

III. SOME POINTERS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. The kinship between the Adamic and Sinaitic covenants emerges clearly from the New Testament. The curses entailed by these covenants are in store (respectively) for humanity in general and the Israelites in particular. Whether it be transgression of the law written on the heart or that of the Mosaic code, the 'whole world' stands guilty before God (Rom. 1:18—3:20; Rom. 5:12-21; Rom. 7:7ff; 1 Cor. 15:22; Gal. 4:3, 9).
2. Jesus-Christ meets the requirements of the conditional covenants. He is the 'last Adam' and the true Israel who succeeds where Adam and Israel failed (Jn 15:1 [cf. Ps. 80; Isa. 5]; Matt. 2:15 [cf. Exod. 4:22; Hos. 11:1]; Matt. 3:15; Lk. 3:23-38; Lk. 4:1-12; Rom. 5:19; 1 Cor. 15:22; Heb. 2:5-8; Heb. 10:5-10 [cf. Ps. 40:7-9]); the dimension of conditionality featuring in the Davidic and Levitical covenants is also honoured by Christ.
3. The old covenant (that of Sinai) is at odds with the Abrahamic covenant inasmuch as its conditionality – which the Israelite/Jewish people are unable to fulfil – gives rise to cursing (Gal. 3). The new covenant is 'superior' relative to the old (Heb. 7:22; Heb. 8:6; cf. Acts 13:38-39): in place of partial and temporary removal of God's wrath thanks to the ministry of sinful mediators, it provides for intercession that is total in its scope, permanent in its effectiveness and sin-free in its administration (Heb. 7-10).
4. The promises of the Abrahamic covenant were made to Christ, and, under the new covenant, all those who are united to Christ benefit from them (Gal. 3:6—4:7): all who have faith are sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:7; Rom. 4:16-19). On the other hand, unbelieving Jews are under condemnation (Matt. 21:33-44; cf. 1 Thess. 2:15-16).
5. The Abrahamic and Davidic covenants stand in clear continuity with one another, Jesus being the long-awaited seed of Abraham and David (Matt. 1:1, 17;¹ Lk. 1:67-79; Jn 7:42; Acts 13:16-37). The 'Psalm 2 king' – the new/eschatological David – is greater than the immediate son of Jesse and also greater than Solomon (Mk 12:35-37; Lk. 1:30-33; Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:3-4; Col. 1:15-19; Rev. 19:16; Lk. 11:31). The Levitical covenant also finds fulfilment in Christ, even if the priesthood in question undergoes transposition: this Melchizedekian priesthood is indissolubly tied to Christ's kingship (Heb. 1:5; 5:5-6).
6. 'Where there is a change of priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well' (Heb. 7:12 ESV). Under the new covenant, the believer's ethic is determined not by Sinai but by the 'law of Christ' (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2).
7. The Abrahamic covenant is 'the gospel proclaimed in advance' (Gal. 3:8). But the gospel itself is what the Abrahamic covenant gives rise to when it comes to be fulfilled alongside other covenants, namely the new covenant (...). This new-covenant fulfilment occurs in stages. The Psalm 2 king's rule has already come (Matt. 12:28; Lk. 11:20; Matt. 4:17; Mk 1:14-15; Lk. 4:17-22; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Heb. 6:4) but is also a future concept (Matt. 6:10; Lk. 11:2; Lk. 22:15-16; 1 Cor. 6:9-10) for us who live during the 'last days' (Acts 2:17; 2 Pet. 3:3; Heb. 1:2) – even the 'last hour' (1 Jn 2:18). The

¹ The structure of redemptive history may be conceived as follows, according to Matthew 1:
Abraham → David → exile → Christ.

day of judgement awaits the ends of this world (Matt. 13:39-40, 49-50), when Christ returns (Matt. 25:31-32). Here I pay tribute to Graeme Goldsworthy and his model of Christ 'for us' in the past, 'in us' in the present and 'with us' in the future.² The new covenant is inaugurated by the death of Christ (1 Cor. 11:25; Lk. 22:20). It is on the cross that Christ is enthroned (Jn 12:27-33), that he suffers as God's servant (Acts 8:30-36), and that he obtains the forgiveness of sins and the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant on behalf of his people (1 Pet. 2:22-24; Gal. 3:13-14). Christ's coming was welcomed as the end of the exile (Lk. 2-4), his death being an exodus (Lk. 9:31). Under the new covenant, believers are circumcised of heart by the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:7-18; Rom. 2:29), but sin, suffering and persecution have yet to be eradicated (we live in the era of frustration – Rom. 8:18-25 – and the new-exodus journey is still ongoing). To be sure, everything that Christ has procured for us is already ours in the heavenly realms, by faith (Eph. 1:3-14; Eph. 2:6). We have arrived at our terminus: we have come to Zion – to 'Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant' (Heb. 12:22-24). At the same time, 'here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come' (Heb. 13:14 ESV). We are 'sojourners and exiles' in this world (1 Pet. 1-2; Heb. 11:13). And the Spirit is the guarantee of our heavenly inheritance (1 Cor. 1:21-22; 2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:14) [If the parousia seems to be long in coming, we do well to remind ourselves that the resurrection of Christ is inextricably tied to the judgement/end (Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 15) as also justification to glorification (Rom. 5:9-10; Rom. 8:30). We may groan, though not without hope (Rom. 8:23-24)!] The full realisation of the new covenant must await the time when we obey God perfectly in a new cosmos, with sin and its effects no longer present (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:3-4; Rev. 21:27; Rev. 22:3). Although it evokes the circumstances that prevailed before the Fall (Rev. 22:1-5), this definitive new-covenant fulfilment will not amount to a simple return to the Garden of Eden, for a vast community of the redeemed will serve God and the Psalm 2 king for all eternity (Rev. 7; Rev. 21-22).

² Cf. G. L. Goldsworthy (1991), *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible*, Leicester/Homebush West [Nouvelle-Galles du Sud]: IVP/Lancer, 261-305.