**A Covenant with God**

For a period of about 1500 years, God had a covenant with the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, otherwise known as the children of Israel. That covenant was codified in the law God gave them through Moses when He brought them out of Egypt. The agreement was simple: God would give them a land of their own and bless them as long as they remained faithful to Him and obeyed His commandments.

Over the centuries, the Israelites were responsible for a vicious cycle of faithfulness, rebellion, punishment, repentance and restoration. Jesus likened their history to a vineyard owner (God) leaving his operation in the hands of vinedressers (the Israelites). When He sent servants (prophets) to collect His share of the profits, the wicked men beat them and killed them. Finally the master sent His Son (the Christ), whom they proceeded to kill. Jesus said the moral of the story was that “the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it” (Matthew 21:43).

But what about the immutable promises of God to the Israelites? Didn’t He promise to make a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 31)? Well of course He did. The question we should be asking is, who constitute Israel and Judah today? The Scriptures make it clear that being a descendant of Abraham is no longer a matter of who your parents are.

Paul wrote, “All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:27-29).

The writer of the book of Hebrews reinforced this truth when he quoted Jeremiah 31:31-34 verbatim and applied the new covenant to Christians! You see, he is not a Jew who is one outwardly (Romans 2:28); one who has been baptized (immersed) into a relationship with Christ belongs to Him, thus making him or her a descendant of Abraham, a spiritual Israelite!

The new covenant was God’s plan all along and it is a wonderful thing! The blood Jesus shed on the cross paid the price for the sins we have committed. When we come to Him in obedient faith, God justly forgives us, appealing to His Son’s sacrifice. Being reconciled to God, we also gain fellowship with one another, sharing hope in our eternal salvation.

You can have a covenant relationship with your Creator. Obey the gospel, walk in the Light of His teachings and humbly appeal to His grace when you fall short. It is truly that simple.

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