

Considering the Relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Church in Connection to the New Covenant: Challenging A Point of Methodological Similarity Between Classical Dispensationalism, Covenant Theology, Progressive Dispensationalism and New Covenant Theology

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ABSTRACT

Classical dispensationalists generally invokes the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the church during the present dispensation as an aspect of present application (though not fulfillment of) the New Covenant (NC) to the church. Progressive dispensationalists have cited this classical understanding (of the Holy Spirit's present function in relation to the church as directly connected to the NC) as an instance of Classical dispensationalist employment of the *already not yet* (ANY) hermeneutic device. Consequently, progressives perceive no departure from classical hermeneutic methodology on their own part in applying ANY to the Davidic Covenant.

This paper examines the Covenant, Classical dispensational, Progressive dispensational, and New Covenant Theology perspectives of the relationship between the NC and the contemporary ministry of the Holy Spirit, and concludes by exegetical analysis that His relationship to the church is not directly connected to the NC. Further, it is argued here that ANY is not an appropriate hermeneutic device to be employed in this context (the Holy Spirit, the NC, and the church). Consequently, in some cases Classical dispensationalist interpreters have been inconsistent in hermeneutic methodology by employing ANY as a hermeneutic device, and in those cases Classical dispensationalist interpreters have operated from a Covenant framework and inadvertently justified the hermeneutic methodology of Progressive dispensationalism.

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Elsewhere¹ I argued that ANY is not a legitimate hermeneutic device within the literal grammatical-historical method. In support of that thesis I asserted that the NC was not in any way currently being fulfilled in the church, and further, that the church was not presently enjoying the blessings of the NC. Additionally, I suggested that church-age

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blessings were anticipated in the Abrahamic covenant (particularly in Gen 12:3), and that church-age forgiveness of sin and the corresponding indwelling by the Holy Spirit are not in any way connected to the NC (nor is such a connection necessary, or even beneficial), except that the One who ratified it also and at the same time accomplished the necessary condition for the fulfillment of Genesis 12:3 – He paid for the sins of all the families of the earth (1 Jn 2:2).

That the current church-age ministry of the Holy Spirit is unconnected to the NC is a necessary condition for the legitimacy of this supporting argument, and yet many in the dispensational camp would not agree with this discontinuity. Larry Pettegrew is representative of dispensational perspective on this matter as he observes, “when the new covenant is fulfilled with Israel in the future kingdom, the Gentiles will receive ‘trickle down’ blessings.”²

Pettegrew adds, “The disciples were told to wait in Jerusalem until the final provision of the new covenant in the church age was inaugurated...some fifty days after Passover, Christ inaugurated the new covenant by pouring out the Holy Spirit.”³ He says, “Clearly, the provisions of the new covenant are also operative and observable beginning on the day of Pentecost.”⁴ He cites specifically “the law in the heart, a personal relationship with God, forgiveness of sins, and even the ministry of the Holy Spirit on believers,”⁵ and posits “the New Testament documents should be viewed as instruction on how to live out the new covenant in the present age.”⁶ While acknowledging tensions in such an interpretation (in light of the original recipients of the new covenant promises), he suggests “the most biblically informed solution is that the church participates in the new covenant but that the new covenant will not be finally fulfilled until Israel comes into a right relationship with God and its Messiah at the end of the Tribulation.”⁷

REFORMED PERSPECTIVES

Pettegrew is neither original nor alone in his assertion that the Holy Spirit’s ministry to the church is an NC blessing. In contrasting Old and New Covenants, John Calvin observes, “The Old Testament is of the letter, for it was published without the working of the Spirit. The New is spiritual because the Lord has engraved it spiritually on men’s hearts

2. Larry Dean Pettegrew, *The New Covenant Ministry of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2001), 32.

3. Pettegrew, 35.

4. Ibid.

5. Pettegrew, 36.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

[II Cor 3:6a].⁸ He clarifies that the New is operative, saying, “The New is the ministry of righteousness because it reveals God’s mercy, through which we are justified [II Cor 3:9].”⁹

Abraham Kuyper, while recognizing that the Spirit had been active in “the Church of the Old Covenant,”¹⁰ he notes that, in light of the prophecies of Numbers 11:29, Isaiah 32:14-17, Ezekiel 11:19 and 36:25, Joel 2:30-31, Luke 24:49, John 14:16-17 and 15:26, 16:7-8, and Acts 1:4-8 “it can not be doubted that the Holy Scriptures means to teach and convince us that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was His first and real coming into the Church.”¹¹ Especially notable is Kuyper’s understanding that Ezekiel 36:22ff - a restatement of NC restoration promises of Jeremiah 31 - is fulfilled at Pentecost.

O.T. Allis, in discussing the role of law in the current age, asserts succinctly the connection between the NC and the present ministry of the Holy Spirit: “For the gospel age in which we are living is that day foretold by the prophets when the law of God shall be written in the hearts of men (Jer. Xxxi. 33) and when the Spirit of God abiding in their hearts will enable to keep it (Ezek. Xi. 19, 26f.). The gospel age is the age of the new covenant...”¹²

Louis Berkhof observes that “the covenant” [he means the covenant of grace] is only fully realized in the elect, citing Jeremiah 31:31-34 as a proof.¹³ Berkhof adds, “The New Testament Dispensation of the covenant may be called universal in the sense that in it the covenant is extended to all nations, and is no more limited to the Jews as it was in the old dispensation.”¹⁴ The elect to whom Berkhof refers are those who are “called to be children of God and heirs of eternal life.”¹⁵ Thus, for Berkhof, the ministry of the Spirit in and to the elect constitutes a covenant relationship.¹⁶ While the idea that the church’s present blessing did not, of course, originate with Calvin, Kuyper, Allis or Berkhof, either, theirs is representative of a Reformed position that has been (I argue) borrowed by dispensational thinkers.

8. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans., Ford Lewis Battles, ed., John T. McNeill (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1940), 2:11:8.

9. Calvin, 2:11:8.

10. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 113.

11. Kuyper, 115.

12. Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1947), 42.

13. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949), 276.

14. Berkhof, 276.

15. Berkhof, 114.

16. Berkhof, 426.

CLASSICAL DISPENSATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Lewis Sperry Chafer says on the one hand (correctly, I suggest), “Now Israel is dormant and all that is related to her covenants and promises is in abeyance.”¹⁷ He adds “it is made certain that the present age has been marked off as one of peculiar privilege and benefit for Gentile peoples.”¹⁸ He characterizes this present time (in which he observes everything related to Israel’s covenants are dormant) as “this age of the Church...properly styled the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁹

It is evident from these comments that Chafer, in this context, draws a complete distinction between the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the present age and the NC. While Chafer does contrast the present indwelling of the Holy Spirit and previous Old Testament ministry by citing 2 Corinthians 3:6,²⁰ and he further considers circumcision of the heart as discussed in Ezekiel 44:7,²¹ nowhere in Chafer’s chapters devoted to the work of the Holy Spirit in the church age believer does he in any way connect the present ministry of the Holy Spirit to the NC.²²

Elsewhere, however, Chafer identifies two NC’s – one for the church and one for Israel. He defines and contrasts the two as follows:

(11) The New Covenant for the Church (Luke 22:20), which incorporates ever promise of saving and keeping grace for those of the present age who believe. Its many blessings are either possessions or positions in Christ. (12) The New Covenant for Israel (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-12), which covenant is “new” in the sense that it supersedes as a rule of life the Mosaic Covenant that Israel broke, but it does not alter or conflict with the Palestinian Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, or the Davidic Covenant. Its blessings are fourfold and all yet future, though assured unconditionally on the unfailing faithfulness of God.²³

Notably, there is no exegetical weight behind Chafer’s claim that there is a New Covenant made with the church. His citing of Luke 22:20 as supportive of such a covenant ignores at least two important textual factors. First, the reference to the NC is articulated in the Greek

17. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology, Volume VI: Pneumatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1983), 83.

18. Chafer, 84.

19. Chafer, 100.

20. Chafer, 123.

21. Chafer, 146.

22. See Chafer, *Vol VI*, 80-298.

23. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology Volume I: Prolegomena, Bibliology and Theology Proper* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1993), 43.

of Luke 22:20 (ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη²⁴), and would have been understood by the disciples as referring to a specific covenant previously announced.²⁵ Second, when Paul quotes the statement in 1 Corinthians 11:25, he notes only one application of the event for the church: “you proclaim His death until He comes.”

Why then does Chafer follow in the path of Covenant theologians in identifying covenants that are not so identified in Scripture? Why does Chafer depart from the literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic in favor of a theological hermeneutic in this context? It seems an attempt on the one hand to counter Covenant theology’s merging of Israel with the church while at the same time accommodating a central tenet in Covenant theology - that the church has a present covenant relationship with God (a tenet entirely unnecessary, as Chafer demonstrates by writing an entire volume on the Holy Spirit without once connecting His ministry to the NC).

The keen observer will note that in Chafer’s volume on Pneumatology, of all secondary sources cited, Chafer leans most heavily upon John Walvoord, who also describes a separate New Covenant for the church:

Just as Israel will be graciously forgiven under the New Covenant, so also the church in the present age receives grace. All grace systems stem from the death of Christ, whether applied to Israel or other peoples. Hence the church in the present age also participates in a New Covenant. This can be best explained as one New Covenant of grace made possible by the death of Christ, whether applied to Israel in Jeremiah or the church as in the New Testament.²⁶

While Chafer at least offers a proof-text, Walvoord bases his NC on a simple syllogism:

P1: The church in the present age receives grace
P2: All grace systems stem from the death of Christ
C: Hence, the church participates in a NC

This is easily recognizable as a *non sequitur*, and invites the question of why such brilliant and godly men as Chafer and Walvoord would compromise their theological methods to the point of proof texting and poor logic. I propose that they were attempting to concurrently counter and accommodate certain aspects of Covenant theology.

24. Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Matthew Black et al., *The Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Federal Republic of Germany: United Bible Societies, 1993, c1979), 233.

25. Pentecost observes this also, see Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie, 1964), 126.

26. John Walvoord, *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook* (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1990), 140.

I do not here intend to suggest that deliberate accommodation of Covenant theology is an epidemic in dispensational thought. However, I do assert that dispensational thought has been so strongly influenced by Covenant grounding that we struggle to extricate ourselves, and in some aspects don't even realize the trap in which we are caught. I think that such is the case with those who hold that the current blessings enjoyed by the church – including the present ministry of the Holy Spirit – are connected to the NC.

While Dwight Pentecost does not attempt in *Things to Come* a resolution of conflicting theories among dispensationalists pertaining to the NC,²⁷ he offers some commentary very relevant to the discussion. First, he notes that Hebrews does not indicate that Israel's NC is operative with the church.²⁸ Second, he suggests that the New Testament references to *the* NC would all have been understood as referencing *the* NC of Jeremiah 31.²⁹ Finally, he adds this telling statement: "Since the church receives blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gal 3:14; 4:22-31) by faith without being under or fulfilling that covenant, so the church may receive blessings from the new covenant without being under of fulfilling that new covenant."³⁰

The problem with this statement is evident from the first passage to which he alludes. Galatians 3:14 addresses the method whereby the Abrahamic Covenant can be fulfilled: ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη³¹ - in order that unto the nations, ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραάμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ³² - the blessing (singular) of Abraham might come in Christ Jesus. What *singular blessing* promised to Abraham was prophesied to come to the nations or peoples? None from Genesis 12:1-2, but 12:3 speaks of blessing for all the families of the earth. Hence, Galatians 3:14 does not describe the nations as receiving blessings not initially intended for them, but rather it describes the vehicle necessary for fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham: the death of Christ – and the passage recognizes that the prophesied blessing (from Gen. 12:3) has now been provided for in Christ. In short, the church *is* presently fulfilling at least some aspects of the seventh point of the Abrahamic Covenant. If this is correct, then any connection of the church to NC blessings is, if exegetically unwarranted, theologically unnecessary.

Consider, for example, Pentecost's agreement with the following:

The new covenant of Jeremiah 31 necessitated the work of a Mediator and the death

27. Pentecost, 124.

28. Pentecost, 126.

29. Ibid.

30. Pentecost, 127.

31. Barbara. Aland, Kurt. Aland, Matthew. Black et al., *The Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Federal Republic of Germany: United Bible Societies, 1993, c1979), 497.

32. Barbara. Aland, Kurt. Aland, Matthew. Black et al., *The Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Federal Republic of Germany: United Bible Societies, 1993, c1979), 497.

of Christ is that which makes a new covenant possible...All the blessings which come to the church today are based upon the blood of Christ, which was necessarily shed to make possible the new covenant.³³

If Pentecost is correct here (and I believe he is), then the church's blessings are based on Christ's blood, and can be understood as deriving from the Abrahamic, rather than the New Covenant. Any connection whatsoever between Israel's covenants and the church is found in this fact: the One who died to ratify the NC did at the same time provide the necessary condition for the fulfillment of Genesis 12:3. In any case, Pentecost, with his *one NC with present blessings for the church view*, differs from Chafer and Walvoord, who hold to two NC's, and seems to represent a separate classification of dispensational thinker in this regard: rather than deliberately accommodating aspects of Covenant theology and working directly in its framework, he simply does not seem to break away from certain traditional aspects of dispensationalism deriving from Covenant theology – even though his observations contain the solution to (what I believe to be) the inconsistency.

Most dispensational thinkers have walked in the two differing sets of footsteps described above (either following the two NC view or alternately the view that there is only one NC and the church presently enjoys its blessings without fulfilling it). For sake of transparency, before I began to argue against it, I advocated a position consistent with those held by Pentecost and Scofield (although Scofield does go a bit further than Pentecost in positing that “Christians are now partakers” of the NC³⁴). Some years ago I authored a survey of the Bible, and in discussing the NC, I posit,

There is a sixth element [of the NC] that is not revealed in Jeremiah. This is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise that “in you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” It is the mystery, later to be unveiled, that the Gentiles may participate in the forgiveness element of the New Covenant also (Ephesians 3:1-5). It becomes *the* promise to the church (1 John 2:25).³⁵

While I expect to revisit the statement and edit appropriately in due time, at the present, the comment remains a testament to my own evolution on this issue, as ultimately the idea that certain covenant blessings are presently being realized is unavoidably an application of ANY as a hermeneutic device. In short, the inconsistency I am decrying has, in the recent past, been my very own.

33. Pentecost, 122-123.

34. C.I. Scofield, *Scofield Bible Correspondence Course Volume I: Introduction to the Scriptures* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1959), 70.

35. Christopher Cone, *The Promises of God: A Synthetic Bible Survey*, 3rd Printing (Fort Worth, TX: Exegetica Publishing, 2005), 138.

PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Nonetheless, for some interlocutors, the two paths more traveled have not offered sufficient exegetical grounding or logical warrant. Founders of Progressive dispensationalism (PD), for example, point to areas such as these when discussing the need for further development in dispensational thought. They acknowledge that the hermeneutic devices employed in postulating such positions demand the further revision of the positions. For example, Darrell Bock notes that, “All the covenants of promise are initially realized in the church. This has never been disputed for the Abrahamic covenant in dispensationalism.”³⁶ Bock’s comment illustrates a key point in PD thought: since classical dispensational thinkers are willing to accept ANY as a hermeneutic device for understanding the Abrahamic and NC, then there can be no protestation when that same hermeneutic device is applied to the Davidic Covenant.

In applying ANY to the NC, Bock writes of Jeremiah 31:34, “This promise is probably what underlies the earlier eschatological revelation that a day was coming in the midst of restoration when all of the people of God would experience the outpouring of God’s Spirit (Joel 2:28-29).”³⁷ Notice how effortlessly Bock moves past the specific application to Israel and connects the passage to broader prophecy. He continues, “This is what also underwrites Ezekiel’s remark about the promise of a new heart and Spirit within them (Ezek. 36:26-27).”³⁸ Bock understands the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Gentiles in Joel 2 to be a NC event - and one that has present realization.

Of Jeremiah 31:34, Bock explains, “The point here is not that instruction is abolished; rather, it is the loss of a need for any other mediator in conducting the relationship with God.”³⁹ The literal rendering of the text - which would damage the theological point Bock is making - is sacrificed in this case in favor of “the point here,” which is derived from a nonliteral rendering that accommodates the PD thesis. Bock adds in a later context, “In Jesus, eschatological, regal, messianic promised activity has come to realization in the giving of the Spirit and the granting of a transformed relationship to the Gentiles.”⁴⁰ If a NC promise is presently being realized in the church (as Bock says it is), and that promise is connected to the Davidic Covenant (as he implies it is by invoking terms such as “regal” and “messianic”), then it should come as no surprise that ANY can be applied to all the covenants of promise, and that the covenants are all being realized (if only

36. Darrell Bock, “Covenants in Progressive Dispensationalism” in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism*, Gen. Ed., Herbert W. Bateman IV, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1999), 171.

37. Bock, 191.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Bock, 201.

initially) at present in the church.

Bruce Ware appeals to Isaiah 55:3-5 as a “new-covenant text,”⁴¹ and asserts that “we see from this text that the new covenant made with Israel includes a host of Gentile participants, not directly addressed as God’s covenant partners.”⁴² Further, by connecting Joel 2:28-29 with Jeremiah 31:34 (as Bock also does), Ware concludes that the NC “will be an inclusive covenant in which all God’s people experience the internalization of the law by the Spirit and so know him in utter faithfulness, with sins forgiven and removed forever and ever.”⁴³ Not only does Ware understand that the NC is inclusive, but he understands it to be realized (though not entirely fulfilled) in the church.

He observes that in order for there to be such a realization there had to be “the internalization of God’s law, by the Spirit, in all of God’s people.”⁴⁴ However, “this lack is quickly supplied when we turn to Acts and the Epistles...One of the features of the new covenant is that all those in the community of faith participate in that covenant’s eschatological power and blessings, and Acts 2 makes it clear that this feature has now begun to be realized.”⁴⁵ As for how Ware understands Paul to connect the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the NC, Ware observes, “It seems that Paul has combined in his thinking the new-covenant promise of Jeremiah 31 (see 2 Cor 3:6, where “new covenant” is used) with the promise of the coming Spirit from Ezekiel 36, for it is clearly the ministry of the Spirit that enlivens and empowers the new covenant’s effectiveness.”⁴⁶

As does Bock, Ware combines promises made to Israel with broader promises regarding the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon Gentiles. Ware attributes such a merge as Pauline, though he hedges somewhat by invoking the word “seems.” Still, Ware concludes that there is “One new covenant, under which differing covenant participants join together, through Christ and the Spirit, as a common people of God – this, then, is the grace and the glory of the marvelous provision of God.”⁴⁷ Though Ware reckons that the peoples of God are distinct “insofar as God will yet restore Israel as a nation to its land,”⁴⁸ one factor that unites them is the present and future NC ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Craig Blaising believes that Paul places the church under the NC as the church obeys

41. Bruce Ware, “The New Covenant and the People(s) of God” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 72.

42. Ware, 73.

43. Ware, 83.

44. Ware, 87.

45. Ibid.

46. Ware, 88-89.

47. Ware, 97.

48. Ibid.

Jesus' command to drink the cup of the covenant (1 Cor 11:25-29),⁴⁹ despite Paul's explanation that the church simply "proclaims His death until He comes" (v. 26). Further, he connects Jeremiah 31:33 with 2 Corinthians 3:3 and Ezekiel 37:14 and 2 Corinthians 3:6.⁵⁰ Blaising perhaps goes a bit further than his colleagues when he boldly asserts the certainty of present day realization of the NC in the church:

It is indisputable that the New Testament views the new covenant predicted by Jeremiah and Ezekiel as established in the death of Jesus Christ with some of its promised blessings now being granted to Jews and Gentiles who are believers in Jesus. These are not blessings which are like those predicted by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. They are the very same blessings which those prophets predicted. For the new covenant which is presently in effect through Jesus Christ is not one which is like that predicted by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but it is that very same covenant which they prophesied which is in effect today.⁵¹

While Blaising acknowledges there to be still yet unrealized aspects of the NC, he posits that the NC is "the dispensational form in which the Abrahamic blessings are present today."⁵² He further suggests that Paul works within NC framework and terminology throughout 2 Corinthians 3 (in connection with Ezekiel 37) and in Romans 11:26-27 (in connection with Isaiah 59:20-21), noting two themes needing further consideration.

First, Blaising argues that Christ's ministry of sending the Holy Spirit is NC related, since "The gift of the Holy Spirit and the cleansing of the heart are again the language of the new covenant promise."⁵³ He notes, "the blessing is given to both Jew and Gentile alike."⁵⁴ Second, while Blaising asserts the clarity of the NT that "the new covenant has now been inaugurated, that is that blessings belonging to the new covenant are now being dispensed to all those who believe in Jesus,"⁵⁵ he recognizes that future realizations are expected and will come at the return of Christ. In interpreting these two themes, the weight of Blaising's case is on the similarity of language between NC framework and 2 Corinthians 3 in particular – a similarity not as evident to others as it is apparently to Blaising.

Robert Saucy argues the illegitimacy of the two-NC view, in favor of the perspective that there is one NC and that "both Israel and the church share in this covenant, as in the

49. Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 200.

50. Ibid., 201.

51. Ibid., 202.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid., 208.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

Abrahamic covenant, for the new covenant is the realization of the salvation of the Abrahamic promise.”⁵⁶ Saucy adds, “Although the Old Testament references to the new covenant were for the nation of Israel, the members of the church also share in its provisions.”⁵⁷ He uses two devices to connect the church to the NC. First, he notes that since the NC is an amplification of the Abrahamic Covenant, the NC can also be applied to Gentiles.⁵⁸ Second, he observes that the “Old Testament prophecies looked forward to the salvation of the new covenant extending also to the Gentiles.”⁵⁹ In the first instance, the inclusion of Gentiles as beneficiaries of the Abrahamic covenant automatically (it seems) qualifies Gentiles for participation in the NC, and in the second, OT references to Gentile salvation are understood by Saucy to be connected ultimately to the NC.

Saucy admits, “the Old Testament did not explicitly predict the coming of the Spirit on the Gentiles,”⁶⁰ but notes “it did predict the sharing of the messianic salvation with them.”⁶¹ He adds, “Inherent in this new covenant salvation, as taught in both testaments, is the gift of the Spirit.”⁶² Based on two premises, Saucy connects the present ministry of the Holy Spirit with the NC:

P1: Gentile salvation is anticipated as an outworking of the NC.

P2: NC salvation involves the gift of the Spirit.

C: Therefore, the present ministry of the Spirit is a NC ministry.

As I have noted previously, the suggestion that Gentile salvation is connected to the NC is neither exegetically warranted nor theologically necessary. Rather Gentile salvation can easily be understood as an outworking of the Abrahamic Covenant, and not in any connection with the NC (other than that it is the same Mediator who makes possible by the same event – His death – the ultimate fulfillment of every aspect of all the covenants of promise).

In summarizing the above PD perspectives on the present ministry of the Holy Spirit in connection with the NC, a few notable factors are evident: (1) broad theological themes are considered more weighty than the fruit of consistently applied grammatical-historical hermeneutics; (2) problem passages are consequently explained away by use of a nonliteral hermeneutic; (3) the application of ANY as a hermeneutic device, employed earlier by

56. Robert Saucy, *The Church in God's Program* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1972), 78.

57. Ibid., 80.

58. Ibid., 80-81.

59. Ibid., 81.

60. Robert Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 183.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

Covenant and Classical dispensational theologians, is expanded to include all the unconditional covenants; (4) consequently, the principle of single meaning is de-emphasized; and finally, (5) the methodological lines between Covenant and dispensational theology are broken down to the point that there is no absolute basis for preferring Covenant over dispensational theology. Further, it should be noted that the primary hermeneutic device (ANY) facilitating this breakdown is prominent in Covenant theology, evident in Classical dispensational theology, and utilized not inconsistently by Progressive dispensational theology. Ultimately, by employing ANY as a hermeneutic device, Classical dispensationalism has set the stage for its own demise, and as long as it continues to do appeal to ANY, its criticisms of PD are little more than exercises in hypocrisy.

NEW COVENANT THEOLOGY PERSPECTIVES

Fred G. Zaspel describes New Covenant Theology (NCT) as an attempt to answer the question of relationship between Old and New Testaments, as a movement dissatisfied with elements of the Covenant and dispensational systems, and as one comfortable with the progress represented by PD, for example, to that end.⁶³ Donald Hochner describes NCT as agreeing with Covenant theology in such areas as five-point Calvinism, the use of figurative hermeneutics, the spiritualization of Israel, and recognizing many prophecies in the OT of the NT church.⁶⁴ Further, Hochner notes that NCT departs from the Covenant system in that NCT does not recognize an OT church (but rather the elect of Israel), but does recognize the beginning of the NT church in Acts 2, and does not agree on the artificial covenants (redemption, works, grace) of the Covenant system, and NCT recognizes that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the NT church age differs from His ministry in the NT.⁶⁵

Tom Wells and Fred Zaspel further describes the priority of the NT as a central principle of NCT hermeneutics: “if the New Testament is the apex of God’s revelation, then we ought to read the earlier parts of Scripture its light.”⁶⁶ They emphasize that “NT revelation, due to its finality must be allowed to speak first on every issue that it addresses.”⁶⁷ In applying this hermeneutic device, Randal Seiver suggests that “We should not expect, based on Jeremiah 31:31-34, a restoration of national Israel, any more than we

63. Fred G Zaspel, “A Brief Explanation of New Covenant Theology,” <http://www.biblicalstudies.com/bstudy/hermenutics/nct.htm>, accessed 7/30/2011.

64. Donald Hochner, “A Comparison of Three Systems: Dispensationalism – Covenant Theology – and New Covenant Theology,” <http://www.angelfire.com/ca/DeafPreterist/compare.html>, accessed 7/30-2011.

65. Ibid.

66. Tom Wells and Fred Zaspel, *New Covenant Theology: Description, Definition, Defense* (Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media, 2002), 1.

67. Ibid., 7-8.

should expect, based on Jeremiah 30: 9; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25, a literal restoration of David to the throne of Israel.”⁶⁸ In this assertion he does not mean that there is no future aspect of NC fulfillment for Israel, but only that any future fulfillment will not be qualitatively different from previous blessings. He clarifies,

There may be a *future restoration* of ethnic Israelites to God's favor through faith in Christ but not a *retrogression* to Judaism. There may be a fuller, future fulfillment of promises that have been, in the higher, new covenant sense, literally fulfilled already. Yet, in keeping with the nature of typological fulfillment, the future fulfillment must be of the same kind as the fulfillment that has already occurred. Thus, there may be a future restoration of Israel that is fuller *in quantity*, but not different *in quality* from what is now occurring in the conversion of a remnant of ethnic Israelites through gospel preaching.⁶⁹

In short, the NC is presently in force, but that present operative state does not preclude the possibility of more full realization in the future. Seiver appeals to Romans 9:25-26 as evidence that the Gentiles become partakers of NC grace.⁷⁰ From there, he claims that Jeremiah 31:34 refers to those in “The Church, God’s new covenant community”⁷¹ and that “every member of this community, from the least to the greatest, knows the Lord.”⁷² By reading the NT (Rom 9:25-26) back into the OT (Jer 31:34), Seiver applies a literal hermeneutic to part of the verse (For they shall all know Me...) while ignoring the other (And they shall not teach again...). By this hermeneutic maneuver the NT church is able to receive NC blessings – including the ministry of the Holy Spirit for internalizing the law of the Lord.

NCT is very similar in this respect to PD, underscoring a notable parallel between the founders of each system: PD emerges from dispensationalism and moves toward Covenant theology, while NCT emerges from Covenant theology and moves (at least to some degree) toward dispensationalism. It is fitting, then, that the methodology (application of ANY, primacy of the NT for interpreting the OT, employment of figurative hermeneutics) and conclusions of NCT and PD are largely (though not entirely) compatible in regard to the NC and its applications and fulfillment.

68. Randal Seiver, “The New Covenant in Promise and Fulfillment: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13” <http://solochristo.com/theology/nct/ncpromise.htm>, accessed 7/30/2011.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

THE IMPORT OF PRESUPPOSITIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Notably, representatives of each perspective – whether Covenant theology, Classical dispensational, Progressive dispensational, or New Covenant Theology – recognize the importance of presuppositions and methodology, and acknowledge the impact of those two factors on the exegetical process. Covenant theology is grounded on the premises of one people of God in covenant relationship, and is governed methodologically by ANY, a hermeneutic device facilitated by the employment of allegorical and spiritualized interpretation. New Covenant Theology varies from this only by degree and specific application of nonliteral hermeneutics, though its founders acknowledge the central role of NT primacy in NCT hermeneutic method – this is a presupposition that sets the course of the hermeneutic methodology. Progressive dispensationalism is premised on “a holistic and unified view of salvation,⁷³ and one that is “without distinction.”⁷⁴ PD is methodologically grounded in a complementary hermeneutic, which emphasizes NT primacy and welcomes ANY as *the* Scripture-unifying device.⁷⁵

Classical dispensationalism is usually understood to be grounded upon doxological purpose of God and the distinction between Israel and the church, and governed methodologically by the consistent application of a literal grammatical hermeneutic. Charles Ryrie identifies these three aspects clearly enough – identifying them as the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism.⁷⁶ Of the three, perhaps it is best to prioritize the hermeneutic component, since the other two must be derived through the application of the methodology.

If this is the case, then Classical dispensationalism must be – more than any of the other systems discussed here – singularly and completely committed to consistent application of the literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic. In view of our adoption of ANY and our occasional appeal to allegorical and spiritual hermeneutics we have not been faithful to our own system. John Gestner says as much when he observes,

Many on both sides think that this minor ‘hermeneutical’ difference [between the dispensationalist tendency to literalism and the non-dispensational tendency to interpret figuratively] is a more foundational difference than the theological. *We profoundly disagree for we believe that the dispensational literal hermeneutic is driven by an a priori commitment to dispensational theological distinctives.*⁷⁷ [emphasis and

73. Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 47.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid., 98.

76. Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1965), 44-47.

77. John Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria,

clarification mine]

As Bible students who have historically drawn dispensational conclusions, we must ask ourselves from where those conclusions come – whether they are the fruit of diligent exegesis or whether they are merely the working out of a system to which we feel indebted. Perhaps Gerstner is correct in his assertion that our feigned loyalty to the literal grammatical-historical method is mere hypocrisy. Or perhaps, much like Martin Luther – who sensed the need for reform and acted to that end, all the while unable to divorce himself from aspects of the Church he sought to correct – perhaps much like him, our dispensational fathers ran fast and hard to escape the errors they perceived in the Covenant system. Yet they, like Luther, did not perceive the full invasiveness of the bonds that held them fast. And thus, upon making their escape, they understandably failed to recognize that the foundations upon which they began to build were not as purely fashioned as they had intended.

In this present context of the NC and the contemporary ministry of the Holy Spirit, we must examine whether we build on cracked foundation or whether we maintain a fierce loyalty to the authority of God in Scripture by consistently applying the literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic to the text – as our dispensational fathers tried to instruct us, even if their example was imperfect.

SECTION II

EXAMINING RELATED OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS IN CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

In this section I exegetically consider OT passages that are cited as significant to the positions of the various traditions discussed above. In so doing, I attempt strict adherence to the literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic. The question at stake in this context is whether there is exegetical warrant for understanding these passages as supportive of a present manifestation of the Holy Spirit's NC ministry, or whether His contemporary ministry can be exegetically understood from these passages as disconnected from the NC.

Genesis 12:2-3

2“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”⁷⁸

1991), 93.

78. All English Bible references are from *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

וְאַעֲשֶׂה לְגוֹי גָדוֹל וְאַבְרָכָה וְאַגְדַּלְהָ שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְרָכָה: 2
וְאַבְרָכָה מְבִרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אֶאְרָר וְנִבְרָכוּ בְּךָ כָּל מְשֻׁפְּחֹת הָאֲדָמָה: 79 3

² καὶ ποιήσω σε εἰς ἔθνος μέγα καὶ εὐλογήσω σε καὶ μεγαλυνῶ τὸ ὄνομά σου, καὶ ἔσῃ εὐλογητός, ³ καὶ εὐλογήσω τοὺς εὐλογοῦντάς σε, καὶ τοὺς καταρωμένους σε καταράσομαι, καὶ ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς.⁸⁰

God makes seven commitments to Abraham in this iteration of the Abrahamic Covenant: (1) I will make (qal imperfect) you to (or into) a great nation (וְאַעֲשֶׂה לְגוֹי גָדוֹל); (2) and I will bless you (וְאַבְרָכָה, piel imperfect); (3) I will make (piel imperfect) your name great (וְאַגְדַּלְהָ שְׁמִי); (4) and you (or it, as in your name) shall be (qal imperative) a blessing (וְהָיָה בְרָכָה); (5) and I will bless (piel imperfect) those who bless (piel imperfect) you (וְאַבְרָכָה מְבִרְכֶיךָ); (6) and whoever is slighting you (וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ, piel participle) I will curse (אֶאְרָר, qal imperfect); (7) and they are blessed (וְנִבְרָכוּ, niphel perfect) in you (בְּךָ) all (כָּל) families or clans (מְשֻׁפְּחֹת) of the ground, or land (הָאֲדָמָה).

The first six pertain directly to Abraham and find fulfillment in his descendants. It might be suggested that this is an instance in which ANY should be applied to the text, but I argue that ANY is not applicable here. Consider, for example, the second commitment God makes to Abraham: "I will bless you." The object (suffix of the verb) is second person singular. God promises here to bless Abraham specifically. That part of that blessing would include his descendants growing into a great nation does not mitigate the personal blessing Abraham would receive. Rather than interpret the second blessing aspect as having more than single meaning, we can understand from other specific promises what some of those blessings would be.

We know that Abraham was blessed in the short term because specific passages indicate that explicitly (14:19; 24:35), and we know that Abraham would still see future blessing because of other specific passages explicitly indicating as much (e.g., 22:17, chronologically after the description of 14:19). Here is an important principle that makes ANY inapplicable to this context: ANY applies double meaning to a specific text (near/far are found in the same pronouncement), while the principle of single meaning requires that if there is to be any kind of near/far aspect those disparate aspects must be exegetically demonstrable from separate references. In short, if single meaning is to be upheld, as the literal grammatical-historical approach warrants, we should not expect near/far referents

79. All Hebrew references are from *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: With Westminster Hebrew Morphology*, electronic ed. (Stuttgart; Glenside PA: German Bible Society; Westminster Seminary, 1996, c1925; morphology c1991).

80. All LXX references are from *Septuaginta: With Morphology* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996, c1979).

in the same pronouncement. We should not say that these promises are extended to anyone else - even Isaac, for example - without a specific and explicit pronouncement to that end (as we find inarguably in Genesis 17:21). Without such a specific and explicit statement of expansion or inclusion, we must simply respect the principle of single meaning, and go no further than does the text.

In any case, the first six of these promises are directly for Abraham and are established with his descendants (the children of the promise are those who are descended from Abraham in respect *both* to the flesh and faith [e.g., Jer 31:31-34; Rom 11:5,25]) after him through the line of God's choosing (Rom 9:6-13). The varying use of the qal and piel stems in the Hebrew verbs of these six elements implies different emphases and methods in the fulfillment of these six aspects, perhaps in anticipation of the great many expansions and fulfillments to come within the Land, Davidic, and New Covenants.

The seventh promise, on the other hand, is presented here with the niph'al - either as passive or reflexive (here, passive seems the best understanding, though a reflexive meaning does not obviate the point). This seventh element is also distinct from the other six, in that it promises a blessing for those not of Abraham's line according to flesh -all peoples of the earth (πᾶσαι οφθαλὰ τῆς γῆς), as the LXX puts it. This promise is broad enough so as to include every future aspect of blessing for Gentiles (including salvation and the ministry of the Spirit), there is no need to place Gentiles in a covenant relationship to God in order for this aspect to be fulfilled. In fact, that the niph'al is used in describing the blessing is an indicator that those peoples who would later experience the promised blessing promised will do so without any relationship even to the Abrahamic covenant. In light of this, it is fair to say that Gentile believers in the church age receive salvation and the ministry of the Spirit, not because God owes it to them (as would be the case if the beneficiaries were in a covenant relationship), but if anything, because God owes it to Abraham - as He obligated Himself by His word (even if only generally so in Genesis 12:3).

Joel 2:28-29 (3:1-2 in BHS and LXX)

28 "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. 29 "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

3 וְהָיָה אַחֲרֵיכֶן אֶשְׁפֹּךְ אֶת־רוּחִי עַל־כָּל־בֶּשָׂר וְנָבְאוּ בְנֵיכֶם וּבָנוּתֵיכֶם זְקֵנֵיכֶם תְּלַמְּדוּ
 יְחֻלְמוּן בְּחֻזֵיכֶם חֲזִינֹת יִרְאוּ:
 2 וְגַם עַל־עֲבָדַי וְעַל־שִׁפְחֹת בֵּימֵי הַהֵמָּה אֶשְׁפֹּךְ אֶת־רוּחִי:

3 Καὶ ἔσται μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα, καὶ

προφητεύσουσιν οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν καὶ αἱ θυγατέρες ὑμῶν, καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ὑμῶν ἐνύπνια ἐνυπνιασθήσονται, καὶ οἱ νεανίσκοι ὑμῶν ὀράσεις ὄψονται, ² καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς δούλους καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς δούλας ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου.

This section follows a pronouncement of future blessing for the land of Israel (2:18-27). This blessing is directly connected to the land (e.g., 2:18a), has a perpetual element to it (2:26b, 27b), and is characterized by the presence of God in the midst of Israel (2:27a). And it will come about following this (וְהִיָּה אֶחָרֵי־כֵן) that I will pour out My Spirit (אֶת־רוּחִי אֶשְׁפֹּךְ, qal imperfect verb) on all flesh (עַל־כָּל־בָּשָׂר). The recipient category of the outpouring is all flesh - not here necessarily restricted to Israel, though the first four specific recipients are each considered in the second person plural (your sons בְּנֵיכֶם, your daughters וּבָנוֹתֵיכֶם, will prophesy וְנִבְּאוּ, your old זְקֵנֵיכֶם, your young בְּחֹרֵיכֶם, will see visions וְרָאוּ חִזְיוֹנֹת). By inclusion of the male and female servants (v. 29) it is indicated that there is no discrimination by station in this great blessing.

It is very possible, if not probable, that all flesh (translated πᾶσαν σάρκα in the LXX) refers to all flesh of Israel for at least two reasons. First, the focus on Israel in the context preceding and following would make a brief insertion of universal reference contextually odd. Second, if all flesh is to be understood in a truly universal sense, then we should not hesitate to include animals in this as well, since they are also described as having flesh (e.g., Genesis 8:17, in which the same terms are used). It is clear that the phrase *all flesh* means to communicate *all of a particular kind of flesh*. If the phrase is necessarily limited rather than universal, in light of the context we should understand it as a universal reference to the nation of Israel. It is also worth noting that even if the universal is meant (as the NASB translates, *all mankind*), this outpouring of the Holy Spirit would not necessarily be a NC blessing, because at the time of Joel's prophecy there was still no such thing as a revealed NC (the NC, proper, was not announced to Jeremiah until more than one hundred years after Joel's writing).

Additionally, considering Peter's appeal to this passage as an explanation for the events of Acts 2:1-13, when the Spirit was poured out on devout Jewish men (Acts 2:5), and considering the surprise of those with Peter when the Spirit was poured out on Gentile believers (Acts 10:45), it seems that Peter and those with him may have understood the Joel prophecy as relating specifically and only to Israel. Further, it is notable that Peter did not claim Joel's prophecy to be fulfilled, rather he said, literally translated, "But this is the having been spoken (ἀλλὰ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ εἰρημένον⁸¹) (Acts 2:16)."

Though Peter does not suggest Joel's prophecy was fulfilled (surely recognizing that

81. All GNT references in this section are from Barbara. Aland, Kurt. Aland, Matthew. Black et al., *The Greek New Testament, 4th ed.* (Federal Republic of Germany: United Bible Societies, 1993, c1979), 324.

all the conditions for fulfillment were not in place, as Israel's land was not revisited for blessing at that time), he does indicate that *this was of the same kind* as that which Joel predicted - this was a manifestation of the outpouring of the Spirit of God on His people. Finally, when God reveals to Peter that the Gentiles had also received the same gift as had the Jews (presumably, the Holy Spirit and repentance, Acts 11:17-18), Peter remembers the words that Christ would baptize in the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:16). When speaking of Jesus' baptizing in the Holy Spirit John did not appeal to Joel's prophecy (John 1:33), nor did Jesus (Acts 1:4-5), and nor does Peter do so in this context.

In short, Peter seemed to understand that the outpouring on the Jews was like that which Joel prophesied, and that the outpouring on Gentiles was a fulfillment of Christ's prophecy and unrelated to the Joel prediction. Based on these factors, I understand the *all flesh* phrasing of Joel to be a universal statement about Israel - that after God restored the land, he would pour out His Spirit upon every Jewish person, as all - calling upon Him - would be saved (Joel 2:32). If this understanding - an attempt to understand the Joel prophecy as Peter understood it - is correct, then the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles may be understood as distinct from the prophecy of Joel - a prophecy consistent with NC conditions as announced especially in Jeremiah 31.

Hosea 1:10 (2:1 in BHS and LXX)

10 Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And in the place Where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God."

וְהָיָה מִסְפָּר בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּחֹל הַיָּם הֵם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִמְדוּ וְלֹא יִסְפָּרוּ וְהָיָה בְּמִקְוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמְרוּ
לָהֶם לֹא־עַמִּי אַתֶּם יֹאמְרוּ לָהֶם בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים:

2 Καὶ ἦν ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς θαλάσσης, ἣ οὐκ ἐκμετρηθήσεται οὐδὲ ἐξαριθμηθήσεται, καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῷ τόπῳ, οὗ ἔρρέθη αὐτοῖς Οὐ λαὸς μου ὑμεῖς, ἐκεῖ κληθήσονται υἱοὶ θεοῦ ζῶντος.

In this context of God's judgment on Israel (1:6) and compassion for Judah (1:7) is a prediction of Israel's ultimate restoration. Note that the announcement of separation is said *to them* (לָהֶם, preposition with third person plural pronoun) - to Israel, and that the announcement of sonship is again said to them (לָהֶם). Hosea's prophecy is singularly focused on Israel. In part this is evidenced by the place (בְּמִקְוֹם) in which the judgment was pronounced (Jezreel) being that same place where the restoration would take place. If the passage is to be fulfilled literally, a restoration of Israel must take place at Jezreel, in the north of Israel (Hos 1:11). Thus, while at first glance, Paul's use of this passage in Romans

9:25-26 may appear, to include Gentiles in the nation of Israel's restoration, a further examination clarifies that he draws no such application of the Hosea prophecy.

Much like Peter employs Joel 2:28, it seems Paul refers to this passage in Romans 9:25-26 as an illustration of God's working. Paul does not refer to the Hosea passage as being fulfilled, rather he uses comparative language: "As even in the Hosea he says (ὡς καὶ ἐν τῷ Ὡσηὲ λέγει)" (Rom 9:25). Paul compares the present age status of believing Gentiles, who were formerly not God's people and now are called sons of God, to the status of the Jews who stood in judgment during Hosea's day but would later be restored. Paul compares but does not equate - he knows that for the passage to be fulfilled a return in righteousness of national Israel to the land is required, and he elucidates without uncertainty that such is not the case at the time of his writing (note his argument throughout Romans 11 and especially 11:25).

Just as Peter appeals to a prophecy in order to encourage observers not to be disbelieving that the events in question were a manifestation of the Holy Spirit because God had pre-announced that the Holy Spirit would be manifest in such a way, Paul seems to remind His readers that God's calling of former enemies to a relationship of sonship is consistent with His character, and should come as no surprise.

Hosea 2:23 (2:25 in BHS and LXX)

I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, And I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they will say, 'You are my God!'"

וְזָרַעְתִּיהָ לִי בְּאֶרֶץ וְרַחֲמֹתַי אֶת-לֵא רַחֲמָהּ וְאֶמְרֹתִי לְאֶ-עַמִּי-אֶתָּה וְהוּא יֹאמֶר
אֱלֹהֵי:

²⁵ καὶ σπερῶ αὐτήν ἐμαυτῷ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐλεήσω τὴν Οὐκ-ἠλεημένην καὶ ἐρῶ τῷ Οὐ-λαῶ-μου Λαός μου εἶ σύ, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐρεῖ Κύριος ὁ θεός μου εἶ σύ.

That Paul does not apply to Gentiles participation or citizenship in the nation of Israel by his appeal to Hosea 1:10 is even more evident in consideration of the other Hosea passage to which Paul refers. After a precise and terrifying restatement of God's judgment upon Israel (2:1-13), Hosea returns to the theme of restoration for the nation (2:14-23). This proclamation of restoration includes four elements: (1) the people judged will be sown in the land, (2) they will be shown compassion where formerly they were not, (3) they will be called His people when formerly that title was stripped from them, and (4) they will respond in acknowledgment of His relationship to them.

This first aspect is particularly important in making clear that these restoration promises pertain to a particular people and will take place in a particular location. And I will sow (וְזָרַעְתִּיהָ) her for Me (לִי) in the land (בְּאֶרֶץ, Gr. ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς). The antecedent of *her*

is Israel (1:5). The *land* is Israel (1:10-11, and probably Jezreel, 2:22). Once again, the restoration of Israel is tied to a specific land. To consider any aspect of these restoration promises as fulfilled - or even expanded for inclusion of others - without recognizing the role of the land is exegetical negligence. Paul, in Romans 9, does not apply this passage to Gentiles, rather he employs it to illustrate the character of God in dealing with those who were formerly far off (as Israel was after her sin).

Isaiah 32:15-18

15 Until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high, And the wilderness becomes a fertile field, And the fertile field is considered as a forest. 16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness And righteousness will abide in the fertile field. 17 And the work of righteousness will be peace, And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever.

15 עַד־יֵעָרָה עָלֵינוּ רוּחַ מִמָּרוֹם וְהָיָה מִדְבָר לְכַרְמֹל וּכְרָמֹל לִיעָר יִחְשָׁב:
 16 וְשָׁכַן בַּמִּדְבָּר מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה בְּכַרְמֹל תֵּשֵׁב:
 17 וְהָיָה מַעֲשֵׂה הַצְּדָקָה שָׁלוֹם וְעַבְדַּת הַצְּדָקָה הַשְׁקֵט וּבֶטַח עַד־עוֹלָם:
 18 וַיֵּשֶׁב עַמִּי בְּנוֹה שָׁלוֹם וּבְמִשְׁכָּנֹת מְבֹטָחִים וּבְמִנוּחַת שְׁאֲנִנּוֹת:

¹⁵ ἕως ἄν ἐπέλθῃ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς πνεῦμα ἀφ' ὑψηλοῦ. καὶ ἔσται ἔρημος ὁ Χερμελ, καὶ ὁ Χερμελ εἰς δρυμὸν λογισθήσεται. ¹⁶ καὶ ἀναπαύσεται ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ κρίμα, καὶ δικαιοσύνη ἐν τῷ Καρμήλω κατοικήσει, ¹⁷ καὶ ἔσται τὰ ἔργα τῆς δικαιοσύνης εἰρήνη, καὶ κρατήσῃ ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἀνάπαυσιν, καὶ πεποιθότες ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος,

Isaiah 32 introduces the future reign of a righteous king and just princes (32:1-2), the positive implications on the eyes, the ears, the mind and the tongue (32:3-4), and the implications for fools and rogues - that they will no longer be perceived as noble (32:5-8). Isaiah notes, however, that this prophesied day of justice is not now, and it will not arrive until certain conditions become reality (32:9-14). At least eight, and possibly ten, such conditions are discussed in vv.15-20: (1) the Spirit poured out, (2) wilderness becomes fertile, (3) field considered a forest, (4) justice in the wilderness, (5) righteousness in the field, (6) work of righteousness is peace, (7) service of righteousness is quietness and confidence forever, (8) my people will live in a peaceful habitation, secure and undisturbed, (9) it will hail when the forest comes down, and (10) the city will be utterly laid low.

The ninth and tenth conditions seem decidedly negative, and may not be conditions at all, but may instead represent a return to the theme of present forlornness discussed in vv. 9-14. In any case, the first and eighth conditions are especially pertinent to the issue of whether the present ministry of the Holy Spirit is a NC ministry.

The first condition is described in 32:15a: until He (or it) is laid bare or poured out (עַד־יֵעָרָה, niphal imperfect verb) upon us (עָלֵינוּ) a Spirit (or a spirit) (רוּחַ) from a height

(מִמָּרוֹם). This may either reference a spirit (an "it" in the sense of regeneration) or a Spirit ("He" in the sense that the Holy Spirit will have a presence in the people of Israel).

The eighth condition is noted in 32:18: then (or and) they will dwell (וַיֵּשְׁבוּ, qal imperfect) my people (עַמִּי) in an abode of peace (בְּבֵנוֹת שְׁלוֹמִים) and in dwellings of confidence (וּבְמִשְׁכְּנוֹת מְבֹטְחִים) and in secure resting places (וּבְמִנוּחֹת שְׁאֲנֻנוֹת). The vav conjunction beginning the verse should not be understood as *then*, meaning the verb following the conjunction chronologically follows the previous conditions identified. Rather, the translators use the word *then* as an interpretive device to separate the modifiers into appropriate categories. Of the ten vav conjunctions in vv. 15-18, only two are translated as *then* by the NASB, one by the ESV (the other is not translated at all), and one by the KJV (with the second instance translated as *and*). It should be understood that these conditions occur concurrently.

This particular outpouring of either a spirit (in terms of collective regeneration) or the Spirit (in terms of His presence within His people) takes place at a time when a king reigns righteously (32:1) and the people of God are living in peaceful dwellings. This is language consistent with the NC, but inconsistent with current conditions. There is no evidence of a king presently reigning - nor any princes. The people of God (whether Israel or any other) are not now dwelling securely or undisturbed.

Isaiah 59:20-21

20 "A Redeemer will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," declares the LORD. 21 "As for Me, this is My covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring," says the LORD, "from now and forever."

20 וּבֹא לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹאֵל וּלְשִׁבְי פְּשַׁע בְּיַעֲקֹב נֹאֵם יְהוָה:
21 וְאֲנִי זֹאת בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם אָמַר יְהוָה רֹחִי אֲשֶׁר עָלַי וּדְבָרֵי אֲשֶׁר־שָׁמַתִּי בְּפִיךָ
לֹא־יִמּוּשׁוּ מִפִּיךָ וּמִפִּי זֶרַעְךָ וּמִפִּי זֶרַע זֶרַעְךָ אָמַר יְהוָה מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם:

²⁰ καὶ ἦξει ἕνεκεν Σιων ὁ ῥυθόμενος καὶ ἀποστρέψει ἀσεβείας ἀπὸ Ιακωβ. ²¹ καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἡ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη, εἶπεν κύριος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐμόν, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐπὶ σοί, καὶ τὰ ῥήματα, ἃ ἔδωκα εἰς τὸ στόμα σου, οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπη ἐκ τοῦ στόματός σου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ σπέρματός σου, εἶπεν γὰρ κύριος, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

Isaiah 59 includes a pronouncement of the wickedness of the people and their separation from God (59:1-8), a commentary on the implications of their depravity (59:9-15), and a recounting of the intercessory work of the Lord on their behalf (59:16-21). In the latter section is a reference to a particular covenant and two of its major implications

(59:21).

And I (or, as for me), this is My covenant (וְאָנִי זֶאת בְּרִיתִי) with them (אוֹתָם) says Yahweh (אֲמַר יְהוָה). In Isaiah it seems there are two (or possibly three if the Noahic Covenant is intended in 54:10) separate covenants referred to be God as *My covenant*. One was operative at the time of Isaiah's writing, was kept by eunuchs who upheld the covenant and the sabbaths (56:4), and was also kept by foreigners who joined themselves to the Lord (56:6). This seems a direct reference to the Mosaic Covenant, which incidentally, made allowances for those outside the assembly of Israel to participate in some aspects (Lev 19:33-34).

Another, *My covenant of peace* (or more literally, a covenant of My peace וּבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי), invoked in 54:10, might refer to the Noahic Covenant (in light of the immediate context), to God's covenant with Phinehas (in light of the terminology applied to the covenant in Num 25:10-13 and possibly Mal 2:4-5), or to the covenant promised in Ezekiel (34:25; 37:26) which was still yet future. Since in the language preceding 54:10, Levi and Phinehas are not in view - rather the focus is on Israel as a whole (see 54:4-8), and also in light of the future implication of the reference (note the qal imperfect, תִּמְוֹט 54:10 seems to reference that same covenant considered in Ezekiel. The *My covenant* reference in 59:21 seems also to reference the future covenant considered in Ezekiel. Though the NC title is not applied to this reference or used in its phrasing, it seems that due to its commonalities with the Ezekiel covenant and the Jeremiah 31 NC, that it is appropriate to interpret Isaiah 59:21 as a NC reference.

The Isaiah passage highlights two particular aspects of the covenant. First, My Spirit upon you (רוּחִי אֲשֶׁר עָלַיָּךְ). As there is no verb here (literally, no *is*, as the NASB translates), there is no indication of a present tense condition of the Spirit's being upon Israel. Nonetheless, the covenant will include the Spirit of God upon Israel. Regarding the recipient(s), observe the specific reference to redemption arriving at Zion and those who turn from transgression in Jacob (59:20). The second aspect pertains to the word which I have put in your mouth (וּדְבַרִי אֲשֶׁר־שָׂמַתִּי בְּפִיָּךְ, qal perfect verb in this phrase). That word would not depart from your mouth (לֹא־יִמְוָשׁוּ מִפִּיָּךְ) the mouth of your seed (וּמִפִּי זֶרְעֶךָ) and from the mouth of your seed's seed (וּמִפִּי זֶרַע זֶרְעֶךָ). This is threefold, progressively intensifying emphasis. This word will be eternally in the mouth of the seed of Jacob. Observe that this is nation-specific, and that it is into the future eternally. The final key to this passage is the connection with 51:16, which explains that the words God has put in the mouth of Jacob is "you are My people" - an evidence of present and continuing (into perpetuity) status Israel would enjoy before God.

The covenant addressed in Isaiah 59:21, then, does include a pouring out of God's Spirit on Israel, and the context of this inclusion is characterized by future rather than present blessing exclusively for Israel. The present ministry of the Spirit, then, may only be attributed to the Isaiah 59:21 covenant relationship if that significant national element is

discarded, and the broader considerations of Isaiah's prophecies are ignored.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (LXX 38:31-34)

31 “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. 33 “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

31 הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְכָרַתִּי אֶת־בְּרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־בְּרִית יְהוּדָה בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה:
32 לֹא כַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתִּי אֶת־אֲבוֹתָם בַּיּוֹם הַחֲזִיקִי בְיָדָם לְהוֹצִיאֵם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם
אֲשֶׁר־הִמָּה הִפְרוּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וְאֲנֹכִי בָעָלְתִּי בָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה:
33 כִּי זֹאת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר אֶכְרַת אֶת־בְּרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֲרַי הַיָּמִים הֵהֱם נְאֻם־יְהוָה נִתְּתִי
אֶת־תּוֹרָתִי בְּקֶרְבָּם וְעַל־לִבָּם אֶכְתַּבְנָה וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים וְהָמָּה יִהְיוּ־לִי לְעָם:
34 וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו לֵאמֹר דַּעוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כִּי־כֹלֵם יִדְעוּ
אוֹתִי לְמַקְטָנָם וְעַד־גְּדוֹלָם נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי אֶסְלַח לְעֹזְנֵם וְלִחַטָּאתָם לֹא אֶזְכֹּר־עוֹד:

³¹ Ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, φησὶν κύριος, καὶ διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰουδα διαθήκην καινὴν, ³² οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην, ἣν διεθέμην τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιλαβομένου μου τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου, ὅτι αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνέμειναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου, καὶ ἐγὼ ἠμέλησα αὐτῶν, φησὶν κύριος, ³³ ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκείνας, φησὶν κύριος Διδουὸς δώσω νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν γράψω αὐτούς, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν, ³⁴ καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν πολίτην αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων Γνώθι τὸν κύριον, ὅτι πάντες εἰδῆσουσίν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν καὶ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν, ὅτι ἴλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι.

The Abrahamic Covenant included a land aspect that Abraham's descendants would possess a specific land (Gen 15:18-21). The Mosaic (or *old*, as it is called in Jeremiah) Covenant allowed for Israel to live in a portion of that land and to dwell in blessing as long as the nation kept the covenant (Ex 19:5; Deut 28:1-14), but if the nation failed to do so God's judgment would come - a judgment that especially affected Israel's tenure in the land (Deut 28:15-68). Based on an additional covenant discussed in Deuteronomy 29-30

(introduced in 29:1 and 14, and which I generally refer to as the Land Covenant, since it has such a land emphasis), after the curses of the Mosaic Covenant came to pass, God would restore the nation to the land (30:1-5) and would circumcise the heart of the nation in order to create the necessary condition for the people to live (30:6). This provision anticipates the problem illustrated by the Mosaic Covenant: that no people can enjoy eternal covenant blessings of land and nation without a divine provision of God's righteousness - to enjoy eternal blessings required that the recipients must have eternal life. The Land Covenant announces the means whereby Israel would be allowed to enjoy the land into perpetuity: God would work within the hearts of the people to do for them what they were unable to do themselves. Thus, as each covenant is given, it builds on previous ones, and anticipates aspects of the ones to follow.

Jeremiah 31 is the only instance in the OT that a covenant is referred to as *new*, and as such it serves as the primary text for consideration of the NC. In this context God announces, (31:27) with an emphatic *behold* (הִנֵּה), that days are coming (יָמִים בָּאִים), in which three things will take place: (1) Israel and Judah will be repopulated (31:27b), (2) God will watch over them to restore (31:28), and (3) individual responsibility will be emphasized (31:29-30). The introductory phrase is repeated in v. 31 (behold, days are coming, הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים) to introduce days characterized by God's cutting (וְכָרַתִּי) of a new covenant (בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה) with the house of Israel (בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל) and the house of Judah (וּבְיְהוּדָה). That this covenant is new, and contrasts the old, (31:32, referring to the Mosaic Covenant with Israel) and that the recipients are identified again in v.32 are key reaffirmations that this new covenant is made exclusively with that same nation (the dual reference to Israel and Judah accounts for the national division during Jeremiah's time).

As the Land Covenant emphasized that Israel would again dwell in the land (Deut 30:1-5), and briefly anticipated the provision of regeneration (Deut 30:6), this new covenant is connected with Israel's replanting in the land (Jer 31:27), but its focus is spiritual renewal of the people. The content of the covenant includes five (or seven if the second phrases of the first and fourth aspects are separated from the first phrase of each) elements: (1) God will put His law within them and on their heart He will write it, (2) He will be their God, (3) they shall be His people, (4) they shall not teach any more the knowledge of God, for they shall all know Him, (5) He will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more. Notably, any specific reference to the Holy Spirit is absent here, though the connection between the Holy Spirit and the NC is usually made by understanding the event described in Ezekiel 36:27 as hearkening back to Jeremiah 31.

The first of these five aspects is, in light of Ezekiel 36:27, the one most often associated with the Holy Spirit. God will give His law (נָתַתִּי אֶת־תּוֹרָתִי) in their inward parts (בְּקִרְבָּם). After referring previously to the old covenant (of laws) as being broken (31:32), and because the law referred to here is not articulated (nor is it in the LXX, reading, δῶσω νόμους μου), it would not seem to fit the context here to understand this as referencing a return to that former law. Nonetheless, law is emblazoned on the heart of Israel in a

manner later described in Ezekiel as involving the Holy Spirit.

As evidenced by this unique internal activity accomplished by God, Israel will acknowledge Him, as He will be their God (וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים) (and to them I will be God, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν), and they will be His people (וְהָיְתָה יְהוּדָה לִי לְעָם) (and to Me they will be a people, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν) . That there will be universal acknowledgement of God by the nation of Israel is emphasized in saying that they will not teach each other to know Yahweh (דַּעוּ אֶת־יְהוָה). By God's own working the whole (of Israel) will all know Him (כִּי־כֹלֵם יִדְעוּ אֹתִי). This aspect also has been understood as related to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, but again - He is not mentioned specifically in this context. Still, it is not unreasonable to understand that, as in Ezekiel 36:27, the Holy Spirit may be directly involved in this universal (for Israel) awareness of God.

There are, however, problems in linking the present ministry of the Holy Spirit to His role anticipated in Jeremiah 31:31-34. This passage describes with great specificity the recipients of the covenant and its blessings. If there is to be understood from NT passages (such as 2 Cor 3:3-6) an inclusion of the church into the NC ministry of the Spirit, those passages should be very explicit in stating such expansion. Further, those passages would need to also explain the scope of those expanded blessings. For example, do the Gentiles participate in all NC blessings or just the spiritual ones? If throughout OT prophecy Israel's physical restoration to the land is linked with a spiritual renewal, it seems very arbitrary and exegetically unfair to impart those spiritual blessings to the church but hold back the physical ones. Unless there is explicit expansion in the NT, the principle of single meaning requires that we understand the NC ministry of the Holy Spirit as for Israel exclusively.

To suggest that 2 Corinthians 3, for example, contains NC language (as does Blaising) is not sufficient exegetical warrant - even if true - to expand the NC blessings to include the church. Yes, Paul does contrast tablets of stone with the human hearts (2 Cor 3:3, οὐκ ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις). Yes, Paul contrasts that which is written with the Spirit (2 Cor 3:6, οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος· τὸ γὰρ γράμμα ἀποκτείννει, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωοποιεῖ). But does Paul's invoking of these contrasts imply an expansion of NC blessings to include the church?

Some say *yes*, based on Paul's statement that He made us servants of a new covenant (2 Cor 3:6, ἡμᾶς διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης). But this conclusion is not exegetically necessary and is perhaps even contrary to the text. The second person plural (you) is contrasted with the first person plural (we) in 3:1-2. The antecedent of the second person plural is the church of God with all the saints who are throughout Achaia (1:1), while the antecedent of the first person plural is Paul and Timothy (1:1). Paul distinguishes the *us* from the *you*, and in so doing does not identify his audience as servants of a new covenant, but rather him and Timothy. In what way then do they serve the NC? The answer is not obvious from 2 Corinthians 3, however, I argue that he makes the answer clear later when he describes his ministry to the Gentiles as facilitating the salvation of Israel (Rom 11:11-15).

In understanding Paul to include the church in NC blessings, some point to Paul's restatement of Christ's words in 1 Corinthians 11:24-25 (Paul quotes part of Luke 22:20). Importantly, though, Paul does not apply the covenant to the church. The purpose he gives for the church's participation in the bread and the cup is simply to proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (11:26). There is no exegetical warrant in this passage for including the church in NC blessings, other than to understand that all the blessings of the church come from One who mediated the NC for Israel by His death, thereby providing for the fulfillment of the first six aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant, and who also by His death provided for the fulfillment of the seventh aspect (Gen 12:3).

The only other NT references to the NC of Jeremiah 31, besides the one by Jesus (Luke 22:20), and the two by Paul (1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6) are found in Hebrews. The first is in 8:8 and 13, a context which quotes nearly verbatim the LXX translation of Jeremiah's NC, and a context in which old and new are contrasted - with new shown to be superior. The thrust of this context is that Christ is a superior mediator to Moses, since He mediates a better covenant (8:6). There is no explicit or implicit connection of the NC to the church. Yes, the NC is described in 8:6 as *lawgiven* (or enacted, as the NASB translates the verb, *νενομοθέτηται* - a perfect passive indicative), but no indication therein is evident that NC blessings are being enjoyed at present by anyone. The focus is the Mediator - the covenant is only discussed to illustrate the truth about the Mediator. The next reference is in 9:15, another context emphasizing the superiority of the Mediator, with no direct connection between the NC and the church, and one in which old and new are contrasted (the church was never party to the old, so any attempt at connecting the church to the new must also admit some connection to the old - a maneuver Covenant theology is happy to oblige). The final reference is in 12:24, which simply identifies Christ as the mediator of a new covenant, and cites the superiority of His sprinkled blood over the blood of Abel. Again, no application of the covenant to the church, neither explicit nor implicit.

In short, there are a total of seven references to the NC from the Gospels on, and not one of them makes any explicit claim of application to the church, nor is there any exegetical necessity that they be understood as doing so implicitly. If the texts - both OT and NT - *can* be understood to show no connection between the present ministry of the Holy Spirit and the NC, then what is the motivation to force such a connection?

Ezekiel 11:17-20

17 "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.'" 18 "When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. 19 "And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God

17 לָכֵן אָמַר כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה וְקִבַּצְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִן־הָאֲרָצוֹת
 אֲשֶׁר נִפְצוּתֶם בָּהֶם וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־אֲדָמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 18 וּבָאוּ־שָׁמָּה וְהִסִּירוּ אֶת־כָּל־שְׁקֻצֵיהָ וְאֶת־כָּל־תְּעֻבוֹתֶיהָ מִמֶּנָּה:
 19 וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב אֶחָד וְרוּחַ חַדְשָׁה אֶתֶּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְהִסְרֹתִי לֵב הָאֲבֹן מִבְּשָׂרְכֶם וְנָתַתִּי
 לָהֶם לֵב בְּשָׂר:
 20 לְמַעַן בְּחַקְתִּי יֵלְכוּ וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי יִשְׁמְרוּ וְעֲשׂוּ אֶתֶּם וְהָיוּ־לִי לְעָם וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָהֶם
 לֵאלֹהִים:

¹⁷ διὰ τοῦτο εἶπόν Τάδε λέγει κύριος Καὶ εἰσδέξομαι αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν καὶ συναΐξω αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῶν χωρῶν, οὗ διέσπειρα αὐτοὺς ἐν αὐταῖς, καὶ δώσω αὐτοῖς τὴν γῆν τοῦ Ἰσραηλ. ¹⁸ καὶ εἰσελεύσονται ἐκεῖ καὶ ἐξαροῦσιν πάντα τὰ βδελύγματα αὐτῆς καὶ πάσας τὰς ἀνομίας αὐτῆς ἐξ αὐτῆς. ¹⁹ καὶ δώσω αὐτοῖς καρδίαν ἑτέραν καὶ πνεῦμα καινὸν δώσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐκσπάσω τὴν καρδίαν τὴν λιθίνην ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτῶν καὶ δώσω αὐτοῖς καρδίαν σαρκίνην, ²⁰ ὅπως ἐν τοῖς προστάγμασίν μου πορεύωνται καὶ τὰ δικαιώματά μου φυλάσσωνται καὶ ποιῶσιν αὐτά, καὶ ἔσονταί μοι εἰς λαόν, καὶ ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν.

Ezekiel is commissioned to speak to Israel (11:14-16) about a future ingathering and restoration to the land of Israel (11:17). The return to the land will accompany a turn to righteousness (11:18) and a regeneration (11:19). God will give them one heart (וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם לֵב אֶחָד). The LXX reads *another* heart (καρδίαν ἑτέραν). He will put a new spirit in their inward parts (וְרוּחַ חַדְשָׁה אֶתֶּן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם). This phrase especially seems to refer to regeneration, and may anticipate an Ezekiel 36:27 reference to the Holy Spirit. The reason for this new life is for the purpose that (לְמַעַן or ὅπως) they will walk in His statutes and ordinances and do them. Once again, the regenerative aspect is accompanied by a return to the land, and an empowerment for obedience in contrast to the feebleness of their fleshly heart (11:19). The new allows them to overcome their deficiencies that were exposed by the old. And while there is certainly a parallel between what Ezekiel describes here and how the Holy Spirit in the present age allows the believer to be freed from sin (Rom 6:1-11) and how He enables obedience to God's commandments (Rom 6:15-23), except for engaging in the logical fallacy of guilt by association, there is no warrant for connecting the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Israel's restoration, as described here, with His present ministry in the church age.

Ezekiel 36:25-30

25 “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. 28 “You will live in the land that I gave to your

forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. 29 “Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. 30 “I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations.

25 וְזָרַקְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם מֵיִם טְהוֹרִים וְטַהַרְתֶּם מִכֹּל טְמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם וּמִכָּל־גִּלּוּלֵיכֶם אֲטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם:
 26 וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֶב חָדָשׁ וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה אֶתֶן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְהִסְרֹתִי אֶת־לֵב הָאָבִן מִבְּשָׂרְכֶם וְנָתַתִּי לָכֶם לֵב בָּשָׂר:
 27 וְאֶת־רוּחִי אֶתֶן בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְעָשִׂיתִי אִתְּ אֲשֶׁר־בְּחַקִּי תִלְכוּ וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי תִשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם:
 28 וְיִשְׁבַּתֶּם בְּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאַבְתֵּיכֶם וְהֵייתֶם לִי לְעָם וְאֲנִי אֶהְיֶה לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים:
 29 וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִכֹּל טְמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם וְקִרְאתִי אֶל־הַדָּגָן וְהַרְבִּיתִי אֹתוֹ וְלֹא־אֶתֶן עֲלֵיכֶם רָעָב:
 30 וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֶת־פְּרֵי הָעֵץ וְהַתְּנוּבָת הַשָּׂדֶה לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִקְחוּ עוֹד חֲרֻפַּת רָעָב בְּגוֹיִם:

²⁵ καὶ ῥανῶ ἐφ ὑμᾶς ὕδωρ καθαρὸν, καὶ καθαρισθήσεσθε ἀπὸ πασῶν τῶν ἀκαθαρσιῶν ὑμῶν καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν εἰδώλων ὑμῶν, καὶ καθαριῶ ὑμᾶς. ²⁶ καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν καρδίαν καινὴν καὶ πνεῦμα καινὸν δώσω ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ ἀφελῶ τὴν καρδίαν τὴν λιθίνην ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν καρδίαν σαρκίνην. ²⁷ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά μου δώσω ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ ποιήσω ἵνα ἐν τοῖς δικαιομασίῃ μου πορεύησθε καὶ τὰ κρίματά μου φυλάξησθε καὶ ποιήσητε. ²⁸ καὶ κατοικήσετε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἧς ἔδωκα τοῖς πατράσιν ὑμῶν, καὶ ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς λαόν, κἀγὼ ἔσομαι ὑμῖν εἰς θεόν. ²⁹ καὶ σώσω ὑμᾶς ἐκ πασῶν τῶν ἀκαθαρσιῶν ὑμῶν καὶ καλέσω τὸν σῖτον καὶ πληθυνῶ αὐτὸν καὶ οὐ δώσω ἐφ ὑμᾶς λιμόν, ³⁰ καὶ πληθυνῶ τὸν καρπὸν τοῦ ξύλου καὶ τὰ γενήματα τοῦ ἀγροῦ, ὅπως μὴ λάβητε ὄνειδισμὸν λιμοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.

In this context, God announces His purpose in the coming restoration of Israel - for His name's sake (36:22). He reiterates that Israel will return to her land (36:24), and then in nearly identical language to the pronouncement in Ezekiel 11:18-20, He describes His future cleansing of Israel (36:25), giving Israel a new heart and spirit (36:26), putting His Spirit within them (36:27a) and causing them to obey His statutes and ordinances (36:27b). This regenerative aspect is accompanied by a return to the promised land (36:24 and 28) and a forgiveness of sin (36:29a) that will reverse previous curses on the land itself (36:29b-30). Once again, nothing in these OT passages indicates that the aspect of regenerative blessing should be segregated from the land and forgiveness blessings. And again, if such a maneuver is made to parse the blessings, the question is begged as to how one should decide which blessings may be claimed by the church and which may not - since there is no NT commentary on such parsing.

Ezekiel 37:14

"I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own

land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it," declares the LORD."

14 וְנָתַתִּי רוּחִי בְכֶם וְהִנַּחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם עַל־אֲדָמְתְּכֶם וִידַעְתֶּם כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה דְּבַרְתִּי
וַעֲשִׂיתִי נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

¹⁴ καὶ δώσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου εἰς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ζήσεσθε, καὶ θήσομαι ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ὑμῶν, καὶ γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ κύριος λελάληκα καὶ ποιήσω, λέγει κύριος.

Once again, the working of the Spirit in Israel's restoration is directly associated with a return to the land, but this time it involves resurrection, and not simply an ingathering from the nations (37:12-13). It should be noted that in every OT instance discussing a regenerative aspect for Israel, a physical return to the land of Israel - for the people of Israel - is always in view. In this passage God's part is to give His Spirit (וְנָתַתִּי רוּחִי) in you (בְּכֶם, preposition with second person plural suffix). The referent is them (37:12) who are the whole house of Israel (כָּל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל). The result of this divine action is that Israel would live (וְחִייתֶם, in the LXX, καὶ ζήσεσθε - you will live), and God would cause them to rest (וְהִנַּחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם, hiphil [causative], you will rest) on their own land (עַל־אֲדָמְתְּכֶם, upon your land). Notice here that the regenerative aspect of blessing is inseparable from the land element. They are not independent aspects, but rather are interconnected and mutually necessary. There seems no room here for considering one aspect of blessing to be applied without the other.

CONCLUSION

Each of the theological systems considered above have, in varying degrees, and to the detriment of the text, separated the regenerative blessing of Israel from her land blessing, in order to show some present application or fulfillment in the present church age. Specifically, each asserts that the contemporary ministry of the Holy Spirit is a NC blessing having some realization in the church today - whether in full or in part. I have suggested that these assertions stem from a theological necessity within Covenant theology, and that they are incompatible with the literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic applied to the passages discussed above. I have further suggested that the adoption of these ideas within Classical dispensationalism represents a gaping departure from its own distinctive methodology, in favor of ANY as a hermeneutic device, and that such a departure is an inconsistency upon which Progressive dispensationalism has pounced in justification of its own inconsistent hermeneutic applications of ANY. Finally, I argued by exegetical evidence that if one applies literal grammatical-historical methodology to the passages cited, one will discover no exegetical nor theological necessity to place the church in any connection to the NC - besides that the church and Israel will enjoy relationships with Jesus Christ, Mediator

of the NC, and the Mediator between God and man. Simply put, I appeal for consistency.