and forgiveness. While having no obligation to this covenant, the Gentiles are intended to become attracted to God and obeying Him, as well as to the Messiah's sacrificing himself according to the New Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant does not directly call for the Messiah's sacrifice. It requires the sacrifice of animals in the temple of Jerusalem. Thus, the Messiah's sacrifice affects both the Jews and Gentiles indirectly through the Mosaic Covenant.

Now we turn to the covenants themselves and a brief description of each.

## 1. The Foundational, National, and International Purpose of the Abrahamic Covenant

About 2000 B.C., God spoke to Abraham as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3—

**Genesis 12:1** Now the LORD said to [Abraham],

"Go forth from your country,  
And from your relatives  
And from your father's house,  
To the land which I will show you;

**2** And I will make you a great nation,  
And I will bless you,  
And make your name great;  
And so you shall be a blessing;

**3** And I will bless those who bless you,  
And the one who curses you I will curse.  
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed [NAS95]."

In these verses, God makes two fundamental promises to Abraham—

- 1) That his physical descendants, the Jews, will become the greatest and most powerful nation in all human history, and they will live safely and securely on the land of Israel.
- 2) That God will grant Abraham the blessing of resurrection from the dead and eternal life, with the result that he will be a prominent and well-known man among all the peoples of the world, so that any other human being from all the ethnic groups of the world, both Jews and Gentiles, who imitates his belief in God, will also acquire the same blessing of eternal life.

Because the Abrahamic Covenant addresses the blessing of both Jews and Gentiles that will happen later in history relative to Abraham himself, it is foundational for understanding the rest of the Bible, both the Hebrew scriptures and the Greek scriptures. With the first promise, God declares that the Jews will eventually become the most powerful and influential nation in history. To be precise, Abraham's

descendants through Isaac and Jacob, who become the twelve tribes of Israel, are the Jews and the nation of Israel. Subsequently, the books of the Bible demonstrate that God is declaring to Abraham that eventually all living Jews will dwell on the land of Israel with the same authentic faith and obedience of their patriarch Abraham and will rule over all the Gentiles who inhabit the remaining parts of the earth. These latter people are other ethnic groups who do not descend from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob.

A helpful verse for understanding the connection between God's promise to the Jews and their land is Genesis 15:18—

**Genesis 15:18** On that day the LORD made a covenant with [Abraham], saying,  
“To your descendants I have given this land,  
From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates [NAS95].”

Depending on what God means by “the river of Egypt,” we can see that the land which God is giving to Abraham's physical descendants, the nation of Israel, is a major piece of real estate in the Middle East. In addition, God says in Genesis 17:8—

**Genesis 17:8** “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land where you have been living, all the land of Canaan, for **an everlasting possession**; and I will be their God [NAS95; emphasis mine].”

Here, God states explicitly that the Jews, the nation of Israel, will possess the land for as long as it takes to make them and keep them the “great nation” of the first promise of the Abrahamic Covenant, which is something still future to us early in the twenty-first century.

The history of the Jews in the Hebrew scriptures and right up to the present time has made it clear that they have not yet become this “great nation” that God has promised them to be. Instead, most of them have been unwilling to believe and obey God with rightly oriented hearts. Therefore, we are still waiting for God to fulfill this first promise. We will explore this in more detail, but the prophets of the Old Testament indicate that God will do so when the Messiah appears, and the New Testament states that this will be at his second appearance, that is, at the return of Jesus of Nazareth. While his first appearance resulted in the Jews' rejecting him and promoting his death on the cross, after which God raised him from the dead and lifted him from the earth, at his second appearance the entire nation of Israel, whose hearts God will change while He gathers them into the land of Israel, will embrace him as their Messiah, king, high priest, and prophet. In this way, they will become the most powerful nation in all history of the first of God's promises to Abraham, and they will exercise ultimate power and authority over the Gentiles.

In line with His second promise, God will grant eternal life to Abraham and to all those who imitate his belief and obedience, both Jews and Gentiles. While the Hebrew scriptures focus on the first promise, the New Testament makes it clear that Jesus of Nazareth's death and resurrection become the basis for God's forgiving the sins of all those who believe in him according to his role as sacrificial offering, high priest, and king of God's people, who will eventually be both the “great nation” of obedient Jews on the land of Israel and obedient Gentiles throughout the rest of the world. Thus, God remains committed to this promise by changing the hearts of individual sinners in all nations of human history and by sending His Son, Jesus of Nazareth, to die for them that they may receive forgiveness and entrance into the Kingdom of God—both the Millennial Kingdom and that of the new, eternal earth at the bottom of the **Diagram of Biblical Theology**.

Subsequently, as I describe below, each of the three covenants after the Abrahamic Covenant adds another important element to God's fulfilling His two promises.

## 2. The National and International Purpose of the Mosaic Covenant

Five hundred years after Abraham, around 1500 B.C., God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and met their leader Moses at Mt. Sinai to present them with the 613 commandments of the Mosaic Covenant. These commandments added another important element to God's promise in the Abrahamic Covenant to only the Jews. Therefore, it is strictly a *national* covenant, but, as we will see, it has *international* implications. To demonstrate its *national* nature, Moses says to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 4:1—

**Deuteronomy 4:1** “Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you [NAS95].”

Moses is referring to the Israelites' taking over the land of Canaan and making it their own under the leadership of Joshua who follows him. But Moses is also saying that the condition which God has placed on them to become the most powerful nation in human history is their obedience to the Mosaic Covenant *from their hearts*. In Deuteronomy 10:12,13 & 16, Moses explicitly states that their obedience cannot be external only, but must include this internal and inward component—

**Deuteronomy 10:12** “Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your existence, **13** and to keep the LORD's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?...**16** **So circumcise your heart** and stiffen your neck no longer [modified NAS95, emphasis mine].”

The rest of the Bible indicates that a circumcised heart for any sinful human being is acquiring a new and different spiritual and moral orientation, so that a person's fundamental desire is to believe the truth that God has presented in the Bible and to obey His commandments with profound humility, enduring commitment, and genuine repentance of his sins. Indeed, this change of a person's inward condition is what God requires for anyone to participate in the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant of both the “great nation” of Israel and eternal life with Abraham. More on this in a moment.

To demonstrate the *international* implications of the Mosaic Covenant, Moses says in Deuteronomy 4:5-8—

**Deuteronomy 4:5** “See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. **6** So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding **in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’** **7** For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him? **8** Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole Torah which I am setting before you today [modified NAS95, emphasis mine]?”

These verses show that, by their obedience to the Mosaic Covenant, the Jews will provide a living signpost of their God to all Gentile peoples to observe. They will instruct the world in who the “LORD” is—the one true God. This is because, with the commandments of the covenant, God has given the nation of Israel the proper wisdom to live life skillfully and well, even though a bit peculiarly with all the different kinds of the 613 commandments. And their obedience to these commandments is intended to reveal that He is loving, just, merciful, and faithful to His people Israel and to all other people who embrace Him as their God. These are the *international* implications of the covenant.



But the Mosaic Covenant also points, at least indirectly, to the future Messiah as the final prophet of God and leader of Israel, whom the New Testament describes as Jesus of Nazareth. In Deuteronomy 18:15 & 19, Moses says—

**Deuteronomy 18:15** “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen. You shall listen to him!... **19** It shall come about that whoever will not listen to [God’s] words which he shall speak in [God’s] name, [He] will avenge [Himself] on him [my translation].”

Here, Moses predicts that there will be other prophets like himself. They will be spokesmen for God, and the nation of Israel will be required to follow and obey them. But if the people reject these prophets and the truth from God which they present, then these unbelieving people will lose their opportunity to participate in His fulfilling His promise to Abraham to mold the Jews into the most powerful nation in history (and His promise to live in the eternal Kingdom of God).

The apostle Peter speaks to this effect by quoting these verses in the midst of his words in Acts 3:13-26 to the people of Jerusalem who have observed the miracle of God’s healing the lame man—

**Acts 3:13** “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.

**14** But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

**15** but put to death the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, to which we are witnesses.

**16** And on the basis of belief in his name, the name of Jesus, He has strengthened this man whom you see and know. And the belief which is through him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.

**17** And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.

**18** But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Messiah would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

**19** Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

**20** and that He may send Jesus, the Messiah appointed for you,

**21** whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

**22** Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. To him you shall give heed to everything which he says.

**23** And it will be that every person that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’

**24** And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days.

**25** It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your descendants all the families of the earth will be blessed.’

**26** For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent him to bless you by turning every one from your wicked ways [modified NAS95; emphasis mine].”

Moses states in Deuteronomy that the Jew who rejects any prophet of God will face His judgment and vengeance, because the person is rejecting not just the prophet, but God Himself. And Peter makes it clear that the ultimate prophet of God is Jesus of Nazareth, the one who will return to bring about the “restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time,” who deserves just as much “heeding” and obeying, if not more, than any other of God’s prophets such as Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the others. Also, the “restoration” of which Peter speaks will be the permanent renewal of the Kingdom of Israel when the Jews living on the land of Israel will become the primary and greatest world power according to God’s promise.

Nevertheless, in the midst of God’s first promise to Abraham, the Mosaic Covenant states that the Jews as a nation have a moral obligation to obey its commandments and instructions in order to retain the land

(and, therefore, in order to be the “great nation” of the Abrahamic Covenant). God both promises the Jews safety and security on the land if they obey it and threatens them with expulsion from the land of Israel if they disobey it. Deuteronomy 28:10 & 13 and 28:63-65 demonstrate these two possibilities—

**Deuteronomy 28:10** “[If you obey the Mosaic Covenant], all the peoples of the earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will be afraid of you... **13** The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully [NAS95].”

**Deuteronomy 28:63** “It shall come about that as the LORD delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the LORD will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you will be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it. **64** Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. **65** Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of existence [modified NAS95].”

First, God assures the Jews in Deuteronomy 28:10 & 13 that He will remain faithful to the Abrahamic promise and eventually make them powerful enough to rule the world. However, He places a condition on them. They must “listen” to His “commandments...to observe them carefully.” The question is, will they do this? Yes, as we will find out in a moment. Therefore, they will exercise hegemony over all the peoples of the earth, the Gentiles. Plus, the Old Testament prophets, Isaiah through Malachi, and the book of Revelation in the New Testament indicate that this will occur when the Messiah appears (for the second time). And we also know that the New Testament declares that the Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth.

Second, in Deuteronomy 28:63-65 above, God threatens the Jews with expelling them from the land of Israel, *if they disobey the Mosaic Covenant*. He will tear them from the land and “scatter” them “among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth,” so that they never find a true home or homeland in the world outside the land of Israel. Unfortunately, the Israelites did not obey God, and the first instance of His following through on this threat took place around 700 B.C., when the Assyrians destroyed the northern Kingdom of Israel and dispersed eleven tribes into their empire. The second instance happened around 600 B.C., when the Babylonians destroyed the southern Kingdom of Judah and took the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (and Simeon) into captivity to Babylon. A similar scattering of the Jewish people occurred when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and killed most of the Jews and forced them off their land in A.D. 132-135. And they did not begin returning in large numbers until the end the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

However, in Deuteronomy 30:5-6, Moses speaks of a remarkable miracle which God will perform—

**Deuteronomy 30:1** “So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you [in Deuteronomy 28], and **you turn in your heart** in all the nations where the LORD your God has banished you, **2** and you return to the LORD your God and **obey Him with all your heart and existence** according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, **3** then **the LORD your God will restore you** from captivity, and have compassion on you, and **will gather you again** from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. **4** If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will take you back.” **5** “The LORD your God **will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed**, and **you shall possess it**. And **He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers**. **6** Moreover the LORD your God **will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your existence**, so that you may live.

**7** “The LORD your God **will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you**, who persecuted you. **8** And **you shall again obey the LORD**, and **observe all His commandments** which I command you today. **9** Then the LORD your God **will prosper you abundantly** in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground,



for the LORD **will again rejoice over you for good**, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; **10** if you obey the LORD your God **to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the Torah**, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and existence [modified NAS95; emphasis mine].”

First, God predicts that He will scatter the Jews throughout the world because of their disobeying Him and the Mosaic Covenant. Second, He says that they will come back to Him in their hearts, so that He will gather them from the far corners of the earth to the land He has given them. Third, He will cause them to prosper on the land. Fourth, God will cause those who hate them to suffer the way He has caused them. Fifth, they will obey the commandments of the Mosaic Covenant properly. And, sixth, God will circumcise their hearts, meaning that their new, inner orientation to Him will be *because of His inward work*. While He exhorted them in Deuteronomy 10:16 to circumcise their hearts, here in chapter 30 He reveals that they can do so only if He causes them from His transcendent position as the author of human history. But He assures them that He will do exactly this.

The result will be that Israel’s enemies will be cursed and destroyed, while the Jews enjoy complete safety, security, and prosperity on their land. In line with His promise to make them the “great nation” of the Abrahamic Covenant, this will all involve God’s fulfilling it. Again, God states that the condition He is placing on the nation of Israel for them to enjoy all these blessings from Him is their keeping the Mosaic Covenant and turning to Him with all their hearts and with every aspect of their existences as His chosen people on the land of Israel. But, of course, they will fulfill this condition at the right time in history, when God chooses for them to fulfill it, because God has promised such to Abraham and is promising it again through Moses.

### 3. The National and International Purpose of the Davidic Covenant

Now that God has made His two promises of the Abrahamic Covenant and established in the Mosaic Covenant the existential condition for the Jews to experience His promises, even for them to become the most powerful nation in human history, the stage is set for His human proxy and representative to rule over them for the rest of the time that this earth is in place. Accordingly, God makes the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:9-16 with King David around 1000 B.C., a thousand years after Abraham and five hundred years after Moses—

**2 Samuel 7:9** “I [the LORD God] have been with you [David] wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth. **10** I will also **appoint a place for My people Israel** and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and **not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them** any more as formerly, **11** even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel. And I will give you [David] rest from all your enemies.

The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will **make a house for you**. **12** When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up **your descendant** after you, who will come forth from you, and **I will establish his kingdom**. **13** He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom into perpetuity. **14 I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me**. When he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, **15** but My loyal love shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

**16** Your house and **your kingdom** shall endure before Me **forever**. **Your throne** shall be established **forever** [modified NAS95; emphasis mine].”

In this passage, God makes five promises to David that become clearer by means of the rest of the Bible—

- 1) Like His promise to Abraham, God will make David's name great, because David's role is to be the ancestor and forerunner of the final and eternal king and Messiah of Israel and the Gentiles.
- 2) In line with His promise to Abraham and through Moses, God will grant the Jews the land of Israel on this earth where they will live securely and safely.
- 3) Just as David has been God's Son, his son will be the Son of God, so that his descendants will continue to be God's Sons, including and especially the final king of Israel.
- 4) David's son, Solomon, and not David, will build a temple for God.
- 5) The Davidic line of kings and therefore his earthly kingdom will last into perpetuity and, indeed, forever.

Up to the time of Saul of the tribe of Benjamin, the first king of Israel, and David of the tribe of Judah, Israel's second king, God had appointed "judges" to rule the Jews. With David, He is establishing a permanent line of kings, who will be his physical descendants, starting with Solomon. Solomon will build a temple for God in Jerusalem, but, if he sins, He will discipline him with attacks by his enemies and seek to motivate him to pursue righteousness and obedience to Him.

David and his descendants, the legitimate kings of Israel, will each be a Son of God, which, in the Ancient Near East, meant a human proxy and representative of a people's chief god. For example, the Pharaoh of Egypt was the Son of Ra, the sun god. And the purpose of this title was for the king to rule over not only the god's people, but also his land, *with the same level of authority as the god* and as if the god himself were sitting on the throne of the king. Similarly, God is saying that David, Solomon, and the rest of Israel's kings are to be His representative, ruling over His land, the land of Israel (and, by extrapolation, the rest of the world and the universe!). As a result, when the Israelites walked into David's or Solomon's throne room, they were to think of themselves as speaking to and hearing from the LORD God Himself, the transcendent and uncreated author of the creation and human history.

The New Testament proclaims that the line of the Davidic kings of Israel culminated in and ended with Jesus, the final "Son of God." According to the prophets of the Hebrew scriptures and the book of Revelation, the Messiah appears in order to rescue Israel from their enemies, to restore the Kingdom of Israel on the land that God gave them in the Abrahamic Covenant, and to rule over both them and the Gentile nations of the earth. This will be the "1,000 years" of the Millennial Kingdom of Revelation 20 and will be the first stage of the Kingdom of God in which all believers from all history, both Jews and Gentiles, from Abel to the last believer of this present realm, will participate. This is the aqua box on the left at the bottom of the **Diagram of Biblical Theology**.

On the one hand, the believers who had died before the Messiah's appearance will be resurrected from the dead as eternal and morally perfect persons, while the believers who are still alive will be immediately transformed into the same. On the other hand, God will finish the circumcision of the hearts of the Jews living on the land of Israel and who remain mortal and sinful, in order that they *finally* become the "great nation" of the Abrahamic Covenant. And their Messiah and they will rule over the Gentiles in the rest of the world. The Messiah will be both their eternal king and their eternal priest. More on this in a moment.

Then, we find out from Revelation 21 & 22 that the second and final stage of the Kingdom of God will take place on a new earth of a new creation after God destroys the present creation at the end of the rule of the Jews over the earth and the final judgment and destruction of those who were unwilling to obey Him during their life on this earth. In this way, the New Testament says also that Jesus, the Davidic king and Messiah of the Jews, will be the eternal ruler of the second stage, so that all believers from all history, both Jews and Gentiles, will serve him and enjoy everlasting existence on the new and permanent earth. This is the light purple box on the right at the bottom of the **Diagram of Biblical Theology**.

Consequently, the *national* nature of the Davidic Covenant is that the Messiah as the Son of God, i.e., God's human proxy and representative among the Jews, will rule over them on the land of Israel when

God fulfills His promise to Abraham and they become the most powerful nation in history. Therefore, the Davidic Covenant adds the element of a monarchy to this Abrahamic promise.

The *international* nature of the Davidic Covenant is that the Jewish Messiah, the king of Israel, will rule over God's eternal people, when they are transformed into immortal beings to participate in the Kingdom of Israel on this earth and when God creates a new earth. And His eternal people will comprise both Jews and Gentiles whose hearts God has circumcised during their earthly lives. Therefore, the Davidic Covenant also adds the element of a monarchy to God's promise to Abraham to bless with eternal life all believers like him.

#### 4. The National and International Purpose of the New Covenant

About 600 B.C., as the Babylonians were in the process of destroying the southern Kingdom of Judah, Jeremiah made the following prediction in regard to the Jews and the New Covenant—

**Jeremiah 31:31** "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, **32** 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. **33** "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My Torah within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. **34** 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** [modified NAS95; emphasis mine]."

In this passage, God promises to make a New Covenant with all the Jews, "the house of Israel and the house of Judah," where the distinction between David's tribe of Judah and the other tribes, who were also descended from Jacob, had been in existence since the days of David around 1000 B.C. Here, God repeats His statement from Deuteronomy 30:6 that, at some time in the future, He will change the hearts of all living Jews, which we know from the prophets of the Hebrew scriptures will be when the Messiah appears to finalize God's promise of producing the "great nation" of Israel.

Therefore, the new feature in the New Covenant is in the last part of v. 34, that God promises to forgive all their sins. But will this happen by means of the sacrifices and offerings of the Mosaic Covenant, which God had already put in place nine hundred years earlier? Apparently not. All along, God had planned to use a different method from the bulls and goats to extinguish His anger against sinners and to forgive them. This new method was to require that the Messiah be not only the king of Israel, but also the one, permanent offering on behalf of their sins.

Bible students have disagreed about the interpretation of Isaiah 53, but the prophet says in vs. 2-5—

**Isaiah 53:2** For [God's servant] grew up before Him like a tender shoot,  
and like a root out of parched ground.  
He has no stately form or majesty  
that we should look upon him,  
nor appearance that we should be attracted to him.  
**3** He was despised and forsaken of men,  
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.  
and like one from whom men hide their face  
he was despised, and we did not esteem Him.  
**4** Surely our griefs he himself bore,  
and our sorrows he carried.  
Yet we ourselves considered him violently hit,

struck down by God, and humiliated.

- 5 But he was pierced through for our transgressions.  
He was crushed for our iniquities.  
The chastening for our well-being fell upon him,  
and by his scourging we are healed [modified NAS95].

Is Isaiah referring to himself, or to the nation of Israel, or to another individual? I believe the correct interpretation of these verses is that, around 740 B.C., Isaiah predicts the suffering by death of *another authentic human being like himself*, whom he identifies as the “servant” of God and who will be rejected by his own people and struck dead by God for His people’s sins and “iniquities.” Yet, this person’s death will bring about a healing for the people, which, in the context, means God’s forgiveness for their “transgressions.” And who will this man be?

I suggest that David refers to him in Psalm 110:1-4, that he will be an unusual person in the history of the Jews who will play two special and vital roles that are given to him by God—

- Psalm 110:1** The LORD says to my Lord:  
“Sit at My right hand  
until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”  
2 The LORD will stretch forth your strong scepter from Zion, saying,  
“Rule in the midst of your enemies.”  
3 Your people will volunteer freely in the day of your power.  
In holy array, from the womb of the dawn,  
your youth are to you as the dew.  
4 The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind,  
“You are a priest forever  
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

David states that the first role that this unusual man will play is to be his “Lord.” But, assuming David writes this psalm when he is the Son of God and king of Israel as God’s proxy and representative according to the Davidic Covenant, what man can be greater and more authoritative than he is? It must be a future Son of God and king of Israel, who somehow is even more special than David. Therefore, it is a descendant of his from the tribe of Judah, who plays an additional role within the nation of Israel. Indeed, this man, according to David, will be a “priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” The Melchizedek to whom he is referring was the king of Salem (Jerusalem) in Genesis 14, who met Abraham when he was returning from rescuing his nephew Lot from the four kings who had kidnapped him.

In Hebrews 7:11-24 in the New Testament, the author explains the relationship between David’s “priest according to the order of Melchizedek” and the Levitical priests of the Mosaic Covenant—

**Hebrews 7:11** Now if reaching the goal was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Torah), what further need was there for another priest to arise **according to the order of Melchizedek** [as David says in Psalm 110:4], and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? 12 For when the priesthood is changed, there is, of necessity, **a change of Covenant also.** 13 For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to **another tribe**, from which no one has officiated at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord was **descended from Judah**, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.

15 And this is clearer still, if another priest arises **according to the likeness of Melchizedek**, 16 who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is attested of him,

“You are a priest forever  
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

18 For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the [Mosaic] Covenant never brings someone to his goal), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. 20 And inasmuch as it was not

without an oath **21** (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but he with an oath through the One who said to him,

“The LORD has sworn  
and will not change His mind,  
‘You are a priest forever’”);

**22** so much the more also **Jesus** has become the guarantee of a **better covenant**.

**23** The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, **24** but Jesus, on the other hand, **because He continues forever, holds his priesthood permanently** [modified NAS95; emphasis mine].

If God intended the Jews to obtain complete confidence that they will reach their “goal” and receive God’s eternal mercy *by means of the sacrifices of animals* that they bring to God in the temple *according to the Mosaic Covenant*, then why did God declare that He would bring about a New Covenant with the nation of Israel? Because, as David says in Psalm 110, God has required that his “Lord” become a “priest forever” *outside the Mosaic Covenant*. The Mosaic Covenant, with its *mortal* priests who are sinners and its *continuous* animal sacrifices, is inadequate to provide the Jews with God’s eternal mercy. Only David’s priest “according to the order of Melchizedek” can do so. Both David and the author of Hebrews are stating that this new priest, who is “descended from Judah” and not from Levi, can satisfy God’s requirement of being a permanent priest. And the author of Hebrews states explicitly that David’s “Lord” and “priest forever” is Jesus of Nazareth, who “has become the guarantee” and basis of God’s forgiveness within “a better covenant,” the New Covenant.

Then, in Hebrews 8:6-13, the author confirms that Jesus is the fulfillment of the New Covenant—

**Hebrews 8:6** But now [Jesus as the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek] has obtained a more excellent ministry [than the Levitical priests of the Mosaic Covenant], by as much as he is also the mediator of a **better covenant**, which has been enacted on **better promises**. **7** For if that **first covenant were capable of making people blameless**, there would have been no occasion sought for a **second**.

**8** For deeming them condemned, [the New Covenant] says,

“Behold, days are coming,” says the LORD,  
“when I will effect a New Covenant  
with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,  
**9** **not like** the covenant which I made with their fathers  
on the day when I took them by the hand  
to lead them out of the land of Egypt.  
For they did not continue in My covenant,  
and I did not care for them,” says the LORD.

**10** “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel  
after those days,” says the LORD,  
“I will put My instructions into their minds,  
and I will write them on their hearts.  
And I will be their God,  
and they shall be My people.

**11** And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen,  
and everyone his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’  
for all will know Me,  
from the least to the greatest of them.

**12** **For I will be merciful to their iniquities,  
And I will remember their sins no more.”**

**13** By saying, “New,” He has made the first “Old.” And that which has been made “old” and is growing old is near disappearing [modified NAS95; emphasis mine].

Thus, the author of Hebrews says categorically that “the first covenant,” meaning the Mosaic Covenant, is not “capable of making people blameless” before God. It cannot produce eternal forgiveness for the Jews, or for anyone else. Only the “second” covenant, the “New Covenant,” can do so. Indeed, through it, God

“will be merciful to their iniquities” and “sins.” Then Hebrews 9:24-28 speaks explicitly of how Jesus as the Messiah becomes the basis of eternal forgiveness—

**Hebrews 9:24** For the Messiah did not enter a holy place made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. **25** Nor was it that he would offer himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place **year by year with blood that is not his own.** **26** Otherwise, he would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the system. **But now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.** **27** And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, **28** so the Messiah also, **having been offered once to bear the sins of many,** will appear **a second time** for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await him [modified NAS95; emphasis mine].

It does seem weird that God would require a human sacrifice in order to solve the problem of the Jews’ and Gentiles’ sinfulness and to provide them with forgiveness and mercy. Yet, the author of Hebrews is saying that Jesus, who is the morally perfect Son of God, with his *one* sacrifice when he died on the cross, qualifies to be a permanent high priest between God and sinners. Therefore, his appeal under the New Covenant, and not the appeal of multiple Levitical priests under the Mosaic Covenant, is the only effective appeal to God the Father for sinners’ eternal forgiveness and life in the Kingdom of God. This is what David in Psalm 110 and Jeremiah in chapter 31 were implying and Isaiah was stating explicitly in chapter 53.

As a result, Jesus is the long-expected Messiah (Anointed One, Christ, king, high priest, ruler, judge), who becomes God’s instrument of mercy and leadership—on the one hand, for the Jews and God’s shaping them into the greatest and most powerful nation in history when he makes his second appearance, and, on the other hand, for Jews and Gentiles as a result of God’s causing them to be oriented towards Him and inwardly committed to Him and Jesus for the sake of obtaining eternal life.

In this way, the New Covenant, as explicitly made with the “house of Israel and the house of Judah,” is *national* in its purpose for the Jews, so that God will inwardly change all of them and promise them forgiveness during the restored Kingdom of Israel, i.e., the Millennial Kingdom of Revelation 20, which is the first stage of the Kingdom of God. And it adds to the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, and the Davidic Covenant the element of a sacrificed Messiah, priest, and king, who is Jesus of Nazareth, as a single offering to God and an eternal advocate for Jewish sinners who live in the Millennial Kingdom. This is the “Lord” of David and his “priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek,” whom he describes in Psalm 110.

The New Covenant is also *international* in its purpose for both Jews and Gentiles, who, throughout history in the present realm, become authentic believers in the one, true God, the God of Israel. God changes them inwardly through His Spirit, and they obtain both participation in the restored Kingdom of Israel when Jesus returns and eternal life by God’s forgiving them through his death, resurrection, and intercession at the final judgment. As stated in the previous paragraph, this covenant adds the element of the unique sacrificial offering to God of Israel’s Messiah, priest, and king, who becomes an eternal advocate for all sinners who are believers and obedient to God during their lives on earth. In other words, at Jesus’ second appearance, God will resurrect both Jewish and Gentile believers who died in previous history and lift from the earth the believers who are still living, in order to transform the whole group into immortal and morally perfect beings. According to Revelation 20, these will reign with Jesus over not only the new Kingdom of Israel on the land of Israel but also the rest of the world made up of Gentile nations.

Plus, during the time of the Millennial Kingdom, God will change the hearts of all the Jews who are descendants of the initial generation who live on the land of Israel. He will also change the hearts of some Gentiles in other countries and nations on the earth. The diagram shows the Millennial Kingdom at the bottom as the first stage of the Kingdom of God. Then, all believers, who became such either before or



during the Millennial Kingdom, will obtain life in the second stage of the Kingdom of God on the new and eternal earth after the present universe is destroyed.

It is important to recognize that the Hebrew scriptures of the Old Testament address themselves primarily to God's first promise to Abraham to make Israel the "great nation," while the Greek scriptures of the New Testament deal with both promises. (Certain Christians since Jesus' appearance believe that God has transferred the first promise from the Jews to those who are believers in Jesus, who are mainly comprised of Gentiles. But this would be to call God a liar in regard to His faithfulness and loyal love to His promises and to the Jews).

A good example of Old Testament passages that explicitly refers to the first promise is Jeremiah 23:5-8. In it, God speaks of the Millennial Kingdom on the present earth, in which Jewish believers will dwell safely, but temporarily, under the rule of their Messiah, the "Branch" of David in the land of Israel—

**Jeremiah 23:5** "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD,

"When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch;  
and he will reign as king and act wisely  
and do justice and righteousness in the land.

**6** In his days Judah will be saved,  
and Israel will dwell securely.  
And this is his name by which He will be called,  
'The LORD our justification.'

**7** "Therefore, behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when they will no longer say, 'As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt,'

**8** but, 'As the LORD lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and from all the countries where I had driven them.' Then they will live on their own ground [modified NAS95]."

Then, two good examples of New Testament passages that explain the fulfillment of the first and second Abrahamic promises respectively are Revelation 20:1-6 and Revelation 21:1-4, this latter passage referring to the new creation and the new earth on which believers, who are called the New Jerusalem, will dwell forever —

**Revelation 20:1** Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. **2** And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. **3** And he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed. After these things he must be released for a short time.

**4** Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the existences of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand. And they came to life and reigned with the Messiah for a thousand years.

**5** The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

**6** Blessed and set apart is the one who has a part in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of the Messiah and will reign with him for a thousand years [modified NAS95].

**Revelation 21:1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth go away, and there is no longer any sea. **2** And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, **4** and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will no longer be any death. There will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain. The first things have gone away [modified NAS95]."

The vision of Revelation 20:1-6 which the apostle John sees depicts the imprisonment of Satan for a “thousand years,” i.e., for a long time, during which specific believers (I believe these are the twelve apostles of Jesus) rule the restored Kingdom of Israel with Jesus and the other previous believers who have acquired their immortal and morally perfect bodies as a result of the “first resurrection” of deceased human beings (and as a result of God’s lifting living believers off the earth when the Messiah makes his second appearance). Later, God will resurrect the unbelievers at the end of this Millennial Kingdom and judge and condemn them at The Great White Throne Judgment, which the vision describes at the end of Revelation 20.

Next, John’s vision of Revelation 21:1-4 shows that the “first heaven and the first earth go away” and disappear. Plus, a loud voice declares that the “first things have gone away.” While the vision may be speaking symbolically of the elimination of the present creation, I suggest that God will actually destroy this universe with its particular laws of physics and create a completely new one with different laws. As the voice states, “death” and the physical and biological decay that precedes it will no longer exist. In addition, there will not be “any sea,” which refers to Gentiles who oppose God and the Jews, as they do now and will do so even during the Millennial Kingdom outside the “great nation” of Israel. Gentiles who are hostile to God and the Jews will be gone forever from human existence on the new and eternal earth.

Finally, the kind of environment that all authentic believers in God have been longing for, one in which there is no loss, no suffering, no disappointment, and no heartache, will arrive. Consequently, no “mourning, or crying, or pain” will ever exist again in the created realm. And God “will dwell among...His people” for all eternity on the new, permanent earth. This is the most detailed description in the Bible of the everlasting life that God will provide to His people who have authentically believed in Him during the course of human history. Thus, the New Covenant provides the final element of the unexpected means of the death and resurrection of the Messiah for God’s fulfilling His promises to Abraham.

## **Summary Regarding God, the Nation of Israel, the Messiah, and the Kingdom of God**

God is telling the main story of His granting eternal mercy and life in the Kingdom of God to Jewish and Gentile sinners, whose hearts He changes so that they believe in Him and pursue obedience to Him even in their current sinful and immoral condition. He is also telling the secondary, but also very important, story of forming the Jewish people into the greatest and most powerful nation in all human history, which will occur when the Messiah arrives to destroy Israel’s enemies and to inaugurate the first stage of the Kingdom of God, when he rules over the Jews and the rest of the world.

God tells these stories in the midst of four covenants, which He makes explicitly with the nation of Israel, as explained in the Hebrew scriptures. First, with the Abrahamic Covenant, God has both—

- 1) promised the Jews the position of being the most powerful people on this earth on the land of Israel, and
- 2) promised eternal life to both Jews and Gentiles who become authentic believers like Abraham.

These promises are foundational for understanding the rest of the Bible and human history.

Second, with the Mosaic Covenant, God has stipulated for the Jews His condition of changed hearts that results in genuine belief and obedience to its various 613 commandments, in order for the people of Israel to demonstrate their commitment to God in the midst of their greatness in history. And He has assured them that He will cause them eventually to meet this condition. In addition, by having changed hearts and

being properly obedient to the covenant, they will instruct all other peoples of the world, the Gentiles, in the knowledge of God as the creator who is good, just, loving, faithful, and merciful.

Third, with the Davidic Covenant, God has promised that David and his descendants will be Sons of God and kings of Israel, and especially that, when Israel finally lives safely and securely on the land of Israel as the most powerful nation in history, it will be because of one special descendant of his, the Messiah, who will reign as God's everlasting Son.

Fourth, with the New Covenant, God has promised that He will forgive completely the sins of the Jews whose hearts He changes, which will eventually be the case for all of them living during the time of Israel's greatness. The covenant implies and is supported by other passages in the Hebrew scriptures that it will be the Messiah and David's own "Lord" who offers himself through death to God and becomes the basis for His mercy and forgiveness of the Jews (and the Gentiles) as their permanent priest.

In line with these four covenants, the Greek scriptures of the New Testament teaches that, through his death and resurrection, Jesus of Nazareth, as the final Davidic king, Son of God, and Messiah, is the means by which and the basis on which God fulfills His promises in the Abrahamic Covenant. Consequently, he will be the king and high priest of both believing Jews and believing Gentiles, both mortal and immortal, during first the Millennial Kingdom of Israel's greatness when he makes his second appearance. Then, after God ends the first stage of the Kingdom of God, brings about The Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20, and has finished transforming all believers throughout the history of the present realm into both immortal and morally perfect beings, God and Jesus will rule over these believers in the second and eternal stage of the Kingdom of God on the new earth of Revelation 21.

Thus, God, the nation of Israel, the Messiah who is Jesus of Nazareth and a member of this nation, and the Kingdom of God are the most important subjects of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

Here is one last manner of summarizing the historical and chronological progression of God's plans and purposes with the four covenants of the Hebrew scriptures—

- 1) **Abrahamic Covenant** – God guarantees that the nation of Israel will become the most powerful nation in history and that Abraham and people of authentic belief will participate in this nation and acquire eternal life.
- 2) **Mosaic Covenant** – God requires the nation of Israel to change their hearts and properly obey His 613 commandments in order to instruct the world, to live well on their land, and to rule the world, while He also promises that He will eventually cause them to do so after He has expelled them from the land because of their disobedience and brought them back because of His faithfulness.
- 3) **Davidic Covenant** – God adds the role of the king of Israel from the tribe of Judah and line of David to rule over them, including eventually when Israel exercises hegemony over the world, implying that the final and permanent king will rule over both believing Jews and believing Gentiles who have become immortal and morally perfect in the eternal Kingdom of God.
- 4) **New Covenant** – God adds the role of sacrificial offering and priest to the final king of Israel as the basis for His granting them mercy and forgiving them, implying that this will be the basis for His forgiving also the Gentiles who will share in the eternal Kingdom of God.