

YHWH'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL **(AND THE GENTILES)**

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TheSabbathGathering.org

COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

For reasons that we do not understand, YHWH chose Abraham, and made a covenant with him and his offspring. The consequences of that covenant are promised to affect the entire world.

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

After Abraham went to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, and YHWH provided a ram in the thicket, the covenant was again communicated:

Genesis 22:16-18

By myself I have sworn, declares YHWH, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.

The covenant promises the following:

1. YHWH will make Abraham a great nation
2. YHWH will bless Abraham
3. YHWH will make Abraham's name great
4. YHWH will make Abraham a blessing to others
5. YHWH will bless those who bless Abraham
6. YHWH will curse those who curse Abraham
7. YHWH will bless all the families of the earth through Abraham.

RENEWED THROUGH ISAAC

Genesis 26:3-5

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

YHWH renewed and refocused His covenant through Isaac. Thus the covenant was not to be fulfilled through Ishmael, but through Isaac.

RENEWED THROUGH JACOB

Genesis 28:13-15

And behold, YHWH stood above it and said, "I am YHWH, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with

you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

YHWH now renewed and refocused His covenant through Jacob. Thus the covenant was not to be fulfilled through Esau, but through Jacob. Jacob is later renamed Israel, and his 12 sons become the forefathers of the nation of Israel.

DELINEATED WITH MOSES AT SINAI

Fast forward 400 years. Jacob and his family have been in Egypt, they have become slaves, and they have multiplied into huge numbers. Of course, this was part of the promise! YHWH delivers them out of Egypt, using Moses as their leader, and brings them to Mt Sinai where makes a covenant with them. The question is: **“Is this covenant at Sinai something totally new and different, or is it just another expansion of the covenant promises made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**, now giving further definition and clarity to their offspring? Look at Exod 2:24 and then Exod 19:5-6, which is just before the giving of the “Ten Commandments” and other instructions of Torah.

Exodus 2:24 (ESV)

And God heard their groaning, and **God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.**

Exodus 19:5–6 (ESV)

Now therefore, if you will indeed **obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples**, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

YHWH is now saying to Jacob’s offspring, if you obey me, you will be my treasured possession. In other words, I will be your God, you will be my people, just like he promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Slightly different wording, but the promise is the same. Instead of talking to an individual about their future offspring, YHWH is now talking to the offspring, saying he will make them into a holy nation, set apart as His very own treasured possession. But he emphasizes, you must obey me... as a nation... just like your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob obeyed me.

But what about the other promises of the covenant made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? They are not restated word for word, nor would they need to be. If you consider the past list of promises, God simply revealed a little more each time. He didn’t restate the entire list of prior promises. They are all still in effect. God just reveals a bit more of clarity each time. That being said, God did restate the essence of his promises, as we see in the Deuteronomy passages below:

Deuteronomy 4:1 (ESV)

“And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that YHWH, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

They are to be given the promised land – the land of Canaan – the very land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – IF they obey His commands.

Deuteronomy 4:6–7 (ESV)

Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will 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 YHWH our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?

Here God is telling Israel you will indeed be a “great nation”. These are the very words that he used in his promise to Abraham. But they must keep his commands. Consider Dt 7:6-12.

1. Look at Dt 7:6-12. What does a “people holy to YHWH” mean in verse 6? What is “the oath” referred to in verse 8? What covenant is referred to in verse 9? What is the covenantal obligation on the part of the God’s people? What does God promise? For how long?

Deuteronomy 7:6–12 (ESV)

⁶ “For you are a **people holy** to YHWH your God. YHWH your God has chosen you to be a people for

his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷ It was not because you were more in number than any other people that YHWH set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but it is because YHWH loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that YHWH has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. ⁹ Know therefore that YHWH your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those **who love him and keep his commandments**, to a thousand generations, ¹⁰ and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face. ¹¹ You shall therefore **be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules** that I command you today. ¹² “And because you **listen to these rules and keep and do them**, YHWH your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love that he swore to your fathers.

The people of Israel were to be holy people. In other words, they were to be set apart for God’s purpose. They had a different role than all other peoples. And they were to “love him and keep his commandments”. Note verse 9, which refers to the covenant promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This was the very reason God brought them out of Egypt and into the promised land. God promises to keep his part of the covenant to 1000 generations (another way of saying forever!)

Is the Sinai covenant new and different from the one God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? I would argue that it is basically the same covenant but with further definition provided. God said to Abraham “walk blamelessly before me”. Now he gives more clarity on what that looks like. While much of this was no doubt known to past generations, the Torah given at Sinai defines clearly what God’s expectations are. He gives specific things to do and not do, in order for his people to demonstrate their love for him.

WHAT ABOUT GENTILES?

Scripture states that there were Gentiles traveling with Israel as they made their exodus from Egypt. This “mixed multitude” evidently chose to attach themselves to Israel and wanted to live as the people of Israel lived.

Exodus 12:37–39 (ESV)

³⁷ And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. ³⁸ **A mixed multitude also went up with them**, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds. ³⁹ And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

In the instructions for Passover, we see there is a clear difference between foreigners or hired workers and the sojourner (Hebrew **ger**). Foreigners and hired workers were prohibited from partaking of Passover, while the **ger** was allowed as long they were circumcised. Why? Circumcision was a sign of the covenant. This was how the sojourner indicated that they were choosing to attach themselves to Israel, and live in obedience to the commands of YHWH just as the Israelites.

Exodus 12:43–49 (ESV) Re Passover

⁴³ And YHWH said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, ⁴⁴ but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. ⁴⁵ No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it. ⁴⁶ It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones. ⁴⁷ All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. ⁴⁸ **If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to YHWH, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land.** But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. ⁴⁹ There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.”

The sojourner who indicated they wanted to attached themselves to Israel, and live in obedience to the God of Israel, was to follow the Torah just as the Israelites were. There was to be “one law” for all.

Similar statements regarding the Sabbath and the Appointed Times are also evident in Scripture:

Exodus 20:8–10 (ESV) Re the Sabbath

⁸ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but

the seventh day is a Sabbath to YHWH your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, **or the sojourner who is within your gates.**

Deuteronomy 16:11–12 (ESV) Re Shavuot

¹¹ And you shall rejoice before YHWH your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your towns, **the sojourner**, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you, **at the place that YHWH your God will choose**, to make his name dwell there. ¹² You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt; and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

Deuteronomy 16:14–15 (ESV) Re Sukkot

¹⁴ **You shall rejoice in your feast**, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite, **the sojourner**, the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns. ¹⁵ For seven days you shall keep the feast to YHWH your God at the place that YHWH will choose, because YHWH your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.

Likewise, the **ger** were allowed (and expected) to follow the same commands regarding sacrifices and offerings:

Leviticus 22:18–20 (ESV)

¹⁸ “Speak to Aaron and his sons and all the people of Israel and say to them, When any one of the house of Israel **or of the sojourners in Israel presents a burnt offering** as his offering, for any of their vows or freewill offerings that they offer to YHWH, ¹⁹ if it is to be accepted for you it shall be a male without blemish, of the bulls or the sheep or the goats. ²⁰ You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you.

Numbers 15 makes it clear that the people of Israel of the sojourner “shall be alike before YHWH”.

Numbers 15:15–16 (ESV)

¹⁵ For the assembly, **there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before YHWH.** ¹⁶ **One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you.”**

Moses’ last words were spoken to the people of Israel and also to the sojourner. He instructed all of them to “be careful to do all the words of this Torah.”

Deuteronomy 31:12–13 (ESV)

¹² Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and **the sojourner within your towns**, that they may hear and learn to fear YHWH your God, and **be careful to do all the words of this law**, ¹³ and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear YHWH your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.”

And finally, Deuteronomy 29 specifically includes the sojourner with those who “enter into the sworn covenant of YHWH”:

Deuteronomy 29:10–12 (ESV)

¹⁰ “You are standing today, all of you, before YHWH your God: the heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, ¹¹ your little ones, your wives, **and the sojourner who is in your camp**, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water, ¹² so that you **may enter into the sworn covenant of YHWH your God**, which YHWH your God is making with you today,

Thus we see that from the beginning, it seems that God’s plan allowed for the inclusion of foreigners who desired to attach themselves to Israel and worship the God of Israel. These foreigners and the people of Israel were to be “alike before YHWH”. They were to be a part of the covenant that God made with Israel.

It is interesting to note, however, that in most instances of listing the sojourner, they are listed along with the fatherless and the widows. It is as if they are seen to be in this group of people that is needy, or easily taken advantage of. I think it also implies that perhaps they were not recognized as “equal” on every level.

They were not true “citizens”, but still viewed as “aliens”. This would change with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit!

COVENANT RENEWED THROUGH DAVID

YHWH further refocuses his covenant through David. Here we see more focus on the redemptive work of the promised Messiah, and how YHWH intends to fulfill his covenant promises to the nation of Israel through the offspring of David.

2 Samuel 7:8–16

Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says YHWH of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. **And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more.** And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, YHWH declares to you that YHWH will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, **I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.** He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. **Your throne shall be established forever.’ ”**

YHWH promises that David’s throne would be established forever, and that He would plant is people, Israel, so they could live in their own land, undisturbed forever. This passage is clearly prophetic on multiple levels, speaking of the Messiah as the offspring of David, and also of the people of Israel their need for punishment because of their “iniquity” – a punishment that the Messiah would eventually bear.

THE NEW COVENANT

The “new covenant” could also just as correctly be translated as the “renewed covenant”. Just as YHWH’s original covenant with Abraham was renewed and refocused through Isaac, Jacob, and David, He promises to renew it again. This time, however, the renewal will be more dramatically refocused, since the Messiah who was only hinted at in prior covenants, is to become central to the realization of this covenant renewal.

It is a misunderstanding that the New Testament is the New Covenant, or that the New Covenant is with the Gentile “church”.

Scripture makes is clear declares that the New (or Renewed) Covenant, like the previous covenants, will be with Israel.

Jeremiah 31:31–34

“Behold, the days are coming, declares YHWH, when **I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah**, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares YHWH. For this is the covenant that I will make **with the house of Israel** after those days, declares YHWH: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. **And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.** And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know YHWH,’ **for they shall all know me**, from the least of them to the greatest, declares YHWH. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Ezekiel 36 is another prophetic passage with similar wording to Jeremiah 31:

Ezekiel 36:24–30

I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.** And

I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, **and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.** And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. And I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, **that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.**

From Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36, we see the following characteristics of the new covenant:

1. The new covenant is with Israel (Jer 31:31)
2. YHWH is the God of Israel & Israel will be YHWH's people (Jer 31:33, Ezek 36:28)
3. The Torah will be written on their hearts (Jer 31:33)
4. Israel will all know YHWH (Jer 31:34)
5. Israel's sins will be forgiven (Jer 31:34)
6. YHWH will spiritually cleanse Israel (Ezek 36:25)
7. His Spirit will be within them (Ezek 36:26)
8. Israel will walk according to Torah (Ezek 36:27)
9. Israel will live in the land of their fathers (Ezek 36:28)
10. The nations will know who YHWH is (Ezek 36:36)

It is important to realize that the keeping of Torah is a significant aspect of the New Covenant. *YHWH will write his Torah on the hearts of the people of Israel.* They will all know Him, and their sins will be forgiven and remembered no more. Jeremiah is quoted in Hebrews 8:6-12, showing that the Messiah is the mediator of this new covenant, based on a "better promise":

Hebrews 8:6

But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

What was the better promise? Just before Jeremiah speaks of the new covenant, he makes this statement about sin / iniquity:

Jeremiah 31:30

But everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

And then, as he prophesies about the new covenant, he states that YHWH promises to forgive their iniquity:

Jeremiah 31:34

And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know YHWH,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares YHWH. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

This is also prophesied to David in 2 Samuel, speaking of the Messiah who would take upon himself the iniquity of the people:

2 Samuel 7:12-16

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. **When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men,** but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.' "

Isaiah 53:5–6

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and YHWH has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

So the new covenant YHWH will make with Israel includes a provision for their iniquities to be forgiven forever, through the Messiah. This is an “Old Testament” theme, as well as a “New Testament” theme:

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Messiah is central to the complete and lasting forgiveness of sin. It is not surprising then that the Messiah speaks of the new covenant at the last Passover meal before his death:

Luke 22:20

And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

The Messiah, upon his death, took upon Himself the iniquities of His people, and with that act, the promises of the New Covenant began to be fulfilled. These words of the Messiah and the new covenant are referred to in Hebrews 9, the main passage in the “New Testament” that uses the term “new covenant”:

Hebrews 9:11–22

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. **Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant**, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.” And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

The Messiah is the Mediator of the new covenant, meaning that it is through Him that YHWH fulfilled His covenant promise to His people.

Another aspect of the New Covenant is that Israel was promised His Spirit (Ezek 36:26). This promise was fulfilled in Acts 2 when Jewish people had gathered from many countries to worship in Jerusalem at Shavuot (Pentecost), as they were instructed to do in Torah.

Acts 2:1–11

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. **And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem **Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven**. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”

Although many Christians today see Pentecost as the beginning of the “church”, it is clear from Scripture that the Holy Spirit was at this time given to Jewish people (Jews and proselytes) but not yet to Gentiles. That came later when Peter was at Cornelius’ house:

Acts 10:44–47

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, **because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles**. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

The Holy Spirit is the special sign of the Renewed Covenant, just as circumcision was the sign of the original covenant with Abraham.

2 Corinthians 1:21–22

And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

2 Corinthians 5:5

He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

Ephesians 1:13–14

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Although the New Covenant has been fulfilled in part, it is not yet complete. The Messiah initiated the beginning of the New Covenant with his sacrificial death. The Holy Spirit was given as a sign of that covenant, in accordance with the promises of YHWH. But yet, at this time, not ALL of Israel knows Him. Not all of Israel follows His Torah. These things are yet to be fulfilled.

The “new covenant” really isn’t new. It is really the same covenant YHWH made with Abraham, renewed with Isaac, renewed with Jacob, and renewed with David. Now it is renewed and perfected through the Messiah.

GENTILES GRAFTED IN

The New Covenant was a renewal and refocusing of the original covenant with Abraham. The New Covenant was with the people of Israel. It was to be fulfilled through the Messiah. The sign of that covenant was the Holy Spirit. Thus, when the Holy Spirit, as the sign of that new covenant between YHWH and Israel, suddenly came upon the Gentiles, it forced a new paradigm upon the Jewish believers of that day:

Acts 11:17–18

If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

This was a new concept. Prior to this, Gentiles had to be converted to Judaism to be partakers of the promises of YHWH. This involved agreement to live by the whole torah (written and oral), ritual circumcision, baptism (mikveh), and a temple sacrifice, after which they were (at least in theory) viewed as having become totally Jewish. But now YHWH was inviting Gentiles to partake in His covenant promises with Israel, even without ritual conversion to Judaism.

In hindsight, we can see how Scriptures had always indicated that Gentiles would somehow or someday be included, beginning with the original covenant to Abraham:

Genesis 12:3 YHWH’s promise to Abraham (also in Gen 18:18 and Gen 22:18)

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**”

Genesis 26:4 YHWH's promise to Isaac

I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And **in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed,**

Genesis 28:14 YHWH's promise to Jacob

Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and **in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.**

Paul, in his teaching to the growing number of Gentiles believers, makes it clear to them that they are grafted in to the root of Israel. And even though some Jews of that time had become enemies of the Gospel, the Gentiles should remember that they do not support the root, but rather the root supports them:

Romans 11:13–21

Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, **and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in** among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember **it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.** Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.

Any teaching which suggests that the present day “church” is the “spiritual Israel” or has replaced Israel, indeed exhibits the very “arrogance toward the branches” that Paul speaks against.

FUTURE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

YHWH's people, whether Jew or grafted-in Gentile, will either stand with him, or be broken off from Him, depending upon their faith or their unbelief, respectively (Romans 11:20). But in the end, “all Israel” will be saved:

Romans 11:25–29

Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: **a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.** And in this way **all Israel will be saved**, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.” As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, **they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.** For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Paul is teaching what is taught in the Prophets. Long after David has physically died, amid prophecies of punishment and isolation from YHWH for Israel's disobedience, He promises to restore the people Israel in their own land, forever:

Amos 9:11–15

“In that day **I will raise up the booth of David** that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins **and rebuild it as in the days of old**, that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name,” declares YHWH who does this. “Behold, the days are coming,” declares YHWH, “when the plowman shall overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows the seed; the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and all the hills shall flow with it. I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit. **I will plant them on their land, and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them,**” says the LORD your God.

Ezekiel 37:21–28

Thus says Adonay YHWH: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. And **I will make**

them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But **I will save them from all the backslidings** in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. **“My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd.** They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. **They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob,** where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children **shall dwell there forever,** and David my servant shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. **And I will set them in their land** and multiply them, and **will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore.** My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Then the nations will know that I am YHWH who sanctifies Israel, **when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”**

In the end, Israel, with its grafted-in Gentile branches, will dwell forever in the promised land under the rule of the Messiah in the very presence of YHWH.