

Acts Chapter 2 Con't

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 December 2011

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] Well, in our last session, we introduced the subject that I suggested was really key to the interpretation of Scripture. And that has to do with the primacy of the nation of Israel and the Jewishness of the Bible.

And I feel that this is often lost sight of, particularly among Christians, because the tendency is to think that Israel was then and the church is now, and that the church has taken the place of Israel with what we call replacement theology.

And I would emphasize and acknowledge up front that this is the position held by the majority of Christendom. So we, in our position, represent a definite minority.

If you are of a Roman Catholic persuasion, you endorse the replacement theology thing. If you are Presbyterian, or most of the mainline Methodists, and almost all of the Reformed, and the Episcopal, and the Anglican Church of England, etc., they are all replacement theology.

And that is simply the idea that Israel originally was God's chosen people. But because of their disobedience and their crucifixion of the Messiah, God has written off Israel permanently.

[1 : 31] And they have no real future in the plan and program of God, that God has replaced Israel with the church. So the thinking is that Israel had their chance, and they blew it.

Therefore, God is finished with them. And we broached that subject in Exodus. And if you'll turn back to that once again, there is a question, an issue that surfaced that we really didn't have time to address then.

But I want to this morning. And it has to do with the conditionality or unconditionality of the covenants that God's established with his people.

And this, of course, is just one of the several covenants. In verse 3, Exodus chapter 19, in Exodus 19, 3, we read that Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountains, saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel.

Note, if you will, the exclusivity of the audience here. This is not information for the world at large. This is specific information for specific people.

[2 : 57] And they are all Israelites. They are descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The house of Jacob, and tell the sons of Israel, You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, And how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself.

Now then, if... Very big, two little letters. If you will indeed obey my voice, and keep my covenant, Then you shall be my own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine.

And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.

And I might add here, and no one else. This is a very exclusive message, addressed to a very exclusive people. But we really do need to pay attention to what appears to be a condition here.

If you will keep my commandments, obey my voice, keep my covenant, then you shall be... Did they? No, they most certainly did not.

[4 : 26] And I can understand how because of that, some would read into this text, Well, there was a condition placed upon it. It was if they would be obedient, and if they would hear God's words, Then God would reward their obedience by being their covenant God, and they would be his people.

But if they don't, the deal's all off. So this is conditional. And I can easily understand how it is that some people would arrive at that. In fact, if you just limit yourself to this text right here, You've got a very obvious unconditional or a very obvious conditional covenant that is established.

But, as I've often said, the Bible does not speak its whole mind in any one place. And the only way that you can safely interpret Scripture is to allow Scripture to interpret itself.

And you do that by comparing Scripture with Scripture. And when you do, there are numerous other issues that come into play. Now, there's no question that the Palestinian covenant, Frequently referred to as a Palestinian covenant, is a conditional covenant.

And that had to do with their being in the land, And God's blessing them as long as they were obedient. And he makes it very clear also that if you don't, I'm going to kick you out of the land.

[5 : 57] I'm going to scatter you abroad. So what we need is a broader scope of this covenant and what is involved. And the first place I would have you turn to is Deuteronomy chapter 4.

Deuteronomy chapter 4. And this is information God is providing through his servant Moses.

And we'll just jump in with verse 14. Deuteronomy 4 and verse 14. Moses is speaking. Well, let's...

Verse 13. Verse 13. Deuteronomy 4, 13. Moses is speaking the word of God. So he, that is the Lord, declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform.

That is, the Ten Commandments. And he wrote them on two tablets of stone. And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments that you might perform them in the land where you are going over to possess it.

[7 : 17] Why don't you get the picture now? Excuse me. Moses is addressing the children of Israel. There are thousands of people out there before him.

We don't know exactly how many, but probably tens of thousands. And as he is delivering this message, they are all listening intently. And now, Moses is near the end of his life.

He is about to be buried in Mount Nebo by God himself. And Joshua is going to take over and lead them on in to the land of Israel. So, Deuteronomy means the second giving of the law.

First giving of the law was Exodus 19. Deuteronomy comes from the English word duet, which means, of course, two. And the nomos, which means law.

And it means law, we would say, law number two. Or Roman numerals, law two. This is the second giving of the law. And one of the reasons the law is being given a second time is because there's a new generation of people.

[8 : 23] And the first generation has died off. And we've got the second generation here. And the Lord commanded me that time to teach you statutes and judgments.

You might perform them in the land where you're going over to possess it. So, watch yourselves carefully. Since you did not see any form on the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make a graven image for yourselves or form of any figure, the likeness of male or female.

And here he is warning them against idolatry. And verse 20. But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace from Egypt to be a people for his own possession as today.

And by the way, if you want to say that all of God's blessing or any of God's blessing is conditioned upon the obedience of Israel, what have they been up to this time?

Patently disobedient. One way after another. They've rebelled against the Lord. They murmured against Moses. They complained about this, complained about that. They have been disobedient.

[9 : 39] And we read in verse 21. Now the Lord was angry with me on your account and swore that I should not cross the Jordan and that I should not enter the good land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.

For I shall die in this land. I shall not cross the Jordan. But you shall cross and take possession of this good land.

Now it almost sounds like God is still with them and favoring them, doesn't it? He hasn't written them off. But they haven't been obedient either up to this time. In fact, it is their disobedience that caused God to say, you're not going in.

You are going to wander here in the wilderness until you die off, until all of your carcasses fall here. And I'm going to bring in two survivors, Joshua and Caleb.

And all the others who are coming in will be your children. But you're not coming in. Why? Because of their rebellion and disobedience.

[10 : 43] Yet God is still going to make good on his covenant. So something is brewing here. Verse 23. So watch yourselves.

Lest you forget the covenant of the Lord your God which he made with you. And make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the Lord your God has commanded you.

Are they going to do that? Well, they sure are. Years later down the pike, after you go through Joshua, after you go through all of the judges, Gideon, Barak, Samson, all of those guys, hundreds of years later, when the monarch is established, David is a king.

Then Solomon succeeds him. Then Rehoboam succeeds him. You go through a whole succession of kings. The kingdom divides between north and south. North has their kings and their priests and all the rest of it.

And both the north and the south are given over to idolatry. What is the basis for leading them into Babylonian captivity, Nebuchadnezzar coming over, destroying Jerusalem, sacking the city and everything, carrying the people away into captivity?

[11 : 57] What's all that about? It's all about their rebellion and disobedience against the Lord. Are they then God's covenant people? Well, they sure are.

But they don't deserve to be. No, they don't. These covenants are all grace-based. Even in the Old Testament, they are grace-based. In fact, the reason that God is bringing them into captivity and allowing these pagan, heathen nations to overrun them and take them into captivity is because they are his people.

And he is disciplining them. He is chastising them. This is brought out very clearly in the book of Hebrews. And verse 24, For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

When you become the father of children and children's children and have remained long in the land and act corruptly and make an idol in the form of anything and do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord your God so as to provoke him, Moses said, Now look at verse 27.

And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples and you shall be left few in number among the nations where the Lord shall drive you.

[13 : 44] Has this come to pass? Oh, I say, big time. And we're not finished. Look at Deuteronomy chapter 31. Same book. Back near the end of the life of Moses.

He is very shortly going to be passing off the scene. And this is referred to, Deuteronomy 32, 31, 32, is referred to as the Song of Moses.

Call it, if you will, his swan song. This is Moses' final word to the nation he has led for the last 40 years. And he knows he is about to die.

And he has some parting words to share with Israel. And in verse 16 of Deuteronomy 31, the Lord said to Moses, Behold, you, Moses, are about to lie down with your fathers.

That's die. And this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land.

[14 : 53] These are the pagan deities that will be in the land that Israel is going to occupy. These will be the Philistines. And the Amorites.

And the Girgashites. And the Hivites. And the Perizzites. And these are all pagans. And they are all into idolatry, the worship of multiple gods, the making of graven images, and all the rest of it.

And I don't want to go into the rationale for idolatry now, but let me just say this. Idolatry, the making of idols, all the rest of it.

Paul makes it clear when he writes to the Corinthians, these are all demonic-based and demonic-inspired. There is no god behind these idols or these statues.

There is only demonic activity that inspires their being made and inspires the people who make them and worship them. And the sole reason that people are doing this is primarily for materialistic purposes.

[15 : 59] The idea is you can get something from these imaginary deities that you cannot get from God. And for the most part, it has to do with materialism.

So it is, in their estimation, a very practical thing. For instance, they had gods and goddesses of fertility. Well, if you have a lot of offspring, especially not only your own children, but among your animals, that increases your wealth.

Because wealth was often measured by how many animals you had and how much land you had. And if you've got a lot of land, then you need a lot of offspring to farm the land and till the land.

And all of this contributed to the economic well-being. So with so many people, it wasn't so much a religious thing as it was an economic thing, their worship of all of these false deities.

And continuing on, verse 17, Then my anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide my face from them.

[17 : 07] And they shall be consumed, and many evils and troubles shall come upon them. Which, of course, is exactly what happened. So that they will say in that day, is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?

Yes! It's exactly why God is not among us. Why has God forsaken them? Because they've forsaken Him. But, fellas, and I really want to emphasize this, God's forsaking of His own people has been repeated and has been periodic, but it has never been final and never intended to be final.

It was always, they remain God's covenant chosen people even though they do so in disobedience. And that's exactly where they are right now.

Now, Jews are scattered all over the world, and they remain God's chosen people in exile, in disobedience.

But God is not finished with them, and He will make good on His covenant. And He told them, if you do this, if you disobey me, and you go into idolatry, I'm going to remove myself from you, and I'm going to punish you.

[18 : 27] But that doesn't negate the covenant that God made with them. Verse 18, I will surely hide my face in that day because of all the evil which they will do, for they will turn to other gods.

Now, God is telling Moses, this is what's going to happen after you die. Now, therefore, write this song for yourselves and teach it to the sons of Israel.

Put it on their lips in order that this song may be a witness for me against the sons of Israel. For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swear to their fathers, and they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous, then they will turn to other gods and serve them and spurn me and break my covenant.

Hmm. Come across the page. Verse 26. Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God that it may remain there as a witness against you.

For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness. Behold, while I am still alive, Moses is talking now, and Moses says, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against the Lord.

[19 : 54] How much more than after my death? When I'm not here to keep an eye on you people, it's going to be even worse than it is now. Now, this is a pretty negative message, but it's a pretty accurate one too.

Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers that I may speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to witness against them.

For I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you and evil will befall you in the latter days.

For you will do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger with the work of your hands. And Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were complete.

What a song. What a swan song. Now I want you to come to Jeremiah 31. Jeremiah 31.

[21 : 08] And the only reason by the way when you come to Jeremiah Jeremiah is way down the pike from from Moses. Jeremiah was written about 500 years before the birth of Christ. and Jeremiah in verse 26 of chapter 31. No, I'm sorry.

Well, we're not going to have time for all of this. So, let's let's go to 31 31.

27. Behold, days are coming declares the Lord when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and with the seed of beasts. And it will come about that as I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to overthrow, to destroy, and to bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant declares the Lord.

In those days they will not say again the fathers have eaten grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. But everyone will die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats the sour grapes his teeth will be set on edge.

[22 : 31] This is quite a study in itself but we can't stop there. Now, verse 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 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, God is speaking of his relationship to Israel using a marital analogy. He is saying as a man is married to a woman I as God was married to Israel she was my wife and I was faithful to her.

In other words I never chose another people. my fidelity to Israel remained intact. He will say through Amos later on you only Israel you only of all the nations of the earth have I known.

That means you are the only nation that I have ever been intimately involved with as a husband with a wife. You only. So God has been faithful to Israel but Israel has not been faithful to God.

I have been a husband to them declares the Lord 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 and they shall not teach again each man his neighbor and each man his brother saying know the Lord for they shall 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 will be remembered no more now I want you to see how God is going to establish this thus says the Lord who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar the Lord of hosts is his name if this fixed order departs from me what is this fixed order it's the moon and the sun and the stars that's the fixed order he's talking about if this fixed order departs from me declares the Lord then the offspring of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before me forever that's when God will write

[25 : 28] Israel off years ago a man who was at the time my Bible professor at Cedarville University Dr.

Arthur Williams was a pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in New York City and this was in the midst of World War II when so much was going on with the persecution of the Jews in Europe and everything and Dr.

Williams put a notice put an ad in the New York Times newspaper announcing his sermon topic the next Sunday and it was how to rid the world of the Jew can you imagine an ad like that coming out in New York City and at the time there were more Jews living in New York City than there were in Israel and he said the auditorium was packed and there were more Jews there than he had ever seen in his life and they all wanted to hear what this guy was going to say about how to rid the world of the Jews and this was the text that he used if you want to get rid of the Jews all you have to do is reach up and pull down the sun and pull down the moon and do away with the stars and sigh of relief over the whole congregation and that's the truth of the matter and that's exactly the position that the

Jew is in because because all of these unconditional covenants are grace based and grace always operates without human merit grace is always conditioned by the nature and character of a gracious God not the worthiness of man anybody who really sinks their teeth into that truth will have a great understanding of what God is all about he is a gracious God we are recipients of his grace solely in an undeserved fashion not conditioned upon our behavior or our worthiness this is this is a remarkable passage and chapter 32 over a page in verse 36 now therefore thus says the

Lord God of Israel concerning this city of which you say it is given to the hand of the king of Babylon by sword by famine and by pestilence behold I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in my anger in my wrath and in great indignation and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety and they shall be my people and I will be their God and I will give them one heart and one way this is all promised after repeated incidents of national disobedience and unworthiness they have abandoned God and forsaken him but God is saying the covenant I establish with you is based upon my integrity not upon your faithfulness and fellas we can we can make that same application to the secure position of the believer in

[29 : 20] Christ we operate and function under the blessings of that same grace it is a remarkable passage and there are several others but let me just let me just yeah yes Roger oh absolutely absolutely absolutely absolutely it will all be in spite of them it won't be because of them and their obedience it will be because of absolutely absolutely psalm 89 this is the Davidic covenant and it is as unconditional as the Abrahamic covenant psalm 89 and let's see where should we begin the whole psalm deserves consideration but verse 20 psalm 89 and verse 20

God is speaking he says I have found David my servant with my holy oil I have anointed him with whom my hand will be established my arm also will strengthen him the enemy will not deceive him nor the son of wickedness afflict him but I shall crush his adversaries before him and strike those who hate him and my faithfulness and my loving kindness will be with him and my name in my name his horn will be exalted now is David going to be worthy of this of course not David and his shenanigans with Bathsheba and setting up Uriah the Hittite for murder and all the rest of it and his troublesome ways none of which deserve that and but if you will come down here to verse 28 my loving kindness I will keep for him forever and my covenant shall be confirmed to him so

I will establish his descendants forever and his throne as the days of heaven if his sons forsake my law will they oh they sure will and do not walk in my judgments if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments then I will visit their transgressions with the rod with stripes I will spank them but I will not break off my loving kindness from him nor deal falsely in my faithfulness my covenant I will not violate nor will I alter the utterance of my lips once I have sworn by my holiness I will not lie to David his descendants shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before me it shall be established forever like the moon and the witness in the sky is faithful where is the throne of

David now it is very much in place and intact but there's nobody sitting on it it's bacon Israel does not have a monarchy the throne will one day be occupied by David's greater son in fulfillment of this prophecy and it will be Jesus Christ and by the way the line the monarchical line of Israel ends with the person of Jesus Christ so that the question could favorably be asked if Israel were to establish a monarchy today which they do not have they have a Knesset and a prime minister but if Israel were to establish a monarchy how would they go about deciding who is eligible to be the king and the answer is there is only one who is eligible and that is the end of the

Davidic line and it stops there because Christ never married and never had descendants the line ceases with him he remains the only one eligible to occupy the throne of Israel and one day he will and it will be all in fulfillment of this so I just want to kind of solidify this idea that Israel remains God's covenant people in perpetuity and the replacement theology that is so rampant today which by the way also paves the way for anti-Semitism and I don't know how aware of it you are but there is a considerable upsurge of anti-Semitism going on right now and in of all places Europe if anybody should have learned something from the Holocaust Europe should have but anti-Semitism is rearing its ugly head again and it is surfacing on college campuses in the

[35 : 02] United States starting to create a springψ on the astrology that were not■ by■ in■ in■