



Correspondence

The new covenant

The Basic Bible Principles insert entitled "[The New Covenant](#)" (published with the April 2004 issue), under the heading "Examples of covenants", quoted Genesis 17 to prove that the covenant to Abraham was God's covenant with Israel. But in Genesis 13:15 God had already said to Abraham, "all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever". And in Galatians 3:16 the Apostle Paul quotes this passage to tell us that the seed is Christ, and therefore, as verses 26-29 tell us, applicable to spiritual Israel too.

Again, under the heading, "The new covenant is to be fulfilled by the nation of Israel", Jeremiah 31:31-34 is quoted, and the comment made: "the primary purpose of the new covenant is the cleansing and adoption of Israel as the people of God in the Kingdom. The apostle refers clearly to the house of Israel . . .". But in *The Ministry of Jeremiah* Brother C. C. Walker writes concerning this passage: "In the scriptures of the old covenant, a new and better covenant was spoken of, which . . . our Lord himself declared was ratified in his blood, which was shed to redeem not a single nation only, like the Jews, but the whole world (Matt. 26:28)" (second edition, p. 162).

Similarly, how can anyone possibly limit Isaiah 59:20,21 to natural Israel: "the Redeemer shall come to Zion . . . this is My covenant with them . . . and My words . . . shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed"? This surely applies to the Lord Jesus Christ and the saints. A few verses later we read: "the Gentiles shall come to thy light" (60:3); then of the Arabs (vv. 6,7), then of the Gentiles again (vv. 11,16). Paul, in quoting Isaiah 59 (as the leaflet says), does not limit the words ". . . shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" to Israel, but expressly writes: "And so all Israel [Jews and Gentiles, spiritual Israel?] shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26). And surely we are not expected to believe that God's promises to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 are limited to natural Israel?

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Author's reply

I thank Brother Bartholomew for his careful reading of the insert and for his letter. I agree that the insert did not anywhere state explicitly that the Gentiles are included in the new covenant. This should have been said in the section headed, "The new covenant". As the subject of the insert was the *new* covenant, I assumed that readers would understand that this covenant applies to all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, in distinction to the old covenant which, with some exceptions, applied only to Israel after the flesh.

It could perhaps also have been said under the section, "The new covenant is to be fulfilled in the nation of Israel", that the bringing in of the Gentiles is a secondary fulfilment of the new covenant, which has, however, preceded in time the primary application of the new covenant to the nation of Israel. The fulfilment of that primary purpose awaits the coming of the Lord. In the meantime the (mostly) Gentile believers enjoy the blessings of the new covenant today, having their sins forgiven, and awaiting the promised "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 1:4).

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