

***The Silence
of the New Covenant:***

***Fallow Ground
in the New Testament***

**A paper presented by
John T. “Jack” Jeffery**

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The Silence of the New Covenant: Fallow¹ Ground in the New Testament

*An argument for expecting and seeing the presence of the New Covenant in the New Testament
even where it is not explicitly mentioned as such*

Introductory Remarks

You may have favorite quotes from John Calvin like I do. Two of my personal favorites are from his Institutes of the Christian Religion, and deal with “the spectacles of Scripture”², and “the sparks of His glory” in natural revelation.³ I would like to focus your attention on the second of these.

You may have heard the oft repeated expression, “every bush is a burning bush”. John Calvin may have been the original source for the thought behind this statement. He describes all of creation as a “theater” in several places: “such a dazzling theater”⁴, “this most glorious theater”⁵, “this most beautiful theater”⁶, and “this magnificent theater of heaven and earth crammed with innumerable miracles”⁷. In one place he writes of the effect of this “theater”:

“...our eyes, in whatever direction they may turn, are compelled to gaze upon God’s works...”⁸.

In another,

“...men cannot open their eyes without being compelled to see him.”⁹

¹An adjective being used here with the meaning *uncultivated, untilled, unsown, or inactive, dormant*. S.v. “fallow”, Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2009). Merriam-Webster Online, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fallow> [accessed 1 AUG 2009]. Also, Dictionary.com at <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/fallow> [accessed 1 AUG 2009].

²John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, 2 volumes, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics, eds. John Baillie, John T. McNeill, and Henry P. Van Dusen, Vols. XX-XXI (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), I:70 (I:VI:1).

³Calvin, op. cit., I:51-53 (I:V:1).

⁴Calvin, op. cit., I:61 (I:V:8).

⁵Calvin, op. cit., I:72 (I:VI:2).

⁶Calvin, op. cit., I:179 (I:XIV:20).

⁷Calvin, op. cit., I:341 (II:VI:1).

⁸Calvin, op. cit., I:161 (I:XIV:2).

But, then, in one statement, what is perhaps the fullest expression of Calvin's thought on this subject seems to come out:

“...wherever you cast your eyes, there is no spot in the universe wherein you cannot discern at least some sparks of his glory.”¹⁰

At this time I want you to hold that thought! I will be returning to it in my concluding remarks.

The material in this paper is background material for the papers I intend to deliver at the Bunyan Conference in 2010 where I intend to apply the principles presented here to two specific cases. My treatment in the development of this subject at that time will be under the general heading: “Seeing the New Testament Through New Covenant Eyes”.

The subject of this paper may be one of the most subjective things you will be asked to consider here due to the fact that it addresses the context of the New Covenant, indeed, that which is the context of the entire New Testament. This is the “big picture”¹¹. The only context larger than this is that of the entire Bible. The larger the area of context, the broader the focus, the more the viewpoint of the student of Scripture may intrude. In this case we need to come to an appreciation for the very “atmosphere” of the New Testament, or to put it another way, the “climate” of the New Covenant. What we are to consider is what we should expect to find when we read between the lines, or “breath in the air” of the New Testament. I speak here of the context of the New Covenant itself, which seldom seems to be considered when studying specific New Testament passages.

I recommend that you hold your applause to the end. While along the way you may find points of agreement, you may not suspect where I am going with this, or how I see it applying to our handling of specific cases in the New Testament, so any enthusiastic support on your part may be premature!

The Question concerning the “Silence” of the New Covenant

Should the significance of the New Covenant in the New Testament be measured by its explicit mentions or direct citations?¹² To phrase the question in a slightly different fashion directed towards a more specific issue: Should the New Covenant be “ruled out of court” as a referent in a given New Testament text simply on the basis that explicit mention of the New Covenant is lacking in the immediate context? Should the New Covenant be considered of minimal

⁹Calvin, op. cit., I:52 (I:V:1).

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹The author is indebted to Murray McLellan for this idea: “I think that if we are going to make headway in the area of NCT together, it will be important to start foundationally with the “big picture” and then slowly narrow the focus.” Email to the Sound of Grace list, Friday, July 4, 2008, Subject: New Covenant Theology, at <http://freegroups.net/groups/soundofgrace/0:20740read.html>.

¹²See the table of references appended to the end of this paper, pp. 9-11.

significance in the New Testament due to the rarity of its explicit mention, or should this very lack of such specific reference lead us to a contrary conclusion?

A Related Question

Is there a difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament? What is the difference, or what are the differences, between the Testaments? Are these differences between the Testaments due to a difference in their covenantal centers? Does the covenant determine the nature of the Testament?¹³

The Issue of the “Silence” of the New Covenant

Denials of New Covenant connections to specific New Testament passages and teachings by theologians and exegetes at significant points in New Testament studies has been observed for some time. These denials also appear to be accompanied by a consequent diminishing of the overall significance of the New Covenant in the New Testament, of its application to the believer during this inter-advent period, and of the very “newness” of its nature.

Perhaps the worst example of this is that of Dr. John Reis Master, currently teaching at Philadelphia Biblical University. At one point he cites Jack R. Lundbom¹⁴:

“It comes as somewhat of a surprise then to find so little said in the New Testament about a new covenant.”¹⁵

Masters is citing Lundbom regarding his own statement in the text:

“The writers of the New Testament do not seem to pick up the “forgiveness” terminology of Jeremiah 31:34 in the New Testament as it relates to the death of Christ except in the Hebrews 8:12 quotation of Jeremiah 31.”¹⁶

Masters continues in this vein in his footnote at this place in which he afterward cites Lundbom:

¹³Another way of phrasing this question has been that of O. Palmer Robertson in the title of an *Excursus*: “Which Structures Scripture – Covenants or Dispensations?” The Christ of the Covenants (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980), pg. 201.

¹⁴Anchor Bible Dictionary, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:1090, s.v. “The New Covenant”.

¹⁵John Reis Master, “The New Covenant”, in Issues In Dispensationalism, gen. eds. Wesley R. Willis and John R. Master (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), pg. 110, note 19.

¹⁶Master, op. cit., pg. 108.

“When one looks at the Greek words used to translate the Hebrew terms of Jeremiah in other Old Testament texts, one still does not find these other Greek terms playing a central role in the terminology of the New Testament writers relating to the work of Christ for the believer today.”¹⁷

Elsewhere we find this author focusing on the lack of explicit mention of the term:

“Allusions to it may be found in other texts, but the term *new covenant* is found only in this text in the Old Testament.”¹⁸

For this author, the result of such an approach to the New Covenant in the New Testament is as follows:

“What then is a suggested realization of the church to the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34? The church is united to the mediator of the new covenant. The new covenant has been cut. The actualization of the new covenant in the lives of believers, however, is yet future, when Christ returns and the house of Israel and the house of Judah are transformed by God’s grace to obey completely the commands of God.”¹⁹

“The new covenant specifically mentioned in the Scriptures is yet future for a redeemed and sanctified Jewish people.”²⁰

“That the church does not fulfill the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 ensures the certainty of God’s promises for the church.”²¹

Another example of this approach to the issue on a different level of New Testament studies is the following remark by John Painter in reaction to Malatesta’s premise²²:

¹⁷Master, op. cit., pg. 110, note 19.

¹⁸Master, op. cit., pg. 96. This is in reference to Jer. 31:31-34. Cp. pg. 97 concerning lack of reference to spirit in Jer. 31, and the lack of mention of the New Covenant in Ezekiel.

¹⁹Master, op. cit., pg. 108.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Master, op. cit., pg. 109. One reviewer on Amazon.com (Ronald M. Henzel) reacts, "By far the worst contribution to this volume is found in "The New Covenant," by John R. Master, who very nearly (if not actually) returns to Lewis Sperry Chafer's long-discredited "Two New Covenant" theory to explain how the New Testament could apply the language of Jer. 31:31-34 (a prophecy addressed to ethnic Israel) to the church."

http://www.amazon.com/Issues-Dispensationalism-Wesley-R-Willis/dp/0802439470/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1249159549&sr=1-1 [accessed 1 AUG 2009].

See also John R. Master, "Some Questions And Observations Regarding the New Covenant", 6 pp. TREN #ETS-0533 [8575]. Paper delivered at the Eastern Regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society at Capital Bible Seminary, Lanham, MD on April 3, 1992, and John R. Master, "The New Covenant In The New Testament: An Eschatological Perspective", 19 pp. TREN #ETS-4946 [9363]. Paper delivered at the 49th National Conference of the Evangelical Theological Society, Santa Clara, CA, November 20-22, 1997.

“...the term “covenant” (*diatheke*) is nowhere used in the Gospels and Epistles of John. Indeed the term is rarely used in the New Testament, only 33 times, of which 17 are in Hebrews....the Gospel and Epistles of John show no explicit interest in the covenant, old or new.”²³

Painter continues:

“Malatesta also confuses John’s focus on mutual abiding with the interiority of the law in the new covenant, “I will write my law on their hearts.” Not only is there no reference to covenant, there is no allusion to these words. Rather, the evidence of mutual abiding is to be found in the confession of the true faith and in mutual love in the community. “Covenant” deals with the ground rules governing the relationship of God with God’s people. It is however, a case of category confusion to read covenant into any discussion of relationship with God. Had it been the point of I John to deal with relationship with God in terms of covenant it could easily have been done. If the readers of the Epistles were not Jewish, this might have made little sense. Even in the Gospel, which reflects the struggle of Jewish believers with the synagogue and unbelieving Jews, there is no sign of the author’s direct use of covenant.”²⁴

This requirement of “direct use”²⁵, or “explicit interest”²⁶ (Painter), or the insistence on the presence of specific terms²⁷ (Master) may “stumble in the gate” when it comes to a consideration of the relationship between the New Covenant and the New Testament. It may in fact “miss the boat” entirely due to a failure to consider the very nature of this covenant and those features that distinguish it from the Old Covenant.

The Initial Statement of the Premise

²²“Because the theme of mutual abiding suggests an emphasis on interiority rather than externals, Edward Malatesta argues that I John is to be interpreted in terms of the new covenant of Jer. 31:31-34.” *1, 2, and 3 John*, by John Painter, *Sacra Pagina Series*, Vol. 18, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002), pg. 101. The work that Painter is reacting to is Edward Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant: A Study of “einai en” and “menein en” in the First Letter of Saint John* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), xx, 358 pp.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Op. cit., pp. 101-102. Painter responds identically to Malatesta and others who link the message “God is light” to the New Covenant. Op. cit., pg. 129. The conclusion of his response in this place is: “It is a conceptual confusion to identify this theme with any discussion of the relationship of the believing community to God simply because this is involved in covenant theology in the Old Testament. The Johannine Gospel and Epistles deal with this theme without reference to “covenant.”

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Painter, op. cit., pg. 101.

²⁷Master, op. cit., pp. 96, 108, 110 note 19.

The New Covenant is woven throughout the warp and the woof of the New Testament, just as the Old Covenant was in the Old Testament. Students of Scripture should consider the New Covenant as underlying, or as foundational, to the entire New Testament just as the Old Covenant is to the entire Old Testament. Even where it appears to be in the background, it is always present, just beneath the surface as an undercurrent, but there nonetheless. The New Testament is about the New Covenant.

In contrast to the many authors who would minimize the role of the New Covenant in the New Testament (like the two cited previously in this paper), Dumbrell observes that “the theology of the New Covenant” is “heavily appealed to” in “the New Testament era”.²⁸ An author who clearly appears to teach in line with the premise above is John H. Walton:

“If there is a single most important theological structure in the Old Testament, few would disagree that it must be the covenant....Both the Old and New Testaments weave their theology on the loom of history with the thread of the covenant.”²⁹

Thomas Edward McComiskey, while recognizing the issue of the “silence” of the New Covenant in the New Testament when it comes to explicit references, does not allow that to be the end of the story:

“If the new covenant is in force today, Christianity is a covenantal religion and obedience is covenantal obedience. But when we examine the teaching of the New Testament, there appears to be no apparently conscious exposition of covenantal nomism, no calling of mankind to a binding covenantal relationship with God. As a matter of fact, Jesus uses the word *covenant* (*diatheke*) on only one occasion, and Paul used it only nine times in very different ways.

J. Guhrt suggests that the lack of numerous occurrences of the word *diatheke*(covenant) in the New Testament is because “the underlying thought has been taken over in the sayings about the kingdom of God. Linguistically we can see this perhaps most clearly in [Luke] 22:29 in the phrase *diatithemai...basileian*, appoint a kingdom, which exactly expresses the formula *diatithemai diatheken*. The new covenant and the kingdom of God are correlated concepts.[footnote 31]

Gordon Wenham speaks to the same question. He says, “An understanding of first-century Jewish thinking about the covenant and the law puts the teaching of Jesus and Paul in a clearer perspective. That they rarely mention the covenant does not prove they regarded it as unimportant. It could be that just like the rabbis they assumed it was

²⁸William J. Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants(New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984), pg. 201. His concluding sentence in this work states, “...the notion of the kingdom of God, controlling as it does the whole of biblical thinking, was always a theological assertion pointing towards a future reality – the New Covenant.” Op. cit., pg. 206.

²⁹John H. Walton, Covenant: God’s Purpose, God’s Plan(Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), pg. 10. Walton also sees what few other theologians recognize, “Whereas formerly the center of gravity or dominating force for Paul and other Jews was the law, now he found that center of gravity in Christ.” Op. cit., pg. 167.

fundamental, and therefore required no discussion. This latter possibility is confirmed, I believe, by an examination of the teaching of Jesus and Paul.”[footnote 32]³⁰

Paul R. Williamson does not equivocate in his assessment of the significance of the New Covenant in the New Testament despite the relative scarcity of explicit mentions of the term.

“Ideally, therefore, an examination of the theological significance of covenant in the New Testament should not restrict itself to texts that explicitly employ the term. As in the Old Testament, the covenant concept is much wider than that.”³¹

He suggestively refers in more than one place to the “associated ideas” found in the New Testament which must be taken into consideration in addition to the passages where the New Covenant is explicitly mentioned.³² When considering “The new covenant in Paul”, Williamson concludes concerning the concept of covenant:

“...the concept might sometimes be assumed even where the terminology is lacking. Thus, given the weight Paul attaches to the concept where it is mentioned, covenant – particularly the new covenant and its implications for the place of the law – is undoubtedly more foundational and pervasive in Pauline theology than a mere word study might suggest.”³³

This is consistent to what Williamson presented earlier in this work:

“Covenant is without doubt one of the most important motifs in biblical theology, attested to not only by the traditional labels applied to the respective parts of the Christian Bible, but also by the fact that the concept looms large at important junctures throughout the Bible....covenant is indisputably one of the Bible’s core theological themes.”³⁴

“While covenant terminology may not be used as frequently in the New Testament...the concept...lies at the very heart of New Testament theology....It is thus clear that the concept of covenant is much more pervasive in both Testaments than the mere frequency of explicit covenant terminology might lead one to conclude.”³⁵

³⁰Thomas Edward McComiskey, The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), pp. 161-162. Pg. 162, note 31: J. Guhrt, “Covenant,” *NIDNTT*, vol. 1, p. 369. Pg. 162, note 32: Gordon Wenham, “Grace and Law in the Old Testament,” *Law, Morality and the Bible: A Symposium*, ed. Bruce Kaye and Gordon Wenham (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1978), p. 19.

³¹Sealed with an oath: Covenant in God’s Unfolding Purpose, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 23, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), pg. 182.

³²Williamson, op. cit., pp. 183, 184.

³³Williamson, op. cit., pg. 186.

³⁴Williamson, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

³⁵Williamson, op. cit., pg. 33. In footnote 46 at this point the author observes, “Covenant terminology is much more frequent in the OT, the primary word (*berit*) occurring some 285 times.”

“Indeed, even when not mentioned explicitly in the biblical text, covenant is seldom far from the surface.”³⁶

“As well as its fundamental role in understanding the Bible as a whole, the covenant idea is essential for unlocking numerous biblical texts. Indeed, arguably, the meaning of many texts will be skewed unless covenant is brought into the hermeneutical enterprise....Therefore, by reading texts against their implicit or explicit covenantal backcloth, their theological significance and practical import generally become so much clearer.”³⁷

Carl B. Hoch, Jr. is another theologian who clearly recognized this issue of “the silence of the New Covenant”³⁸. Yet this did not prevent him from being perfectly willing to encourage plowing the “fallow ground” of the New Testament where the New Covenant as an explicit term was absent, but was nevertheless in view. On the minimal explicit mentions of the New Covenant in the New Testament Hoch wrote:

“Unlike the old covenant, you cannot point to a passage in the New Testament and say, “This is the new covenant in its entirety.” This requires a hypothetical reconstruction of the new covenant form along the lines of the reconstruction of the old covenant form from the Old Testament materials. Such reconstructions are always subject to debate and criticism and cannot serve as absolute bases for further exposition.”³⁹

“Only a few passages in the New Testament use the term “new covenant.””⁴⁰

And yet, Hoch is not willing to leave it at that, any more than Dumbrell, Walton, Wenham, McComiskey or Williamson were. He does not see the New Covenant as relatively “silent” in the New Testament. More is going on concerning the New Covenant in the New Testament than “meets the eye” in his estimation:

“Malatesta’s study shows that the words “new covenant” do not have to be used by a writer for him to have the new covenant in view. Words drawn from the Old Testament texts (particularly the Septuagint version) speaking of the new covenant (and the words “new covenant” do not occur in all of these texts!) can so permeate the vocabulary and conceptuality of the writer that the new covenant plays a central role in his thinking. This type of study needs to be done in both Testaments to provide a full exposition of those

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸All Things New: The Significance of Newness for Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), pg. 92.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

portions of Scripture where the concept of the new covenant is in view, although the actual words, “new covenant,” are absent.”⁴¹

Theologians like Master and Painter should be quite uncomfortable with this teaching echoed in the writings of Dumbrell, Walton, Wenham, McComiskey, Williamson, and Hoch, as it gives “voice” to the New Covenant in the New Testament, where they would see it as “silent”! Unfortunately, Master and Painter are not alone in this “gagging” of the New Covenant!

Suggested Subjects for the Development of the Premise

Here are some areas where “fallow ground” may be found, where work needs to be done if the premise is not to be ignored or rejected. These are just initial suggestions for areas of study and development. This list may be greatly expanded. Sharpen the plowshares and move out smartly!

1. Seeing the New Testament books as New Covenant documents, e.g. I John:

“The New Testament (covenant!) documents thus should be looked at as instruction on how to live out the New Covenant in the present age. Edward Malatesta, for example, presents a convincing case that John writes 1 John as a New Covenant document, explaining the existing provisions of the New Covenant. Malatesta writes, “The composition of Jer 31 (LXX 38), 31-34 highlights three elements of the New Covenant: an interiorization of the Law, knowledge of God, and forgiveness of sins. We shall see later that 1 Jn associates these same three elements in a Covenant context.”[footnote 59] Other NT books plainly unfold the teachings of the New Covenant.”⁴²

2. Seeing the concept of “interiority”⁴³ itself as directly related to the New Covenant.

This would include, but not be limited to the following subjects:

- 1) the expression of the believer’s union with Christ as being “in Christ”, and the converse, as the believer being indwelt by Christ,
- 2) the inscripturation of the “law” within the believer’s heart, and
- 3) the indwelling Holy Spirit within the believer.

This “interiority” is in direct contrast to the “underness” of the Old Covenant, and is a distinctive feature of the New Covenant in both Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Vos has captured the

⁴¹Hoch, op. cit., pg. 127.

⁴²Larry D. Pettegrew, “The New Covenant”, *The Master’s Seminary Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Fall 1999), pg. 268. Pg. 268, footnote 59: “Edward Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant* (Rome: Rome Biblical Institute, 1978) 317. See also his comments on how 1 John emphasizes the promised New Covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sin (316).” This is the same work by Malatesta mentioned earlier that Painter was reacting to (pg. 4, note 12). Carl B. Hoch, Jr. assessed Malatesta’s work as follows: “A comprehensive investigation of the Johannine concepts of “being in” and “remaining in,” especially with reference to the new covenant.”, op. cit., pg. 134. See especially Hoch’s comments on the significance of Malatesta’s work, op. cit., pp. 107, and 126.

⁴³E.g., Malatesta, op. cit.

sense of the “underness” of the Old Covenant administration in his discussion of the Decalogue, “Like the theocracy in general it hovers above the life of the people as an ideal never realizable...”⁴⁴ Arthur Tappan Pierson authored a provocative work on the importance of the concept “in Christ” in the New Testament.⁴⁵

3. Seeing the “first fruits” of the New Covenant in the Gospels: eg. the uniqueness of Christ “breathing” on the Apostles (Jn. 20:21-22; not just a filling of the Spirit as elsewhere in the Old Testament), the descent of the Spirit on Christ at His baptism, the Transfiguration, the Last Supper, the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, etc.
4. Seeing the emphasis on Law under the Old Covenant replaced by a greater emphasis on Christ in the New Covenant as indicative of a covenantal “center” involving just part of the intent of the prologue to the Johannine Gospel, and the opening verses of the treatise to the Hebrews.

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Geerhardus Vos, Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1948), pg. 130.

⁴⁵In Christ Jesus: The Sphere of the Believer’s Life (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.; 1974 reprint), 128 pp. This was originally published in 1898, and some feel that it is the “best written treatment of the phrase “in Christ” in Paul’s epistles.” (back cover of reprint edition) “One of his most significant books was, *In Christ Jesus* (1898), where he came to the conclusion that this brief phrase “in Christ Jesus” a preposition followed by a proper name was the key to understanding the entire New Testament.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Tappan_Pierson [accessed 1 JUN 2009]. This conclusion is found on page 11 of Pierson’s book. This work is now in the public domain, and is available online at the following web sites: <http://www.whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html> [accessed 1 JUN 2009], <http://www.curtaintorn.com/inchristjesus/> [accessed 1 JUN 2009], <http://www.reformedreader.org/rbb/pierson/inchristjesustoc.htm> [accessed 1 JUN 2009], and http://www.inchristclassics.com/articles/pierson/in_christ_jesus_by_a_t_pierson_cont.shtml [accessed 1 JUN 2009]. See also Arthur T. Pierson, The Bible and Spiritual Criticism: Being the Second Series of Exeter Hall Lectures on the Bible Delivered in London, England (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., n.d.; 1970 reprint by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids), pg. 87 - “Take that phrase: “In Christ.” The effect of that one phrase is to link together the whole of the New Testament. It is very short, only two words, - yet that one phrase helps to explain every book in the New Testament.”

Concluding Remarks

The supposed “silence of the New Covenant” is due to expectations that violate its very nature. An insistence on the explicit, or external letter, for proof of its involvement with the teaching of the New Testament at any point, should be seen as a demonstration of a fundamental failure to comprehend the very nature of the New Covenant itself. This failure has left much of the “ground” in the New Testament “fallow” as far as the development of its exposition of the New Covenant.

Let us return for a moment to that statement from Calvin concerning natural revelation considered during the introductory remarks:

“...wherever you cast your eyes, there is no spot in the universe wherein you cannot discern at least some sparks of his glory.”⁴⁶

When I introduced this quote at that point I advised you to “hold that thought”. Now I want you to take it out, and to consider it in a different light, in a different context. Let us move this thought from the sphere of natural revelation to that of the New Covenant. I propose to you, that wherever you cast your eyes in the New Testament, there is no place wherein you cannot discern at least some sparks of the glory of the New Covenant. If we remove Calvin’s double negative, and state this positively, we would affirm that, “Wherever you cast your eyes in the New Testament you can discern at least some sparks of the glory of the New Covenant”. There is no New Testament book that is not a glorious book gleaming with the glory of the New Covenant. There is no chapter in the New Covenant in which that glory is absent. II Corinthians 3 speaks of the glory of the New Covenant as exceedingly glorious⁴⁷, and as an excellent⁴⁸ and abiding⁴⁹ glory, indeed as the glory of the Lord Himself!⁵⁰ Is it too much to assert that we should be able to see the glory of the New Covenant, not just here, but, if we have New Covenant eyes, in every verse in the New Testament? Where can you lay your hand on the pages of the New Testament where you do not touch that glory? Is not the New Testament the “theater” of the New Covenant? Should there be any hesitation on our part to affirm that the New Testament in its entirety is the dazzling, glorious, beautiful, magnificent theater of the New Covenant crammed with the glory of that covenant?

Delight in the discontinuity between the covenants! Revel in the newness of the New Covenant! Do nothing to diminish its glory! Expect it to be there on every page, and do not throw a veil over it in your handling of the New Testament! Do nothing to obscure or hide it! Let it shine!

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷2 Cor. 3:9.

⁴⁸2 Cor. 3:10.

⁴⁹2 Cor. 3:11.

⁵⁰2 Cor. 3:18.

Open your eyes wide when you study the New Testament, and stand in awe of the newness of the Covenant! The glory of the New Covenant is the glory of Christ Himself!⁵¹ Do you see Christ in the New Testament? They you see the New Covenant there! Do you see Him everywhere in the New Testament? Wherever you see Christ in the New Testament, the New Covenant is there! Do your eyes behold the glory of Christ in the New Testament! Wherever you behold His glory, you are beholding the glory of the New Covenant!

⁵¹Is. 42:6; 49:8; 2 Cor. 3:18.

References to the New Covenant in the Old Testament with New Testament Quotations of and Allusions to these Scriptures

OT	Quotation	Allusion	Remarks
Deut. 30:6 ⁵²		Rom. 2:29	Cp. Ps. 40:8; Pr. 3:1.
Is. 24:5			“Everlasting Covenant”
Is. 32:15		Acts 1:8	
Is. 44:3			none
Is. 54:1-10			“Covenant of Peace”
Is. 54:1	Gal. 4:27	Lk. 23:29	
Is. 54:9		Mt. 24:37	
Is. 54:13	Jn. 6:45		
Is. 55:1-5			“Everlasting Covenant”
Is. 55:1		Jn. 7:37; Rev. 3:18; 21:6; 22:17	
Is. 55:3, LXX	Acts 13:34	Heb. 13:20	
Is. 55:4		Rev. 1:5	
Is. 61:8-9		Heb. 13:20 (61:8)	“Everlasting Covenant”
Jer. 3:16 ⁵³		1 Cor. 2:9	
Jer. 30:22			none
Jer. 31:1 ⁵⁴		Rev. 21:3	
Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 8:8-12		The only explicit reference

⁵²Alva J. McClain cites Dr. C. W. E. Naegelsbach as apparently disagreeing that this verse qualifies as a prophecy of the New Covenant, “...it is true that men knew even under the Old Covenant that the law, in order to be fulfilled...must be in the heart (Deut. 30:6; Ps. 40:8; Prov. 3:1). But this...is quite a different thing from that which Jeremiah means in this passage.” The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), pg. 159. Note 7 on this page documents the citation from “Lange’s *Commentary on Jeremiah*, trans. S. R. Asbury (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1870), on 31:33, p. 275.” Curiously, E. Earle Ellis, while apparently disagreeing with Naegelsbach, does not document this verse as being alluded to anywhere by Paul, nor does he list Rom. 2:29 as containing any quotations or allusions to the Old Testament: “Deut. 30:6 speaks of the ‘circumcision of the heart’, which Jer. 31:31 identifies with the New Covenant.” Paul’s Use of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957), pg. 123, note 1. Cp. pp. 150-187. John Reis Master states, “The need for this inner transformation and the work of God was even mentioned by Moses in Deuteronomy 30:6, well before the revelation of the new covenant by Jeremiah.” “The New Covenant”, in Issues In Dispensationalism, gen. eds. Wesley R. Willis and John R. Master (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), pg. 97.

⁵³Although this text is included as being alluded to in the New Testament by Novum Testamentum Graece, eds. Eberhard and Erwin Nestle, 27th ed., eds. Barbara and Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1898, 1993), pp. 795, it is not included as such in The Greek New Testament, eds. Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren, 4th rev. ed., eds. Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), pp. 898.

⁵⁴See note 2. Op. cit., pg. 796.

			to the New Covenant in the Old Testament
Jer. 31:31		Mt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 9:15	
OT	Quotation	Allusion	Remarks
Jer. 31:33	Heb. 10:16	Rom. 2:15	
Jer. 31:33-34		Jn. 6:45; Rom. 11:27	
Jer. 31:34	Heb. 10:17	Mt. 23:8; 26:28; Mk. 14:24	
Jer. 32:36-41		Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 13:20 (all - 32:40)	Everlasting Covenant
Jer. 50:2-5		Heb. 13:20 (50:5)	Everlasting Covenant
Ezek. 11:14-21			Promise of New Heart/Spirit (11:18-21)
Ezek. 11:19		2 Cor. 3:3	
Ezek. 11:20 ⁵⁵	Rev. 21:7		
Ezek. 16:59-63		Heb. 13:20 (16:60)	Everlasting Covenant
Ezek. 18:30-32			none; Promise of New Heart/Spirit
Ezek. 34:20-31			Covenant of Peace
Ezek. 34:20		Mt. 25:32	
Ezek. 34:23		Jn. 10:11, 16; Rev. 7:17	
Ezek. 36:12-15			none
Ezek. 36:22-32			Promise of New Heart/Spirit (36:24-32)
Ezek. 36:23		Mt. 6:9	
Ezek. 36:25		Heb. 10:22	
Ezek. 36:25-27		Jn. 3:5	
Ezek. 36:26		2 Cor. 3:3	
Ezek. 36:27		1 Th. 4:8 ⁵⁶	
Ezek. 37:14		1 Th. 4:8 ⁵⁷	
Ezek. 37:15-28			Everlasting Covenant; Covenant of Peace
Ezek. 37:23		Tit. 2:14	
Ezek. 37:24		Jn. 10:11, 16	
Ezek. 37:25		Jn. 12:34	
Ezek. 37:26		Heb. 13:20	
Ezek. 37:27	2 Cor. 6:16	Jn. 1:14; 14:23; Rev. 7:15; 21:3	
Ezek. 39:29			none

⁵⁵Listed in Nestle, et al., op. cit., pg. 797 as being quoted in the New Testament, but not in Aland, et al., op. cit., pg. 888.

⁵⁶On the significance of this verse as an allusion to the New Covenant see, e.g., Thomas J. Deidun, New Covenant Morality in Paul (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1981, 2006), pp. 19-22, et al.

⁵⁷See note 50.

Hos. 2:18-20			none
Joel 2:28-29, LXX	Acts 2:17-21	Tit. 3:6	

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