

2. When David realized the depth of his sin, he cried out,
“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. ² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin... ¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me (Psalm 51:1-3;10-11).

How is Ezekiel 34:25-28 an answer to David’s prayer?

3. Both David and Ezekiel refer to the human spirit and the Holy Spirit. Why do we need a “new spirit” or “to have a steadfast spirit renewed in us?”
4. Everything Ezekiel describes in this passage is the work of God’s Spirit in our hearts and minds. He cleanses us from our impurities and our idolatries, he gives us a new heart and a new spirit, he removes our heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh, he moves us to follow God’s decrees and to be careful to keep his law.
- How would you describe the initial work of the Spirit in the life of the believer?
 - How would you describe the continuing work of the Spirit in the life of a believer?
5. The New Testament warns us that we can quench (1 Thessalonians 5:19) and grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30)
- What happens when we quench or grieve the Spirit?
 - How can we avoid quenching or grieving the Spirit?
6. Which of these New Covenant promises is most meaningful to you, and why?



Our tales of kings and kingdoms (The Knights of the Round Table, the Chronicles of Narnia, The Lord of the Rings) usually describe a good and benevolent people who have somehow fallen under the spell of an evil empire. The Biblical story (the one true story) is a bit different. The Biblical story begins with a good and benevolent king who is rejected by a self-willed people bent on forging their own path and pursuing their own kingdoms. True, they have plunged themselves into the world of darkness, but it was a conscious decision on their part, not a mere incident of history. The darkness not only resides in the world we live in, it resides in each of our hearts.

The Apostle Paul vividly describes the lingering effects of the fall.

“You were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^m and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath (Ephesians 2:1-3).”

Far more is required than an eternal king reigning on the throne of David. There needs to be a fundamental change in the hearts of God’s people to prepare them to receive the coming king and live under his gracious rule.

I WILL WRITE MY LAW ON YOUR HEARTS

JEREMIAH 31:31-34 “The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. ³³ “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

1. The New Covenant is one of the most complex concepts in Scripture. It involves the regathering of Israel, the coming of a Davidic ruler that will shepherd the people, deep heart transformation in the people of God, an overflow of God’s grace through a renewed Israel to all the nations of the earth, and a renewed heavens and earth. While we live under and enjoy many of the benefits of the New Covenant now, the New Covenant will not be experienced in its fullness until Christ returns.

The Creation Mandate can be described neatly in a few verses (Genesis 1:24-28). God’s covenant with Abraham can be described neatly in a few verses (Genesis 12:1-3). God’s covenant with David can be described neatly in a few verses (2 Samuel 7:8-16). The New Covenant encompasses all the promises of hope and restoration found in the prophets. They use a myriad of images and metaphors to describe and prepare us for its richness.

What are some of the key features of the New Covenant found in this passage?

2. When God speaks of “putting my law in their minds and writing it on their hearts” he is talking about far more than calling his statutes to mind or an aide in Scripture memory, he is describing a deep work in the hearts and minds of his people that causes them to desire the things of God and pursue the things of God.
 - a. How does Paul describe our natural disposition (see Ephesians 2:3 above)?
 - b. What happens when we follow these inclinations?
 - c. What kind of desires will God give us?
 - d. What happens when we follow these desires?

e. How do we cultivate these desires?

3. Under the Old Covenant you became a member of the community through natural birth. Under the New Covenant you become a member of the community through spiritual birth. Under the Old Covenant you would begin with instruction in the hope that you would one day know God. Under the New Covenant you begin with a relationship (knowing God) and continue to grow in your knowledge of God.
 - a. What happens when we know the content of the covenant (biblical knowledge, or theology) but do not know God?
 - b. How does knowing God change the way we approach the content of the covenant (biblical knowledge or theology)?

I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW HEART

EZEKIEL 36:24-28 “For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. ²⁸ Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

EZEKIEL 37:24-28 “My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. ²⁵ They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. They and their children and their children’s children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. ²⁶ I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. ²⁷ My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. ²⁸ Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.

1. Ezekiel describes the deep heart work that God will do in his people in far more graphic detail. According to Ezekiel what will God do to renew the hearts and minds of his people?