

The Role of Jeremiah

We will be talking about the prophecies of Jeremiah. There are certain passages in Jeremiah that are quite well known, the new covenant passage particularly. But I have found in the almost 30 years that I have been working on seminary campuses, that the Book of Jeremiah on the whole is not well known, just a little better known than Ezekiel. Of course, the best known part of the prophecies are certain parts of Isaiah and the first six chapters of Daniel, but Jeremiah and Ezekiel are not that well known. I think that is because it is difficult to find out exactly what the message of the books are. Ezekiel is particularly difficult because of the visions and the structure of the book. Jeremiah is difficult because it does not follow a consistent chronological pattern and the Septuagint has a shorter version of it which is also arranged differently. In addition to these difficulties, there is also the problem of occasional New Testament quotations of Jeremiah, primarily in Matthew 2:17-18:

Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

“A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.”

Here Jeremiah’s prophecy of the impending doom of Jerusalem is quoted and his reaction and what he says of the community. Matthew says it is fulfilled when the women of Bethlehem were crying for their babies and little boys that had been killed when Herod was seeking to exterminate Jesus. It is very difficult to get a consistent interpretation of Matthew’s quotation and I do not want to go into that now because that could take us a whole hour.

Then Jeremiah is quoted too in chapter 27 of Matthew in the account of Judas hanging himself. We read: “So they decided to use the money [that is, the money that Judas had thrown back] to buy the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled.” And then Matthew uses a quote from the prophecy of Zechariah. Why does he say “what was spoken by Jeremiah” and then quote Zechariah? The most common answer to this has been that Jeremiah played a far greater role in the thinking of the people in those days. Isaiah and Jeremiah were the two major prophets, but Elijah and Jeremiah seemed to have been outstanding in the minds of the people of those days. Those two names represented the prophets, Elijah the first half of the prophets and Jeremiah the second. That is the most common interpretation that I have come across although you may have found others. You may hold to another interpretation of why Matthew did this, but it does indicate that there is a certain amount of uncertainty about the Book of Jeremiah. But this we do know, that Jeremiah prophesied at a very crucial time in the history of Jerusalem. Let us pray.

LORD, our God, help us to understand these 52 chapters of the Old Testament under the name of Jeremiah. What a man he was. He lived in difficult times. He faced so many excruciating experiences and then saw Your people on the road to destruction. God, You teach us through him and we pray that there may not be a repeat for Your people of today in this modern age of what Your people went through and what Your preaching prophets had to face. God bless us in this hour. Give us strength and courage. We continue to be weighed down with the tragedies of this life. We grant, our God, that we may not weep as those who have no hope for we know You are a righteous God, You are just and compassionate and in Your own way You will lead us, direct us and bless us. That is our assurance. We pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Now we will look at the connections between the role of Jeremiah and the revelation of the concepts of kingdom, covenant and mediator. Remember we are still in the Davidic epoch. Jeremiah experienced the end of what could also be called the Davidic monarchical period. Ezekiel also stood right at the transition, but both Jeremiah and Ezekiel were very insistent that just because the Davidic epoch was ending, that is not the end of the covenant. That does not mean God's kingdom purposes will not proceed. The mediator is still coming, but something about the line of covenantal activity, the Davidic, the Mosaic, the Abrahamic, the Noahic, is coming to an end and yet is continuing in a refreshed, regenerated way.

Jeremiah speaks at the end of the monarchy of Judah. Israel had long been removed from the scene and Jeremiah tells us that he too was carried away to Egypt, contrary to his desires. He didn't want to go to Egypt but after the Babylonian-appointed governor over Judah was murdered, Jeremiah was carried off by his countrymen as a hostage to Egypt. That is the last we hear of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was living and ministering between 620 B.C. to at least 580 BC and that was indeed a time of tragedy.

The following is a brief summary of some of the experiences of Jeremiah. At God's command he went through the enemy lines to go claim the family inheritance in Ramah. Ramah was just a few miles outside of Jerusalem, but between Jerusalem and the place of his family were the Babylonian military trenches. He made it through, but when his countrymen saw that he did it, they called him a traitor. They hated his prophecies, they rejected him, they threatened him. We see this in Jeremiah 11:18-36. They threw him in prison in chapter 37, into a cistern in chapter 38, and they drug him off to Egypt, where he didn't want to go. He had to give certain prophecies in which he was himself involved. His experiences at times were excruciating. He pled with the king not to be thrown back into the cistern. He was a man who suffered as a servant. We can see that he was a prophetic type of the Christ, faithful to God and to proclaiming the covenantal Word, to setting forth the idea of God, the sovereign one in control. All this in the midst of such experiences! Then he had to appeal to the king, a king who didn't have a sense of righteousness. But the king was, after all, moved to a bit of pity and he says, "All right, take him out of the cistern, but keep him locked up anyway." Jeremiah had a very tough lot. He had to suffer for speaking the truth.

Jeremiah has often been characterized as a man of tears. This idea is supported by Jeremiah when he says in 9:1, "Oh that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people." "I would weep." This is something a soft-hearted man would say. In Lamentations 5:15-18, the author, thought by most evangelical scholars to be Jeremiah, says:

Joy is gone from our hearts;
 our dancing has turned to mourning.
The crown has fallen from our head.
 Woe to us, for we have sinned!
Because of this, our hearts are faint,
 because of these things our eyes grow dim
for Mt. Zion, which lies desolate,
 with jackals prowling over it.

But then he says, "You, O LORD, reign forever." He had said before, in chapter 3: "Your mercies are new every morning; great is your faithfulness, your compassions never fail." He concludes his lamentations saying, "Your throne endures from generation to generation," but then comes his question, "Why do you always forget us, why do you forsake us so long? Restore us to Yourself, O LORD." This is a call of certainty; this is what God will do. He knows that God has not utterly rejected His people.

Jeremiah was a man of tears. He knew how to weep, but he was also a man of courage and a man of strength. Looking at Jeremiah, I can see why when people looked at Christ, they said, "Here's Jeremiah back amongst us!" because of Christ's strength and unyielding perseverance when He was confronted by His enemies. Jeremiah is a hero for the Israelites.

What gave Jeremiah his strength? Jeremiah knew he was called to be a prophet and he knew he could not get out of it. In chapter one the LORD says to him, "Jeremiah, from the very time before you were born, I had elected you. I chose you." And so in a sense, he was reborn before he was born. "I knew you before you were born and in the womb of your mother." There he was known by God and was singled out for the tremendously difficult task of tearing down, building up, uprooting, planting, destroying, resurrecting.

Jeremiah stood at a crucial period between the old and the new. He had to help remove the old and he had to be there to restore the priesthood; he had to regenerate and renew the old as God wanted it at that crucial period. Jeremiah stands at a crucial period. It is like Samuel's role in the transition from the judges to the kings. It is also like Moses' role in the transition from slavery to freedom and like Abram's transition from the Ur of the Chaldeans into the Promised Land. Likewise, Jeremiah stands right at a crucial period, the ending of the Davidic epoch. He was called and he remained faithful, a man of courage. Sometimes it takes courage to cry. It does. And sometimes it means fighting the shame when the tears come. Jeremiah evidently knew how to cry because he was a man of strength, because he was a man in God's favor, fighting for God's will, for God's people. Then tragedy overcame the man of strength and caused him to shed tears. Jeremiah was a man of tears and his strength came from the conviction that he knew God had called him, appointed him and appointed what he was to say. Jeremiah 8:18 says,

O my Comforter in sorrow,
my heart is faint within me.
Listen to the cry of my people
from a land far away:
"Is the LORD not in Zion?
Is her king no longer there?"

No, the king was no longer there after King Zedekiah was taken off into captivity. After Zedekiah had his eyes removed and he was a helpless victim, the Davidic house and its physical representation was gone. There was no king. What a tragedy, no king. What had happened to God's promise to David that there would be a descendant of his on the throne for all time? There was no king. Even more, the harvest is past, the summer is ended and we, the nation, are not saved.

I grew up in fruit country in California and there was a time to pick the apricots and then the peaches. In between came the grapes and then came the pears and then nectarines. They kept coming for a period of three or four weeks, but all of a sudden the time came when there was no more fruit. Anything that was left on the vine either dried up or dropped to the ground and rotted. The harvest was past. There was no use going back out to the vineyards or the orchards. It was finished, it was no more. Likewise, in Jeremiah's time the harvest was past. One could not expect any fruit anymore from God's covenant people. One could not expect to see any continued life there, productive life from God's people as such, because the summer had ended. The winter of night, the winter of destruction had come. That is why Jeremiah had to preach, "The end is here." The end of the monarchy, the end of God's people as such. But is it the end of the covenant? No. The end of the kingdom? No. The end of the promises of the mediator? No. He picks up what is there that will continue.

Jeremiah 8:22 says, “Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?” There is none. There is no balm in Gilead. There is no healing for Israel, for the summer has ended. The harvest is past. There is no more healing; it is finished. Dr. Vos has a careful analysis of that whole period of the monarchy in the time of the prophets in pages 189 and 190 of *Biblical Theology*. He pointed out that from the time of Samuel, it was a time of repentance, conversion and reconstruction. From Manasseh’s time forward there was the same basic framework but it was, in a way, too late. There could no longer be simply repairing, but regeneration. It was the time to replace the Mosaic theocracy, to make room for the new order. That is what the prophets from Manasseh forward began to preach. Habakkuk and Zephaniah also fit in that context. They were contemporaries of Jeremiah, most likely, in the early time. It was too late. “Babylon is on the way,” Habakkuk said. “Babylon is on the way,” Zephaniah said. Oh, there is a great future beyond, but not for the present course, not for the present order. It was finished. The time comes when it can be too late for the way of life.

There are five passages from Jeremiah that we will focus on in this lecture. The first is chapter two, where we see what Jeremiah was emphasizing in the beginning of his prophecy, as he was building up to his cry of “It is too late, it is too late.” In chapter 2:9-14 Jeremiah says, “‘Therefore, I bring charges against you again,’ declares the LORD.” There you get the idea of God having a controversy, God the covenant suzerain having a controversy with his vassals. In chapter 2:9 God says, “I will bring charges against your children’s children,” and then in verse 11, “Has any other nation ever changed its gods? Yet they are not gods at all, but my people have exchanged their glory for worthless idols.” Judah and Israel had rejected the only living God and had turned to idols. The Canaanites never changed their gods. The Moabites never changed their gods. The Edomites, the Amalkites, the Assyrians, the Babylonians—it is not known that they ever changed their gods. Why did Israel? The Satanic influence of the parasite kingdom is the only possible answer. People that had been called and chosen were the objects of that satanic influence and the people yielded and were bent, and were even bent away and then uprooted and taken captive to foreign lands.

God says in 2:13, “My people have committed two sins: they have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.” They turned from living water. Later on Jesus says that He is the living water. Just like the Jews of old turned from Christ who was the source of life, the source of living water, the Jews of Christ’s day turned from him. The people in Jeremiah’s day, the whole Judaic monarchy, have done the same; they have dug their own cisterns and are finding that their cistern is often dry because they cannot build cisterns that hold water. God asks His people in 2:17, “Have you not brought this on yourself by forsaking the LORD, your God, when He led you in the way?” Jeremiah asks that rhetorical question as he prophesies to the people, saying in verse 20, “Indeed, on every high hill, under every spreading tree, you laid down as a prostitute,” “Your throat is dry, but you said it is no use, I love foreign gods. I must go after them (verse 25).” That was one of the great, great sins. They turned away from God and they went to foreign gods like no other nation did. They broke the covenant. They broke that love relationship from their side as the responders. They would not acknowledge the great love of God. And the result of that is in this passage. The monarchy, the Davidic monarchy, that external representation of the theocracy of the kingdom of God, was finished. There was to be no more monarchy; the curse of the covenant was unavoidable as we see in chapters 27 and 28 of Deuteronomy, absolutely unavoidable. But the blessings of the covenant are assured because God continues to bring out that ray of hope in a different setting, in a different context, in a different environment. In looking at chapter two we have seen the great accusation: “You have changed your god.” This makes the curse of the covenant unavoidable.

In Jeremiah 2:2, God says: “I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown. Israel was holy to the LORD, the first fruits of his harvest.” When the marriage between God and Israel first took place at Sinai, God enjoyed that. That is what He is referring to when He says “I took you to Myself and I made you Mine, the precious possession.” The joy of Yahweh’s heart to take His bride is so great! This shows us how the prophecies of Jeremiah tie in with the Mosaic covenant.

Now look at the second of our five passages, 3:1-25—what does Jeremiah say? “If a man divorces his wife and she leaves him and marries another man, should he return to her again? Would not the land be completely defiled? But you have lived as a prostitute with many lovers – would you now return to me?” declares the LORD.” Too late, too late. Hosea in an earlier period had to bring back Gomer, his prostitute wife, but the Deuteronomic law said if a man divorced a woman and she then had other men, he was not to remarry. That was the law. Now, will God take you back, Israel? Will you be able to continue as a monarchy and get everything restored and get the Babylonians away from around the walls of Jerusalem and get the land restored? Too late, too late. A divorced woman who has been out with other lovers is so defiled she cannot be taken back. “You, Israel, are so defiled, I cannot take you back.”

But does chapter 3 spell the absolute end? At first it seems so, because in 3:11 Jeremiah says, “The LORD said to me, ‘Faithless Israel is more righteous than unfaithful Judah. Go, proclaim this message toward the North.’” Judah could have learned the lesson from Israel up north who had been taken away by Assyria. But further on in chapter 3, God gives a number of assurances. “Return, faithless people,” verse 14, “for I am your husband.” No, God has not divorced Israel. God has not broken the marriage covenant, the covenant still holds. “I am your husband; I will choose you one from a town and two from a clan and bring you to Zion.” He does not say He is going to take all the people back, but He will have one from here and one from there. There will be a remnant, and this remnant will represent His covenant people. They will represent His kingdom here on earth. But not in the form of a monarchy, not even in the form of a theocracy while they are held in exile and captivity. Verse 16 is very interesting, saying, “In those days when your numbers have increased greatly in the land, declares the LORD, men will no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the LORD.’ It will never enter their minds or be remembered, it will not be missed nor will another be made.” The ark of the covenant will not be needed in the future.

In the past, the ark had represented God’s presence among his people, his promise to be with them. But what does He say now? He says, “I will be with you and we will not even need the ark as that symbol and type because the reality will be there.” Then nearly 700 years later, John tells us in the first chapter of his Gospel, “Christ came and tabernacled amongst us.” Once Christ had come, there was no need for the ark whatsoever. So Jeremiah is starting to set an eschatological picture before the people. A comment here, a suggestion there, hinting that the ark will not be necessary anymore. In 3:15, what do we read about David’s house? “Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding. In those days when your numbers have increased...” They won’t need the ark. God will be with them because there will be faithful shepherds. Now it is interesting to know just what Jeremiah had in mind when he was referring to the shepherds. He seems to be giving us a New Testament perspective. “You are going to have leaders and men that represent and are agents of and even may be reflectors of Yahweh Himself amongst you His people. God will never leave you, His people, leaderless. There will be faithful shepherds after God’s heart, but the physical, external house of David will seem to have disappeared.”

The LORD continues to give assurance to Israel in 3:17: “At that time, they will call Jerusalem ‘The throne of the LORD,’ and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. In those days, Judah will join the house of Israel.”

They will be one people, no longer two nations. One people, Israel plus all the nations, in Jerusalem. We find this in the book of Revelation where Jerusalem, the throne city of God, descends. There Jerusalem and the throne of God and the mediator are all brought together in one great symbol. Jerusalem becomes the great symbolic center of the kingdom of God, which will be fully and completely realized when Christ returns and heaven and earth are reunited. Jerusalem is a term that is used to represent all of what God has intended and what God will be doing for His people in the consummated age.

This passage, chapter 3, concludes by saying that there will be no more backsliding. “Return, faithless people; I will cure you of backsliding.” When the LORD comes to consummate His kingdom, the response of the people will be, “Yes, we will come to You for You are our God.” This is a perspective which started with Moses, from the background of the patriarchs, and which continues through until the return of Christ. In chapter 3 Jeremiah gives us a great perspective which extends from Moses until Christ’s return, where Jerusalem represents the great center of the universal kingdom of God.

Chapter 11 is the third passage we will look at. (I do not mean to say that these passages were given in this chronological order). The first eight verses of chapter 11 speak of the covenant that has been broken, saying,

This is the Word that came through Jeremiah from the LORD: “Listen to the terms of this covenant and tell them to the people of Judah and to those who live in Jerusalem. Tell them that is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Cursed is the man who does not obey the terms of this covenant – the terms I commanded your forefathers when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the iron-smelting furnace.’ I said, ‘Obey me and do everything I command you.’”

He didn’t give them a choice. He gave them a command, “Obey Me.” But He goes on to say, “You would not obey.” We see in 11:9-13 that the Mosaic covenant was broken and disaster was decreed. The covenant was broken:

There is a conspiracy amongst the people of Judah and those who live in Jerusalem. They have returned to the sins of their forefathers, who refused to listen to my words. They have followed other gods to serve them. Both the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken the covenant I made with their forefathers. Therefore, this is what the LORD says, “I will bring on them a disaster they cannot escape.”

The curse is unavoidable. “You have as many gods as you have towns, Judah, and the elders you have set up to burn incense to their shameful gods are as many as the streets in the Jerusalem.” Jeremiah keeps repeating, “The end is here, the curse is unavoidable. After all the prophets that have come before me and even now, you cast me into prison, you throw me into a cistern, you want to kill me because I’m asking you to be a faithful covenant people.” God’s mercy and faithfulness will continue, but now the chastisement – the exile, the destruction of the city – is unavoidable. The thing that strikes me here is that Jeremiah, while he must preach to the people, God says he may not pray for them (verse 14). “Do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them, because I will not listen when they call to Me in the time of their distress, too late.” It is too late. “Do not pray for them.”

I have been asked many times as a minister by my friends, “Do you ever stop praying?” No, we should not ever stop praying because we have not been told to stop praying. Didn’t Jesus tell us to continue to pray? But Jeremiah was told, “The end has come, the harvest is past, the summer is ended. Do not pray, it is too late.” Such a time can come when it would be too late for some one person or group of people, as we see in Jeremiah and even in the New Testament where we read about the unforgivable sin against

the Holy Spirit. But unlike Jeremiah, we have not been told to stop praying, we have not been told that it is too late for the people we are praying for.

It must have been tough for Jeremiah to hear God say, “Do not pray for these people. I won’t listen.” They are in the depths of distress like they were in distress in Egypt, when they groaned and God heard them as slaves. But now after they have had this tremendous opportunity for hundreds of years and continue to reject God, He says, “Do not pray, just preach, preach the curse.” That took courage for Jeremiah to obey. That took strength for a compassionate man who loved the LORD and who loved the LORD’s Word and who loved the LORD’s will. Jeremiah was a man who wanted the kingdom of God to be established, a man who wanted to see the covenant kept, a man who wanted to have the mediator come forth. But he was told, “Do not pray. It is too late for these people.” That would be hard to accept.

In our study of chapter 23, the fourth of the five passages, we will ask, “What was one of the main problems Jeremiah was dealing with?” We read in 23:1:

“Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!” declares the LORD. Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: “Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,” declares the LORD.

We might ask who these shepherds were. David was the great shepherd (Psalm 78:70-72 tell us that the LORD took him from shepherding the sheep and made him a shepherd over his people), and these shepherds were unfaithful members of the Davidic house. The representatives of the Davidic house were to be the shepherds who protected, led, and fed the people. They were to guard the people, protect them, keeping them from the forces of evil that would come in and destroy them. But what did 11 of the 18 representatives of the Davidic house in Judah do? They led them out into the parasite kingdom and took them away from the fellowship of Yahweh, their covenant God. The six dynasties of kings that were in Israel had done the same thing. They all led the people away as Jeroboam, the son of Nebat had done. The shepherds in verses one and two may also reference the priests and prophets, false prophets who told the people not to believe Jeremiah, but the emphasis is surely on the kings, the descendants of David.

With the descendants of David forsaking their role as protectors of the people and instead even leading them astray, is there no hope for Israel? No, for there is a shepherd who will never forget His people: Yahweh. He is the true shepherd who will gather the remnant of His flock, as we see in 23:3. Not the monarchy or Israel as a kingdom, but one here, one there, and together they will be the remnant, the leftover. “I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number.” Yahweh, the LORD Himself, is the great shepherd. It is interesting that Jesus was referred to as “the LORD,” which is the New Testament translation of Yahweh. Yahweh, the great covenant maker, covenant keeper, and covenant fulfiller of the Old Testament, is clearly revealed in the New Testament by Jesus Christ the LORD. Jesus is the Yahweh of the New Testament. He is the one that says “I will be with you. I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Jesus Christ is the great shepherd who gathers the remnant of Israel, the remnant of Judah and of all nations, people from every tribe, tongue and nation.

Then in verse 4 God says, “I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing.” When will this happen? Verses five and six say, “The days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will

reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety.” Who is this king that is going to be raised up? It is the LORD, Jesus Christ.

Here in 23:5-6 is a prophecy of the LORD Jesus Christ, the king who will reign. When Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on the donkey, He came as the king with the people shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” Zechariah also spoke of the Son of David in Zechariah chapter 9. This message must have hit home with the individual people, the remnant, who were still responsive to God’s covenant kingdom preaching. They were reminded, encouraged, and assured that the days are coming in the great future when the king will be there. God has not forgotten His kingdom; He has not forgotten His people. He has not forgotten the throne or His reign. But Jeremiah emphasizes this, “But because you are not a covenant people, you will not realize the blessings of the kingdom to the extent that you could if you were a faithful covenant people. But there will be faithful shepherds.” Then he speaks in verses 5 and 6 of the royal righteous shepherd. He goes on in verses 7 and 8 to say,

“So then, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when people will no longer say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,’ but they will say, ‘as surely as the LORD lives who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.’ Then they will live in their own land.”

The return from the exile is one of the first historical moments that speaks of how God brings His individual people together. It is one of the first moments in the great gathering and restoring and kingdom-building activity in which Christ comes and where Christ then preaches and performs His great atoning, suffering, priestly, kingly, and prophetic work. The exile is a stage and a first step in the initiation of the new order. Later when we study Ezekiel and Daniel we will see the end of this stage and the setting for the transition to the New Testament era.

The fifth and final passage we will look at in this lecture is Jeremiah 31-33. I have purposely spent a little more time with the previous four passages because I think that Robertson has a good discussion of this passage in his book, *Christ of the Covenants*. In pages 273 to 278, Robertson speaks of the broader context of the prophecy found in chapters 31-33 as the return of exiled Israel to the land of Promise, which I think merits special attention. That indeed is one thing that Jeremiah said, that they would be in captivity 70 years and then they would come back, which is an indication of the full restoration of God’s blessing on the land of promise. In the last part of that section of his book Robertson says that both Jeremiah and Ezekiel relate the restoration of the land to this resurrection motif; you cannot separate the restoration from the idea of resurrection. Jeremiah is also speaking here of the divine fulfillment of previous covenantal commitments. Yes, God is going to keep the commitments He had made previously to Israel – not in the form of a monarchy, or in the external, symbolic, and typical representation of the theocracy, but He will keep His promises. But what will be at the heart of this fulfillment? The internal renewing by the work of God’s Holy Spirit (page 276 in *Christ of the Covenants*), the full forgiveness of sins, the unity of God’s people and the everlasting character of the covenant.

A highly debated question is, “Is the new covenant the same as the covenant of peace that Ezekiel speaks of?” I have often thought of them as two different covenants, although closely related. The new covenant represents the New Testament age of Christ, while the covenant of peace represents the time when Christ will come again. However, Robertson unites the New Testament era with the final consummated era so closely that he takes the new covenant to be the same as the everlasting covenant of peace. He does this because the new covenant is an everlasting covenant which will never end, like the Abrahamic covenant which is also said to never end. So the Abrahamic covenant finds its fuller

representation in the new covenant. In the New Testament, Paul tells us this in Galatians. The new covenant remains the new covenant and becomes the full expression of the great covenant of peace, when the LORD Jesus Christ returns and the new heaven and the new earth are ushered in. The one forms the stage out of which the fuller one comes. The new covenant comes and then the covenant of peace. But again, Robertson sees the new and the everlasting covenant of peace that Ezekiel speaks of as basically one period. He maintains that you cannot separate the New Testament period from the consummated period. There are some exegetical issues to consider with his conclusions, and the main one is continuity versus newness in the new covenant. Does new mean brand new?

Jeremiah says in Lamentations chapter 3, “Your mercies are new every morning.” Does that mean that God has something brand new or that each day His love is as fresh as it was the day before? It is ever fresh, the new song that is sung. Is there a different song every day or is it the same song that just never gets old? The word *hadash* in Hebrew does not necessarily mean brand new. When we speak of the new moon, we do not mean that a new moon appears every month, it is the same moon. It is the same moon, but it starts the new cycle. The word *hadash* means something like “over again,” while the word *turosh* means “fresh” or “new.” The word *hadash* is used here, and so we could understand it as the same covenant in the regenerated form, where there will be an internal renewal of the heart, where there will be great changes within the framework of God’s everlasting covenant made with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. When Christ came He ushered in the new age in preparation for the great consummated age when we will be able to truly say, “God with us and we with God, now and forever.”