

There is a Difference Between Covenant and Promise

“Is God faithful to the promises he made to the patriarchs (e.g. Romans 3:4; 11:2)? If the recipient of a promise can be “redefined”, after the fact, then in what respect has God made good on his promises? If God can swap out the original referent and swap in another referent, then the promise is equivocal and vacuous, since there’s no continuity between promise and fulfillment. Transferring the promise from one party to another is a broken promise, is it not? I made you a promise, but I’ve kept my promise by doing that for someone else! Lee might say gentiles were always included in the promise to Abraham, but in that event, where’s the “redefinition?””¹

The blog-ist of the above quote doesn’t realise that a promise is different to a covenant. What God made with Abraham and his seed was a covenant², not a promise. That being said, a covenant is based on promises, but it is not a promise.

A covenant is a solemn agreement between 2 parties (persons, families, tribes, nations)³ where both parties promise that they will do something or some things. Both sides make a vow to fulfil what they have promised.

The difference between a promise that 2 people make to each other, and a covenant between those people is that a covenant terminates when either party breaks their promise. On such case, the non-defaulting party is no longer obligated to keep their promise after the other party fails. This is why it is illogical for modern believers to logically understand how God did not need to keep his promise to Abraham when the Israelis broke their covenantal promise(s). We do not understand covenants in Western culture.

The agreement God made with Abraham⁴ was a blood covenant⁵, not a normal covenant. In a blood covenant of the ANE⁶, both parties seal the agreement with blood which indicates that the breaking of the agreement is on ‘pain of death’. In other words, the agreement is so solemn, that if one party breaks the covenant, the other party has the legal right to kill the other party or members of that party.⁷

This is why after the 3rd termination of the covenant, God divorced the Israeli people⁸ and destroyed their capitol city, temple, religion, and dispersed them to the nations of the world during the period 70-135AD. The previous 2 times⁹, God had compassion on his special people and relinquished his right to eliminate them. Instead, he punished them with slavery exile, but returned them to their homeland¹⁰, giving them another chance to fulfil the covenant perpetually.

It is for this reason that the blood covenant we are under as the sons of God – known as the New Covenant¹¹ – was not made between God and humanity. We would never have been able to keep the covenant and we would have been subject to annihilation just as Israel and Judah were. Instead, the covenant was made between God the Father and the ascended man Jesus.¹² There is no way that Jesus will break covenant with Father, so it’s a safe, permanent agreement. We enter into this Father-Son covenant when we are “in Christ”¹³ at our spiritual rebirth.

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13-1-2018

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1 – Steve (11-1-2018) “The Jewish Question” blog item (triablogue.blogspot.com.au/2018/01/the-jewish-question.html)

2 – Genesis 17:9; Acts 3:25

3 – e.g. Joshua 9:6-15

4 – Genesis 15:1-21

5 – See www.the-covenant-kingdom.com/blood-covenant-steps.html

6 – Ancient Near East

7 – Read www.the-covenant-kingdom.com/blood-covenant-steps.html (Near the top of the document)

8 – See “Israel was Divorced by Jesus” (canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Israel-was-Divorced-by-Jesus.pdf)

9 – Isaiah 36; 2 Kings 17; 24

10 – Jeremiah 30

11 – Mark 14:24

12 – Hebrews 9:24

13 – Romans 8:1; 12:5